

## The Protracted Conflict *At Home*

# Born-Again Oregonianism

'Pig,' 'Lies,' 'Bigot' — Welcome to Portland State University

David Horowitz

**B**EFORE THE election, I travelled to Oregon to talk about homosexuality and political correctness. I was invited by a group of conservative students at Portland State University who supported Oregon's infamous Measure 9, which, had it passed, would have declared homosexuality "perverse, unnatural, immoral, and wrong." I decided to go to Oregon in order to oppose Measure 9 and to explain to my student hosts that invoking the powers of the state to declare a community immoral was a totalitarian agenda and not at all conservative. By the end of my visit, I felt I had convinced these young conservatives that they had been badly misled by their rightwing elders.

Of course, I had other agendas. Like so many moral issues that divide the nation politically these days, the issue of homosexual rights is often posed in ways that some reasonable citizens will find discomforting. Thus, the Oregon initiative was not an entirely unprovoked aggression against homosexual Americans. It came only after years of aggressive and intrusive political claims by leftwing activists. (While I was there, for example, these activists were busy defending the "right" of homosexuals to cruise public parks and risk spreading AIDS.)

As the sponsors of Measure 9 are quick to stress (however disingenuously), their goal is not to deprive homosexuals of their civil rights, but to prevent them from establishing "special rights" as a designated victim group in the manner of blacks, women, and Aleutian Islanders, a status that would make them eligible for affirmative action preferences and privileges. Thus, the first two clauses of Measure 9 would outlaw affirmative action status for homosexual Americans.

I agree with those clauses. Except that I would extend them to outlaw affirmative action status for

blacks, women, and Aleutian Islanders too. A moment's reflection will show that granting protected species status to women, blacks, Aleutian Islanders, and homosexuals is a way of invoking the power of the state to declare the rest of us (males, whites, recent immigrants, and heterosexuals) immoral, perverse, and wrong, which is the same totalitarian agenda as Measure 9's. If we weren't racist homophobes, why would these groups need special protection against us?

In fact, as my trip to Oregon showed, the most endangered species, at least on campuses these days, are conservatives. The university administration had spent the previous year, for example, trying to ban my hosts, the Conservative Student Alliance. The university was restrained from enacting the ban only by the threat of a lawsuit from the Washington-based Center for Individual Rights. My appearance on campus was announced by the student paper with a full page character assassination in which I was portrayed as a "right wing lunatic" and "political moonie." A professor named David Horowitz with whom I had had lunch when I came to Portland State as a radical 20 years earlier, wrote a letter to the editor misrepresenting my views and publicly dissociating himself from me. ("He now reacts to his [radical] past by resorting to hysterical attacks on African-Americans, Arabs, Jewish peace activists and progressives who violate his born-again nationalism and reactionary views.") In completing his own smear, my namesake even lied about my views on Measure 9: "I would be terribly saddened to have my name associated with the desecration of Oregon's tradition of individual liberty that is embodied in Measure 9 ...." Is this born-again Oregonianism?

**N**O UNIVERSITY official appeared to greet me or to defend publicly my right to speak or to insist on an atmosphere of free inquiry in a place presumably dedicated to the pursuit of learning. But when I entered

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the campus ballroom, I discovered that university officials had decided that it was prudent to provide me with six armed security guards to guarantee my safety. Presumably they knew their students better than I did.

As it turned out, about 20 members of the Bi-Sexual Gay and Lesbian Alliance had positioned themselves across the front rows of the ballroom. The moment I began to speak these activists raised signs over their heads so that I and the audience could see them. The signs said variously, "PIG," "LIES," "BIGOT." Repeated raising of these signs punctuated my talk from beginning to end, with no intervention by the security guards in attendance or by the university administrators who had come to check out the scene.

I managed to get through my presentation, despite the distractions, though it was hardly the reflective and nuanced lecture I would have been able to give in a less tense and troubling atmosphere, never really knowing what was going to happen next. At one point, when I referred to politically correct attitudes that prevented AIDS education from being specific about transmission through anal sex, an activist stood up and shrieked: "He's killing women! He's killing women!" He meant that I had implied there was no vaginal transmission of AIDS (which I had not); but his intention, like that of his cohorts, was to prevent my thoughts from being given a reflective hearing. And I believe they were pretty successful at that.

The following day, the headline in the campus paper was "Conservative Advocate Bashed Boldly," making the point that it was audacious and admirable to destroy the possibility of public dialogue on a university campus.

I was not intimidated by my experience at Portland State. After all, unlike the students I left behind, I am out of reach of the communal sanctions available to the Portland State radicals and their supporters in the university administration. If invited again, I certainly would go back.

**B**UT MY experience at Portland State has made me angry. I am not angry at the gay and lesbian students who obstructed my talk, and who do their cause no service by behaving like political thugs. I am angry at the university administrators who have abandoned their students, both the conservative ones and those who find themselves in the political middle. These students will most certainly be intimidated in the future from expressing their confusions, their questions, and their political dissents.

The administrators at Portland State have betrayed the trust of their students as well as their profession by turning over the university to the forces of ignorance and prejudice, while giving up the battle for reasoned inquiry and intellectual debate. For this betrayal, they will not be forgiven.

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## The Price of Socialism

# 'Civil Rights' Turned Upside Down

Affirmative Corruption and Gloria Allred's War on Single-Sex Health Clubs

Harold Johnson

"**C**IVIL RIGHTS" has become a thoroughly debased concept in this country. It used to mean giving everybody an equal break regardless of color or gender. Today, it means special privileges for a chosen few, the luckier members of politically-anointed minority groups — along with the rich white folk who know how to

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work the system. An example comes from Las Vegas's McCarran International Airport. Federal rules force airports to offer special opportunities for "disadvantaged business enterprises," firms owned by minorities or women. Clever non-minority-owned companies have been able to scarf these goodies by bringing in blacks, Hispanics, or women as "partners" in positions that sometimes amount to no more than front-office decoration. At McCarran, county officials selected World