

Once protesters, today's censors

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Michael Costello commentary

A long, long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, dissent was exalted as the highest form of patriotism. In those days, dissenters hurled obscene epithets at the president with impunity and brandished protest signs comparing him to Adolf Hitler. They could throw brickbats at his motorcade and physically assault the president's supporters without fear of reprisal or even criticism. They would smash windows unfortunate enough to be on the motorcade's route and rough up passersby. This sort of behavior was so commonplace that it often did not merit mention by the news media. Prominent politicians of that era encouraged the protestors and defended them as patriots.

That was then. This is now. In this time and in this place, dissent is un-American. The speaker of the House and the House majority leader said so in a USA Today editorial. Today, we have a president who angrily declared that he doesn't want to hear from people who disagree with him. His legislative partners cast doubt on the patriotism of people who do not share their vision. And in this time and in this place, the president sics his goons to beat up people who dare to dissent. In this reality, the president asks people to inform on dissenters via an e-mail address set up specifically for this purpose. In this galaxy, the Death Star targets the rebels.

As you well know. The time when dissent was patriotic was just last year and the place was right here in the U.S. of A. The only difference is that the party in power today was doing the dissenting last year. And the party currently in political exile is dissenting today. Those who dished it out for eight years are in no mood to take it.

In this newly formed galaxy, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, claims that dissenters from her vision of socialized health care wear swastikas to town hall meetings, even though there is no photographic or video evidence to support her claim. An administration spokesman claimed that protestors were showing up dressed as Hitler. But he too could produce no evidence.

Meanwhile, there is plenty of photographic and video evidence of the Service Employees International Union members, wearing their lavender T-shirts, beating up protestors just one day after Barack Obama encouraged them to confront protestors. There is no shortage of documentary evidence that Democrats, including Obama, are busing supporters to health care town hall meetings while locking dissenters out.

And while that other galaxy's protestors had to make up conspiracies to justify their conduct, people who fear that Obamacare will lead to panels empowered to decide who will live and who will die, can cite Obama as their primary source. On the topic of whether the old and infirmed should receive medical care, Obama told a New York Times interviewer, "I think that there is going to have to be a conversation that is guided by doctors, scientists, ethicists. And then there is going to have to be a very difficult democratic conversation that takes place. It is very difficult to imagine the country making those decisions just through the normal political channels. And that's part of why you have to have some independent group that can give you guidance. It's not determinative, but I think has to be able to give you some guidance. And that's part of what I suspect you'll see emerging out of the various health care conversations that are taking place on the Hill right now."

That was on April 14 of this year. The Times asked for no further clarification, just as it failed to ask whom Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was referencing when she expressed disappointment that legalized abortion had failed to reduce the population of undesirables. The mainstream media scarcely noticed the passage. Meanwhile, they went ballistic when Sarah Palin expressed aloud that Obamacare would lead to such panels, to the detriment of her disabled son.

In a town hall organized by ABC News, a woman asked Obama how her elderly mother might be treated under Obamacare. Obama said that the old lady might be better off taking a pain pill rather than receive medical treatment. Only conservative bloggers seemed to be listening.

We are being rushed into a Brave New World, and those who ask that the legislation at least be read before passage are the enemy. And the empire strikes back.

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