



News



## America Censors Critical Professors

CAIRO, April 4, 2006 (IslamOnline.net) – Socrates was executed back in 399 BC for filling young people's heads with "the wrong ideas". Now US professors and teachers are facing hard time speaking their minds out and criticizing the Bush administration's foreign policy with federal anti-terror sheriffs watching and students paid to tape "anti-America" statements, a leading British daily reported on Tuesday, April 4.



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"There's a pre-written script you have to follow and if you chose not to follow it, then there are consequences, so you become very self-conscious about what you say," Professor Paul Gilroy, the chair of African American studies in Yale university, told the *Guardian*.

"To call it self-censorship is much too crude. But everybody is looking over their shoulder."

Gilroy had an experience recently when he spoke out against the US-led invasion of Iraq at a university-sponsored teach-in on the Iraq war.

"I think the morality of cluster bombs, of uranium-tipped bombs, [of] daisy cutters are shaped by an imperial double standard that values American lives more," he said.

"[The war seems motivated by] a desire to enact

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revenge for the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon ... [It's important] to speculate about the relation between this war and the geopolitical interests of Israel."

Excerpts of Gilroy's contribution was sent to the Wall Street Journal, which published them.

The professor found himself later posted on Discoverthenetworks.org, a website dedicated to exposing "radical" professors.

Stephen Walt, the academic dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and John Mearsheimer, a political science professor at the University of Chicago, have recently been accused of anti-Semitism after criticizing the impact of Israel lobby in the US over the country's foreign policy.

**Police Questioning**

Miguel Tinker-Salas, a Latin American history professor and a vocal critic of US policy, was ranked by Andrew Jones, a Republican, on his "Dirty 30" list of those he considers to be the most leftwing offenders.

Six weeks after Jones posted the list on his website uclaprofs.com, two Los Angeles county sheriffs arrived unannounced at Tinker-Salas's office at Pomona College and started asking questions.

For 25 minutes, the sheriffs, part of a federal anti-terrorism task force, quizzed him on whether he had been influenced in any way by or had contact with the Venezuelan government, the consulate and the embassy.

Then they questioned his students about the content of his classes, examined the cartoons on his door.

"They cast the Venezuelan community as a threat," said professor Tinker-Salas. "I think they were fishing to see if I had any information they could use."

**Paid Students**

In mid January, Jones's

- Water: The Essence of Life
- Starvation Kenya: A Story
- God, Guide If You Exist Danish Muslim Discovers Islam
- Islam and Other Religions
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Bruin Alumni association offered students \$100 to tape leftwing professors at the University of California Los Angeles, said the British daily.

Shortly after the \$100 offer was made, top of the list was Peter McLaren, a professor at the UCLA's graduate school of education.



A student at Overland high school in Aurora, Colorado, protests at the suspension of Bennish.

Earlier this year, Fox news commentator Sean Hannity urged students to record "leftwing propaganda" by professors so he could broadcast it on his show.

Social studies teacher Jay Bennish was recently suspended after one of his Overland High School students recorded a class in which he criticized President George Bush.

Caricaturing a Bush speech, Bennish said, "'It's our duty as Americans to use the military to go out into the world and make the world like us.'"

He then commented: "Sounds a lot like the things Adolf Hitler used to say: 'We're the only ones who are right, everyone else is backwards and it's our job to conquer the world and make sure they all live just like we want them to.' Now I'm not saying that Bush and Hitler are exactly the same. Obviously they're not, OK? But there are some eerie similarities to the tones they use."

One 16-year-old student, Sean Allen, recorded part of the class on his MP3 player and gave it to his Republican father.

Shortly afterwards, Bennish was suspended.

Hundreds of his students staged a walkout, a few wearing duct tape over their mouths while some chanted, "Freedom of speech, let him teach."

### **Witch Hunt**

History professor Ellen DuBois believes that a "witch hunt" is taking

place on campuses and in schools.

"This is a totally abhorrent invitation to students to participate in a witch hunt against their professors," he told the *Los Angeles Times* in a recent interview.

DuBois herself was described on Jones's list as, "in every way the modern female academic: militant, impatient, accusatory and radical - very radical."

Professor McLaren also believes that the United States is experiencing a fascist era.

"This is a low-intensity campaign that can be ratcheted up at a time of crisis. When there is another crisis in this country and this country is in an ontological hysteria, an administration could use that to up the ante. I think it represents a tendency towards fascism."

Professors have really to watch their words as scores of "watch" groups have been established to put professors and teachers under the microscope.

To mention but a few examples are Campus Watch, Edwatch, and Parents Against Bad Books in School.

Pomona University president, David Oxtoby, remains "extremely concerned about the chilling effect this kind of intrusive government interest could have on free scholarly and political discourse."

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