

The replacement of faculty at the New College in Florida with right wing professors on the order of Governor Ron DeSantis. The attacks on UPenn and Harvard presidents by ultra-right legislators in Congress on made-up charges of anti-Semitism, the misrepresentation of anti-racism activities at Washington state's Evergreen State College after two white faculty members publicly rejected the request of organizers to not hold classes on the day set aside for the activities, opining that the request was reverse racism. The publicity of this latter action was fanned by *FoxNews* and other right wing media, causing the campus administration to close the campus after threats from far right viewers and at least one armed right winger showed up on campus. The attacks on the presidents of UPenn and Harvard, neither of whom are leftist political radicals, were similarly fanned by the know-nothing media, including that owned and managed by the Murdochs.

In 1967, the West German government and the occupied city of Berlin hosted the Shah of Iran for a state visit. The shah, who had been put into power via a 1953 CIA coup and consequentially used his country as an outpost of the US empire, was known to imprison and torture his opponents, especially those on the left. German and Iranian students organized protests against the shah's visit. Law enforcement responded to the protests with intense violence. The protesters fought back. A German student was killed by police. West German media, especially *Das Bild Zeitung*—a tabloid owned by the Axel Springer publishing conglomerate—lambasted the protesters and the university system.

After several days of protests, fighting between law enforcement and protesters, and intensifying sensationalized coverage in Springer's newspaper, protest leader Rudi Dutschke was shot by a neo-nazi, seriously wounding him. Protesters immediately accused Springer of inciting the shooter and the company's offices were attacked across West Germany. In fact, the headline of the newspaper the day after Dutschke was shot read ““Students threaten, We shoot back.” As the New Left and the counterculture grew in numbers and in the public's awareness, Springer and his right wing news media intensified its hateful coverage. Not only did this intensify the growing divisions in West

German society, it made the Springer media empire a target of the youth-led movements. Indeed, the Red Army Fraktion bombed some of the corporation's offices in 1972. (Sidenote: the Springer media empire is the largest media corporation in Europe. Its news outlets continue to present a right wing pro-NATO and pro-Zionist viewpoint.)

What does the West German history of fifty years ago have to do with US universities in the 2020s? The answer is fairly straightforward. If one consumes the blather on *FoxNews* or reads the opinionated journalism of newspapers like the *New York Post*, they probably believe that universities and colleges in the United States are dens of anti-Semitic, anti-white protesters taking classes in bomb making taught by old New Leftists. Then again, if one believed the columns of the *New York Times'* Bret Stephens, they would probably believe the same nonsense. Stephens, like many of his fellow columnists in the *Times* and the *Washington Post* might as well be Fox News staff members. Stephens, in particular, has been railing against the presence of non-white faculty and administrators in higher education. Of course, the wording is coded, referring instead to a supposed lack of qualifications on the part of these individuals. However the meaning is clear.

In his January 3, 2023 column responding to the resignation of Harvard president Claudine Gay, he decries the socially engineered university he claims she represents. Of course, the social engineering he is referring to is a university where people are given jobs based on their skin tone. The assertion is laughable except for its underlying racist and classist foundation. After all, universities like Harvard, UPenn are at the apex of a social engineering project so deep we don't even recognize it as such; it is the project called the United States. Indeed, it's been long understood by the Left and the Right that education (and especially higher education) is where young minds are shaped to ensure the ongoing operation of the stratified society we live in. Despite the ongoing sales pitches we receive everyday and everywhere pretending otherwise, it is a social engineering project designed to keep the past and present rulers in power and the rest of us in our places. In the world of Bret Stephens and his ilk, being president of Harvard was above Ms. Gay's place.

The underlying differences between the sensationalist and inflammatory coverage of the 1967 student protests in Berlin by *Das Bild Zeitung* and the similar coverage of current events in today's right-wing media are few. One can't help but wonder when one of its consumers will turn the words they hear from a talking head or a columnist into gunfire. One could conceivably argue that it has already happened. At least figuratively.

-Ron Jacobs

Vermont