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Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

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NPR's *Morning Edition*

Transcript: December 3, 2001

BOB EDWARDS, host:

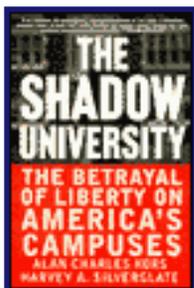
Since September 11th, there have been battles on college campuses over freedom of expression. College administrators have criticized, investigated, even suspended faculty, students and staff whose comments have been considered offensive. NPR's Ina Jaffe reports.

INA JAFFE reporting:

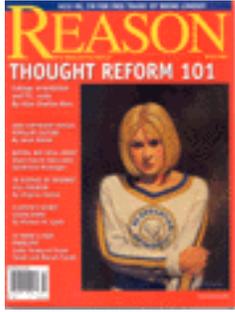
This week Ken Hearlson expects to find out if he still has a job. The tenured political science instructor at Orange Coast College in Southern California was suspended from teaching, even barred from setting foot on campus, not long after his class of September 18th. Professor KEN HEARLSON (Orange Coast College): That night I challenged the students with this kind of provocative question, which was: Why do Muslims condemn the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington but never condemn terrorist attacks in Israel?

JAFFE: The question engendered the sort of boisterous, free-wheeling discussion that's reportedly common in Hearlson's classes. He's frank about his conservative Christian ideology. He says he encourages his students to be just as frank about their beliefs.

Prof. HEARLSON: As I tell them from the first class, I don't want you to all have the same views, and I don't want any of you to have my views because if we all had the same views, we might as well all go home and get in the hot tub and drink a beer because there's



Read excerpts from *The Shadow University* by Alan Charles Kors & Harvey A. Silverglate.



Read *Thought Reform 101* by Alan Charles Kors.



Read *Memo to Free Speech Advocates University of Wisconsin-Madison* by Harvey A. Silverglate.

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no fun in that.

JAFFE: But some students did not have fun in Hearlson's class on September 18th. The next day he was summoned to the office of a college administrator, who showed him formal complaints from two Muslim students. The students accused him of singling them out during the class, saying they responsible for the attacks of September 11th and calling Muslims in general 'terrorists, Nazis and murderers.' A tape of the class, made by another student, does not support the accusations, according to a transcript obtained by NPR, though the session was heated.

But Hearlson's been on leave for 10 weeks now while the college investigates, which is unacceptable, according to Thor Halvorsen, executive director of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education.

Mr. THOR HALVORSSSEN (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education): Clearly, this is an egregious violation of academic freedom and free speech, where a professor was suspended without a hearing, without an investigation. And their disgraceful and abusive behavior is going to, hopefully, end up haunting them.

JAFFE: Since September 11th, Halvorsen says his organization has received about a hundred fifty complaints from academics, who feel they've been treated unfairly by administrators for expressing an opinion. That's twice the usual number for that period of time.

Mr. HALVORSSSEN: Most of the voices that they have silenced are voices that have been in favor of the war effort. In some instances, people who have been critical of the war effort have also been silenced. So we see cases of both types.

JAFFE: For example, a history professor at the University of New Mexico told his classes on September 11th, 'Anyone who can blow up the Pentagon gets my vote.' He later apologized, but may face disciplinary action. On the other hand, there's the Johns Hopkins University professor who was demoted after he said the United States should attack countries that support terrorism because Osama bin Laden himself would never be found, and he'd bet anyone a Koran on that. He apologized for the remark and was reinstated.

But pressure isn't just coming from college administrators. A higher education watchdog group has issued a report highly critical of opinions expressed on campus. Anne Neal is the vice president of the American Council of Trustees & Alumni.

Ms. ANNE NEAL (Vice President, American Council of Trustees & Alumni): We essentially are saying that we need to know, in a war, what is at stake; we need to have moral clarity to call evil by its name, and that we need to understand the ideas and ideals of the country and civilization we are defending. And what we say in our report is that our universities are failing us on these counts.

JAFFE: The report is called *Defending Civilization*. It's mainly a list of 117 quotes from professors and students purportedly criticizing American policy. Some statements do blame the United States for causing the terrorist attacks. Other citations are milder or more ambiguous, like, 'Hate breeds violence, and violence breeds death.'

Stanford University history professor Joel Beinin says no one would take the report seriously if it were not for the powerful founders of the organization that produced it. They include Lynne Cheney, wife of the vice president, and Senator Joseph Lieberman. Beinin is criticized in the report for saying that Osama bin Laden should be tried by an international court for crimes against humanity.

Professor JOEL BEININ (Stanford University): This is a straight-out, neo-McCarthyite sort of thing. And not only that, it's actually quite lunatic because many of the people who are named on the list actually support the war.

JAFFE: The controversy over what professors say and how they say it reflects the unease of the nation as a whole. A new NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School poll found that a majority of Americans thinks someone who blames the United States for the terrorist attacks should be allowed to speak on campus, but a greater majority, 64 percent, say they shouldn't be allowed to teach in public schools. Ina Jaffe, NPR News, Los Angeles.

EDWARDS: The time is 29 minutes past the hour.

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