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## Political Correctness Today

Joseph Ellin  
*Western Michigan University*

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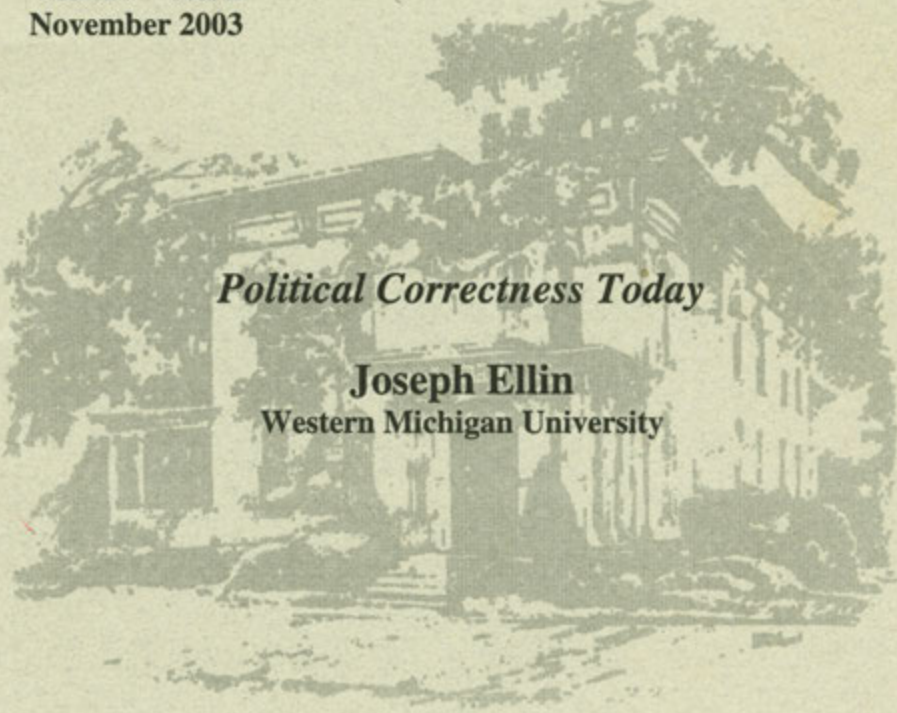
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# Center for the Study of Ethics in Society

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*Political Correctness Today*

**Joseph Ellin**  
Western Michigan University

# **Center for the Study of Ethics in Society**

**Founded 1985**

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# **Political Correctness Today**

**Joseph Ellin**

Paper presented to the  
Center of the Study of Ethics in Society  
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## **Joseph Ellin**

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## POLITICAL CORRECTNESS TODAY

Political correctness prompts reactions that range from fury to ridicule. A newspaper headline reads: 'Farming grows more politically correct.'<sup>1</sup> What's the story? Maryland has renamed its Farm Queen the 'Agricultural Ambassador.' Certain US Senators are trying to have more portraits of women and blacks hung in prominent places in the nation's capitol. 'This is to let political correctness triumph over history,' complains one historian (Roger Kimball). 'The fact is that with few exceptions the people who founded this country were white men.'<sup>2</sup>

And so it goes. Everyone knows the list. You can't tell ethnic jokes anymore, bathroom humor is out and not only in mixed company, no more jokes in mock foreign accents (even the word 'foreign' is impermissible), don't forget whether small people are dwarfs or midgets, jobs such as firemen and postmen, actresses and waitresses, no longer exist...the list goes on and on. When I ask my honors students what they think of political correctness, they are uniformly opposed; they equate it with thought control and the language police. They think political correctness amounts to interference with freedom of speech, and make arguments against it, which could come right from Mill's *Liberty*.

But censorship and the language police is not the whole story; there is more. A news commentary is headlined: 'Commencements of 2002 Achieve New Degree of Political Correctness.'<sup>3</sup> Why? Several universities held separate graduate ceremonies for gays and for minorities: the University of California at Santa Cruz, Iowa State, and the University of Michigan were among those that held separate ceremo-

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<sup>1</sup> *Kalamazoo Gazette*, July 28, 2003, pg. D6.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, Aug. 13, 2003, pg. B1.

<sup>3</sup> *FrontPageMagazine.com*, June 18, 2002



nies for gays; the University of Texas at Austin and California State Polytechnic University held separate ceremonies for minorities, or for blacks only. And at other commencements, left-wing speakers blasted capitalism, American foreign policy, and conservative politics generally.

And still more. Here is a book titled, *The Revolt of the Primitive: an Inquiry into the Roots of Political Correctness*, which is described in its blurb as follows: "...perceptions of men as abusers, sexual predators, and deadbeat dads have become entrenched in our culture...This volume delves into the psychological forces that have given rise to these ideas."<sup>4</sup> A review quoted in the ad says the book describes 'gender politics and gender wars ...revealing some of the primitive emotional forces...behind the vilification of the father...'

Are all these examples of political correctness different forms of the same thing? What is political correctness? Are there leading political correctness themes?

I want to suggest and examine three: sensitivity, diversity, and multiculturalism. (I am not claiming that everything that can be called political correctness can easily fit into one of these categories.) In each case—and this is my thesis statement—political correctness can be defined as a good thing taken to extremes, extremes which range from the merely ludicrous to the clearly malign. This is why political correctness raises such opposition.

Sensitivity. We are all much more aware of the sensibilities of other people than we used to be, at least than those in my generation were. It hasn't been easy getting there, as my quick list of prohibitions shows. But there's certainly an argument that the outcome has been worth the effort. I once wrote in a manuscript, that someone welshed on a bet and my editor pointed out that 'welshed' is an ethnic slur. I replaced it with 'defaulted,' and regarded myself as properly rebuked.

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<sup>4</sup> Publisher's catalogue, pg. 8, advertisement for Howard S Schwartz, *The Revolt of the Primitive*, (Transaction, 2003)

Never mind that like any good thing, language sensitivity can be carried too far and taken to lengths that strike one as absurd; and never mind that no two will agree how long that length is, exactly. Much of our language prior to 1975 or so was truly offensive and we are well rid of it. Years ago my wife and I were traveling in Ireland and one morning at breakfast in a bed & breakfast, a vacationing American priest of Irish extraction used the expression, 'nigger in the woodpile.' I disguised my discomfort but my wife's reaction was to burst out laughing, saying she never thought she'd hear that expression again, certainly not among educated people. The priest was properly abashed and meekly said he guessed it's wrong to say that, or something of the sort. He was absolutely right and we hope he's learned better.

The scorn heaped on political correctness is thus not initially warranted. My students who think language sensitivity amounts to thought control have a point, but they miss the counter point that offensive language is more than offensive, it conveys not very subtle and thoroughly unpleasant messages about people's social standing and prospects. Given all this however there is much justification for the complaint that the political correctness police are capable of some outrageous behavior. Let me tell you about Roger Williams University in Rhode Island,<sup>5</sup> where the president just recently abruptly cut off funding to the university's only student conservative publication, called oddly enough *The Hawk's Right Eye*, after it criticized what it saw as the university's pro-gay and anti-religion policies (the editor was also fired from his campus job, coincidentally no doubt). The president announced his action in a truly Orwellian message titled 'free expression, civility and mutual respect.' After affirming that among the university's 'core values' is 'the affirmation of free expression,' he went on to declare that the students' publication is 'puerile, mean spirited, and stereotypes gay individuals' and announced that 'the university will not condone publications that create a hostile

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<sup>5</sup> My information comes from two articles written by Jason Mattera, editor of *The Hawk's Right Eye*, and published in web-based newsmagazines: 'Censorship on a Rhode Island Campus,' in [www.studentsforacademicfreedom.com](http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.com), and, 'First the Witchhunt, then the Lies,' in [www.frontpagemag.com](http://www.frontpagemag.com).



environment for our students.” Wh at prompted all this was some university-sponsored speeches by gay rights activists who attacked President Bush for opposing gay marriage and blamed ‘religion’ for homophobia. One of the speeches was part of the ‘Welcome Week’ activities, which are mandatory for incoming freshmen. Conservative students didn’t like this and, provoked, dedicated an entire issue of their magazine to attacking the gay rights movement.<sup>6</sup>

I have read the offending issue of *The Hawk’s Right Eye*<sup>7</sup> (and incidentally censure of the *Right Eye* and dismissal of the editor is only part of the story; the publication’s sponsor, the university’s Republican Club, lost its status as a recognized student group on the grounds that its views didn’t really represent republicans) and must say that the president’s adjective ‘puerile ’ puzzles me. On the contrary, the magazine struck me as well-informed, factually based, and certainly no less well-argued than the typical college-level term paper; not puerile at all by normal standards. I didn’t find any offensive language, or exaggerated or emotionally charged statements. There were a few highly questionable items, however. One cartoon shows a homeless guy carrying a large sign that says ‘Will sodomize for food.’ The caption reads, ‘Because of ruthless discrimination, thousands of starving homosexuals wander the streets of Las Vegas, selling whatever they can just to survive.’ The cartoon is not simply gratuitous insult. It accompanies an article and illustrates the article’s point that gays are in fact not ‘disadvantaged’ and in need of special protection, at least as the federal government defines ‘disadvantaged,’ since the first criterion the government uses to identify what the government calls ‘protected classes’ is, financially disadvantaged, which in general homosexuals aren’t. So offensive or not, there’s a point being made here.

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<sup>6</sup> Funding for *The Eye* was shortly restored, possibly as a result of bad publicity.

<sup>7</sup> You can find it on the web at [www.rwucr.com](http://www.rwucr.com)

Another cartoon in questionable taste shows the standard food pyramid, with the caption, 'Militant homosexual activists nationwide condemn the FDA's food pyramid as 'bigoted' and 'hateful' because anus and penis were not listed as separate food groups.' Again, there's a point behind the insult. The cartoon illustrates an article expressing indignation over a sex-education conference sponsored by a gay rights group (Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network) at which 14 year old girls were allegedly taught how to perform lesbian sex and use vibrators, and adolescent boys were instructed on the relative advantages of swallowing or spitting out male ejaculate.

But it seems the real killer that did in *The Eye* was a prominently displayed news story about a brutal homosexual rape-murder. Headlined by *The Eye* 'Bana-rama' because one of the objects used to sodomize the victim was a banana, the story was attributed to WorldNetDaily, a conservative web-based news medium. The description of the acts which lead to the death of the victim was totally graphic. The object of greatest ire evidently was a photo, sardonically labeled 'My Hero,' showing what is apparently an absurdly costumed participant in a gay pride parade; the university president perhaps thought that the photo was intended to imply that all gays are rapists and murderers. *The Eye* accompanied the story with a brief editorial comment: 'Homophobic stories are always dwelt upon, but when homosexuals are the culprits the news is swept up [sic] under the rug.'

Now here is one way to frame this issue. When conservatives are told they can't ridicule or condemn conferences promoting gay sex, or speeches blaming religion for homophobia, or complain that bad actions by gays are ignored in the media, what they hear is that their true crime is being opposed to pro-gay activism, and they conclude that the gay rights movement has taken over the university. Political correctness entails celebrating everything once regarded as intolerable while suppressing all criticism, they think. The sensitivity police don't see it that way: what they see is not the condemnation or indignation as such, but the mode of expression. But the trouble with this argument is that it's not clear what mode of expression would pass the political correctness no-offense test. Maybe dull academic articles

hidden in unreadable journals might be acceptable, but isn't the goal of effective political criticism precisely to be 'puerile,' that is, to make a point so forcefully (and so outrageously) that it's difficult for opponents to ignore?

As my students understand, to be offended at every possible method of saying something is to be offended at the thought itself. The sensitivity police owe us an explanation of what methods of criticizing certain protected interests would not offend them. Then we can judge whether what they oppose is limited to offensive expressions only, or whether they are really against any criticism of the interests themselves. We may hope that the president of Roger Williams University is right, and that it is possible to be committed to the core value of free speech, yet within an environment of respectful language—though achieving respect for everyone's feelings is a lot more difficult. But it is up to the political correctness people to tell us what modes of expression they would regard as achieving this goal<sup>8</sup>.

So much for sensitivity. Another political correctness theme is diversity. As with sensitivity, no person of good will could endorse the evils diversity targets, that is, the ethnic and gender exclusiveness that once characterized so much of American society. But diversity too is given to excess. Though diversity has been now formally endorsed by the US Supreme Court as a legitimate goal of universities, at least in their admission policies, the diversity movement has often been debunked with the wry observation, 'diversity of skin color, uniformity of thought.'<sup>9</sup> This is probably even more true outside of higher educa-

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<sup>8</sup> At this point it is probably desirable to clarify a point about censorship. Since this essay is about PC, I have used an example of PC-induced censorship, namely, censorship in the name of protection for gays. It should not be imagined that pro-gay material is immune to censorship. As I write this, I receive via Internet news of a Community College in Alabama that has removed after one day a display of art depicting 'scenes that could be construed as homosexual in orientation or theme,' which some patrons had found offensive. See: <http://hnn.us/articles/1621.html#10290302>.

<sup>9</sup> Several studies have demonstrated the predominance of Democrats over Republicans on the faculty at selected, often elite, universities. For example, FrontPage-Magazine.com reports (April 16, 2003) a study of a college in New York State

tion than within it. There is a book you may have heard of (or not, given the treatment it got in the press), by William McGowan, called *Coloring the News*, a highly critical examination of diversity programs in the media organizations. About his book McGowan has written:<sup>10</sup>

"Many news organizations demand a...commitment to diversity programs as a requirement for career advancement. Failing to show such commitment...can 'dramatically narrow' one's career options, as *New York Times* publisher Arthur Sulzberger phrased it." McGowan writes that his experience with his book "confirmed that there are sanctions for speaking out too forcefully about this subject...Though some reviewers gave the book's arguments and evidence fair treatment, there were many instances when the...ideological leanings of a news organization...made constructive dialogue all but impossible."

"Many journalists...describe me as some kind of conservative ideologue with an agenda. [Others] showed an almost religious attachment to the concept of diversity." [These] abusive...broadsides...seemed to say something profound about the way our journalistic culture debates—or stifles debate—about its coverage of one of our most vexing national issues."

Let me quote the author's own description of his book:

"The evidence I found and presented showed a disturbing level of...conformity in the press with coverage of these issues [race, gay rights, affirmative action] and favoritism to various politically correct causes and protected 'political correctness' constituencies. Although diversity purported to celebrate a multiplicity of viewpoints, certain unfashionable voices were overlooked or muted...I wrote about a climate that allowed activism and ethnic and racial cheerleading to

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which discovered that, of the 126 registered voters on the faculty, 117 were registered as Democrat or Green, and only 9 as Republican or Conservative (voter registration is public record in NY). Another study claims that of 32 top schools surveyed, the ratio of Democrats to Republicans was about 10-1 (fund raising letter from the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, dated Oct. 28, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=110004162>

eclipse neutral observation as well as the ideal of objectivity...The book closes with an exploration of the consequences this kind of politically correct journalism has had on our political culture...I argued that political correctness journalism hurt the credibility and financial health of mainstream news organizations and fed the growth of right-wing broadcasting backlash.

‘My goal...was not to condemn attempts to expand the ranks of minority journalists...I wanted to ask probing questions that few people in the profession seemed to be willing to ask, at least out loud...If the book had an agenda, it was to reassert the values of rigor and honesty and to affirm a real diversity of opinion...whether or not it was deemed progressive.’

So how was his book received by the press it criticized? ‘Unfortunately...many news organizations with heavy investments in the diversity crusade...preferred not to review their investments. Several influential news organizations simply blacked the book out...*The New York Times* refused to review my book, and in several exchanges with book editors at the Times, it became clear that my book was too critical of some of the diversity efforts at the newspaper—and their impact on news coverage...This silent treatment from *The New York Times* put *Coloring the News* on a lengthening list of books (considered to be ‘right wing’), including Bernard Goldberg’s *Bias*, which have not been reviewed by the *Times Book Review*, despite contributing to a vigorous debate among journalists (and in Goldberg’s case, achieving the number one position on *The Times’s* own bestseller list).’ McGowan then goes on to describe the treatment accorded him and Goldberg at NPR, another bastion of political correctness, where airing of an interview with them was delayed for 6 weeks until rebuttal journalists could be found to ‘balance’ the program (which NPR rarely does with ‘liberal’ interviewees); and the unexplained cancellation of an appearance by him—after fliers with his picture had been printed—at a conference sponsored by the *Kansas City Star*.

Now McGowan may be right or wrong about the treatment he received in the pro-diversity press; I haven't read this book so I can't say whether it meets *The Times'* standards for reviewability (I do read the *Times Book Review* and I can't say I have much of a grip on what those standards are, however). Maybe McGowan wrote a lousy book and is paranoid. It wouldn't be the first hard-hitting expose that turned out to be much less than its author imagined it to be. But the point he makes, that diversity has become such an untouchable sacred cow in certain quarters that it is not a debatable issue, strikes me as important, and worth debating. A commitment to diversity, one would think, entails a commitment to diversity of opinion about diversity. It's legitimate to question whether such diversity exists in major universities and the mainstream press.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is Multiculturalism. Like sensitivity and diversity, multiculturalism has at its core a benign, even wholesome, idea, for even without conceding that cultural chauvinism is or was rampant in our culture, who could deny that students, citizens, all of us, would be better off understanding and respecting other cultures? Were this the entire point, few (only the real chauvinists) would object. But this is not the entire point, and as we examine other claims multiculturalism and political correctness make, we see a certain slippage from the blandly unobjectionable to the really spicy.

We should not confuse multiculturalism with what one of its proponents<sup>11</sup> has called 'shallow global diversity.' Blandly unobjectionable shallow global diversity, which advocates the study of non-Western cultures and texts, 'falls short of full-fledged, or deep, multiculturalism,' says this author.[because] 'It pays inadequate attention to marginalized groups such as women and minorities and ignores entirely the social processes by which only some people are enabled to rise to cultural prominence through the expression of ideas.'

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<sup>11</sup> Marilyn Friedman, in Friedman and Narveson, *Political Correctness, For and Against* (Rowman Littlefield, 1995), pg. 14.



So to the truly politically correct, merely learning about other cultures, reading their books, and becoming familiar with their art, is not enough; one must learn about other cultures in a certain way, emphasizing poverty, marginalization, discrimination, the 'voiceless,' the powerless. Cultures, that is, must be seen as a battlefield in which the dialectic of oppression and insurrection plays itself out. Of course the student is not merely a neutral spectator at this combat; the truly politically correct multicultural student roots for the good guys, the oppressed, and vociferously hisses the villains, who are ruling oligarchies, incumbent governments and their military, and their prime international supporter, the US.

I will illustrate all this by relating the story of Rigoberta Menchu and David Stoll. Rigoberta Menchu is a Mayan Indian from Guatemala who is a world-class celebrity, 1992 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, author of two books about her native country, president of several foundations dedicated to helping Mayans and other native peoples in Latin America, human rights campaigner and much-admired lecturer on the university circuit. David Stoll is an anthropology professor from Middlebury College. Rigoberta Menchu became famous and a sort of poster girl for the radical left through her autobiography, called *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, published in 1983<sup>12</sup>. In it she recalls the suffering of her people at the hands of the Guatemalan government and its brutal army. A classic tale of Third World exploitation and oppression, it purports to be a first-person account of murder, torture and terror tactics practiced by a Latin American government, underwritten by the US, against its own people.

Unfortunately the book is packed with falsehoods. This is where anthropologist Stoll comes in. A specialist on Guatemala, he traveled, in 1989 while the civil war was winding down, to Menchu's village, to investigate how the Mayans coped with the violence of the country's then decade-long conflict. He investigated Menchu's assertions, and discovered that many of the most striking either could not be verified

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<sup>12</sup> *I, Rigoberta Menchu* (Verso Press, 1983).

or were demonstrably false<sup>13</sup>. For example, she claims to be a minimally literate peasant who as a girl lived in the village and so was an eyewitness to brutal acts of the Guatemalan army. But Stoll determined through documents that in fact during this time she was away at Catholic boarding school, in the city, receiving a very good education. She claims again that her father was cheated out of his land by rich European Guatemalans, but Stoll looked up the court records and found that the lawsuit against her father over ownership of the land was actually between him and his brother, Rigoberta's uncle. She claims that her dissident brother was burned alive by the army in the village square, but all the villagers Stoll interviewed denied that any such event had ever happened (Stoll interviewed 120 residents of Menchu's village). And so on. Most of this was subsequently confirmed independently by a reporter from *The New York Times*.

Now what does this have to do with multiculturalism? In reporting this story, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* called the book, 'a cornerstone of the multicultural canon over the last 15 years.'<sup>14</sup> The book is required reading in courses in hundreds of universities where it is treated as a masterpiece of Third World literature. Since 1988 it has been required reading in Stanford University's humanities course, to name just one. So here is a book multicultural practitioners use to demonstrate oppression in the Third World. You'd think that professors, professionally dedicated to truth as they are, who have for 15 years been teaching a dishonest book and putting misinformation into the minds of their students, would be relieved, if not perhaps delighted, that its falsehoods have finally been brought to light.

That does not seem to have been the general reaction. The *Chronicle's* webpage<sup>15</sup> published innumerable letters about this controversy, of which I quote a not unrepresentative sample:

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<sup>13</sup> Detailed in David Stoll, *I, Rigoberta Menchu, and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (Westview Press, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan 15, 1999, pg. A15.

<sup>15</sup> <http://chronicle.com/colloquy>

"I severely question the validity of the research. I will continue to support Manchu and respect her for all the hard work she has done for her people...."

"Rigoberta Menchu's story is the story of the indigenous people of the Americas; the forcible taking of the land...Her story tells the truth of a contemporary Maya, and other Native Americans...Her story is about the history of the fledgling and current US, as a statement of the wars waged against indigenous people for the cause of capitalism, which needs resources and people to exploit in order to function."

"[I object to] Stoll's motives and journalistic techniques ...asking questions in a shell-shocked mountain town.... The region ...was... intensively terrorized by the military...during the '80s. It was also the region Pedro de Alvarado pillaged in the 1520's...They have seen plenty over the centuries to suspect outsiders. Stoll objectifies the Mayas who live there, naively overlooking the politics of 'testimonio'...Never mind that the [area] has been inundated with missionaries attempting to bring the population out of its cultural roots. Never mind that survivors of the scorched earth campaign of the 80s are inclined to say what the government/outsideers want to hear.... The real story is about the atrocities these people have endured."

"One of the issues raised by Stoll's book is how we may understand 'testimonio,' and the voices of indigenous people when telling us their experiences. The stories of a person's life are fraught with memories mixed into the multivalent life of the community. The communitarian experience of Maya communities problematizes any possible 'objective' account. Indigenous Mayas are not objects, and their ways of voicing their stories cannot fit our categories."

"Stoll's book will set the discipline of anthropology back 30-40 years...The most glaring problem seems to be the imposition of western epistemology on a fundamentally non-western account of events. The ontological status of testimonios is fundamentally different than that of autobiographies and memoirs. All of the apparent contradictions... indicated by Stoll are anticipated by Menchu's account when

she emphasizes that she and her people don't reveal all of their secrets to outsiders. ...Stoll is apparently guilty of listening only to those informants who confirm what he wants to hear."

In other words, Stoll is guilty of (a) judging indigenous people who think differently from us by Western values, namely, respect for facts and truth; (b) believing what villagers told him (of course Menchu expects the readers of her book to believe what she tells us, but she is a revolutionary and the villagers are terrorized peasants, so it's our moral duty to believe her rather than them) and (c) not standing with the voice of the oppressed Mayas and against the evil exploitative force of capitalism. This strikes me as the true voice of political correctness: Menchu is on the correct side of the struggle, so that her book is largely fiction presented as fact is at worst a minor distraction. And that is how political correctness got started after all: the Party represented humanity, so you dutifully repeated the Party line, without caring whether what you were saying was true or not.

But this is not the entire story. Menchu's book was a political document, intended to gain support for the revolutionary movement to which she belonged, the Guerilla Army of the Poor (EGP by its Spanish initials). The struggles of this group took place not so much in the hills of Guatemala but in the editorial offices and national capitals of Europe and the US. The propaganda war in the West was the war that would eventually decide the military combat on the ground in Guatemala. The apologists for this insurrectionary group needed to claim that it was a genuinely indigenous group supported by the great bulk of the Mayan people. Menchu's book, purporting to represent 'her people,' gave enormous credence to this claim. Stoll, who has no doubt about what he calls 'the well-attested brutality of the Guatemalan security forces,'<sup>16</sup> makes this question the central one in his book: 'Was the guerrilla movement defeated in the early 1980s a popular struggle expressing the deepest aspirations of Rigoberta's people?

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<sup>16</sup> Quotes that follow are from Stoll's Preface to his book (*supra* note 10), as reprinted on the *Chronicle* web page, *supra* note 12.

Was it an inevitable reaction to grinding oppression, by people who felt that they had no other choice?"

Stoll's answer to this is, no, it was not. In fact, the Mayas themselves were deeply divided about the EGP and its political arm, the Committee for Campesino Unity, or CUC. Many blamed them for their problems with the army, did not accept their call to revolutionary violence, and wanted them to disappear. Stoll: 'the key question is whether the CUC was a grassroots response by an increasingly oppressed peasantry, or whether the EGP invented it as a way to lure peasants into confronting the state...I hope to convince readers that the EGP never developed the strong social base...that Rigoberta would have us believe....The...struggles dividing Rigoberta's neighbors dropped out of [her] story, making armed struggle sound [sic] an inevitable reaction to oppression, at a time when Mayas were desperate to escape the violence. [Her book] became a way to mobilize foreign support for a wounded, retreating, insurgency.'

And he continues: 'If she wanted to blame the violence entirely on the army and support the guerillas, she had the right to a hearing. So did the Mayas who also blamed the guerillas...and did not feel represented by them. Instead, Rigoberta's version was so attractive to so many foreigners that Mayas who repudiated the guerrillas were often discounted.'

This concludes what I want to say about political correctness. The political correctness person knows some simple truths, truths which, without political correctness, would have escaped the notice of the rest of us: Western ways of thought and standards are culturally biased and inherently exploitive; Western epistemology is destructive and culturally coercive;<sup>17</sup> to study the Third World, and indeed our own culture as well,<sup>18</sup> is to study the conflict between the deprived,

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<sup>17</sup> This is the theme of the book by the late Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, 1978), which catapulted him into the forefront of literary scholars and Middle Eastern specialists.

<sup>18</sup> Friedman makes this point in *ibid* note 8 *supra*.

the voiceless, the expropriated, the displaced, the marginalized and their Western European oppressors. The point of such study is not understanding but action: to manifest solidarity with oppressed peoples everywhere, to give the voiceless a voice, to struggle against the ruthless, destructive nature of capitalism, against its war on indigenous peoples, against its insatiable need for exploitable resources and labor. To this noble end, inconvenient facts are legitimately suppressed, those who challenge the political correctness orthodoxy vilified, their research denigrated, their methodology ridiculed. What political correctness seems to be most afraid of, as evidenced by my three themes, is open and honest discussion of the claims I just listed. Thought control in the name of greater liberty is a classical Leninist theme, practiced notably today by Cuba. And that seems to me to be the real meaning of political correctness today.



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## Fall 2003 Public Presentations

**Wednesday**  
**September 24<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm**  
Bernhard Center  
Room 208

**Gary Dorrien, Ph. D.**  
Parfet Distinguished Professor  
**Kalamazoo College**  
Winnie Veenstra Peace Lecture  
*The Boys Who Cried Wolfowitz:  
Creating and Selling Perpetual  
War*

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**Wednesday**  
**October 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm**  
Bernhard Center  
Room 213

**Wayne Cavanaugh**  
President  
**United Kennel Club**  
*The Ethical Boundaries of  
Animal Use and Ownership in  
America*

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**Tuesday**  
**October 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:30pm**  
Fetzer Center  
Putney Lecture Hall

**Robert Beck, M.D.**  
Chairman, Ethics Committee  
**Bronson Methodist Hospital**  
*My Choice or Your Choice:  
The Meaning of Informed  
Consent in Health Care*

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**Friday**  
**November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 pm**  
Bernhard Center  
Room 105

**Timothy Fort, Ph. D.**  
Business School  
**University of Michigan**  
*Business, Culture, and Trust:  
Making Businesses into  
Mediating Institutions*

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**Tuesday**  
**November 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm**  
Fetzer Center  
Putney Lecture Hall

**Thomas M. Blok, M.D.**  
Schoolcraft, Michigan  
*Who Really Benefits from  
Medical Research?*

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**Friday**  
**November 14<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 pm**  
Bernhard Center  
Room 215

**Joseph Ellin, Ph.D.**  
Dept. of Philosophy  
**Western Michigan University**  
*Political Correctness Today*

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