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OPINION

Dangerous professors

It's here: Ward Churchill, the book. The University of Colorado's ethnic studies professor, notorious for his anti-Americanism and under investigation for alleged plagiarism, has now occasioned a 400-page reference work by David Horowitz, "The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America."

Churchill made news last year when his assertion that victims of the World Trade Center attack had it coming led to protests by students in New York, one of whom had lost his father on Sept. 11. Fourteen months of defiance by the professor and impotence by university authorities ensued.

Horowitz's book isn't actually about Churchill. Rather, it cites him as "an emblem of what's wrong with universities," then goes on to profile 100 other tenured radicals of the same ilk. Taken together, the author says, the bios reveal four troubling patterns in America's higher education faculties today.

These include "(1) promotion far beyond academic achievement...; (2) teaching subjects outside one's professional qualifications and expertise for the purpose of political propaganda...; (3) making racist and ethnically disparaging remarks in public without eliciting reaction by university administrations, as long as those remarks are directed at unprotected groups...; [and] (4) the overt introduction of political agendas into the classroom and the abandonment of any pretense of academic discipline or scholarly inquiry."

Wild Ward exemplifies all these pathologies. "The Professors" introduces his successor as chair of ethnic studies at CU-Boulder, Emma Perez, who perceives in the outcry against Churchill "a national strategy... of the neo-con battle for dominance in academe." We also meet their CU col-



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league, philosopher Allison Jaggar, a "socialist feminist" who advocates re-engineering state bodies to share child-bearing duties.

Over at the University of Denver, Horowitz notes, students must endure Marxist anthropologist Dean Saitta, who warns against "conservative thought police" silencing Ward Churchill, yet defends DU's censorship of a Dick Lamm article on racial victimhood.

At Metro State, the "dangerous academics" include political science professor Onelda Meranto, who contends that cultural genocide, racial hierarchy and gender politics are the sum total of Europe's legacy to America. Up at the University of Colorado in Greeley, there's criminologist Robert Dunkley, whose propagandistic 2003 exam asked students to tell why "the military action of the U.S. attacking Iraq was criminal."

I don't suggest, nor does the book, that any of these characters should be fired, censored or otherwise penalized for their views, any more than I support Austria's jailing of Holocaust-denier David Irving. The word "dangerous" in Horowitz's title doesn't refer to lies: A free society need not fear untruth. Instead, it warns about the abandonment of our universities' ethic by which scholarship, not indoctrination, formerly prevailed in the classroom.

Today's "dominance in academe," Perez's paranoid aside is not with neo-conservatives like Horowitz or traditional conservatives like CU

President Hank Brown. It is with the Dunkleys and the Merantos, who are not only anti-American and hard left (bad enough yet endurable), but also believe that "scholarship and activism are... symbiotically related," to quote Columbia historian Eric Foner.

This manipulative belief endangers our higher-education system and, with it, our preparation of the next generation for clear thinking and democratic self-government. And it wrongs countless Colorado students such as Mario Nicolais, who was called a Nazi by his black CU law professor, and Army veteran Heather Schmidt, who was tongue-lashed for her patriotism by a UNC history prof.

I know their stories from having raised the academic freedom issue as a state senator. The presidents of CU, CSU, UNC and Metro signed a joint memorandum in 2004, pledging to work harder at "respecting intellectual and political diversity [and ensuring] that all... be made to feel comfortable in exercising their right to listen critically and to challenge a professor's opinions." Legislation setting an even tougher standard was then withdrawn.

Spokesmen at the four institutions told me last week that progress is being made on implementing the memorandum, perhaps a B grade overall, including grievance procedures for students who are propagandized or politically harassed by faculty. Let's hope so. Horowitz has a website, studentsforacademicfreedom.org, where help can be sought if local remedies fail.

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