

The Left's War on Words

Joe Simonson | *Editor-in-Chief*

Between articles titled “You’ll Never Believe What Happened After This Quadriplegic Six-Year-Old Gave This Homeless Person a Sandwich” and “Why Everyone Including the Taliban Needs More Beyoncé,” my Facebook newsfeed this summer displayed a disturbing trend of articles and rants comparing the Israel’s military operations to the tactics of Nazi Germany. This deliberate mischaracterization and mislabeling of Israel’s actions in the latest Gaza conflict continued outside of cyberspace as well, with pro-Palestinian protestors carrying signs reading “Israel=Genocide” and “Netanyahu=Hitler.”

Ah, yes, those neo-Nazi Israelis with their Arab affirmative action programs, their Arab Supreme Court judges, government-funded Islamic schools and courts, and elected Palestinian Arabs in the Knesset. Did you know that Arabic is one of Israeli’s official languages? I wonder if Hitler and the Nazi Party did the same for Yiddish and Hebrew. I suppose some Jews in Nazi Germany were lucky enough to be forcibly chosen by SS officers to help oversee the executions in some concentration camps. Talk about representation.

And yet, despite all these “genocidal” measures by the Israelis, the Palestinian population has continued to increase exponentially while the worldwide Jewish population is still recovering from the Holocaust.

The extreme misuse of the word

“genocide” is just one example of the left’s War on Words, which has entered almost all aspects of our society. We’re all familiar with the term “micro-aggression,” the numerous examples of which make me wonder why they aren’t simply called “aggressions,” or “being a racist.” Progressives and ideologically driven academics have attached the word “micro” in order to create the illusion that we’re all constantly committing subtle acts of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Did you know, according to Professor Derald Sue of Columbia University, that when you ask someone about her mother and father, you are engaging in a heteronormative micro-aggression? You monster.

When someone says, “You have nice hair, for a black girl,” we should not label this as a minor manifestation of innate racial bigotry in white people. Rather, we should scorn the individual and recognize that only a minority of whites are so crude.

Unfortunately, the bizarre post-modern obsession with language instead of action has permeated the highest office in our country. With tensions between the West and ISIS reaching all time highs, we’ve seen the Obama administration go to painful lengths to avoid the word “war” when talking about any military engagement against the Islamic extremists. The State Department tells us we’re engaged in “kinetic military action” while the more objective military commanders unequivocally affirm that we are indeed at war. For President Obama, labels

are everything, and most importantly they’re the key to cementing his legacy as the Nobel Peace Prize-winning cool dude who likes to dance on talk shows and attend the weddings of MSNBC hosts.

In other areas, the War on Words comes with the best of intentions. We live in an age where many (but not enough) can live comfortably with their sexual orientation. Gender is no longer defined in the traditional sense, which for many allows a new sense of freedom with a minimal impact on social cohesion. However, some of the new identity categories border on the silly to the insane (a favorite in my research is the label Genderpunk, which describes “a gender experience which is punk in nature or intensity.” I identify as GenderPhilCollins). If you want to identify as a Multi-headed Dragonborn Neutrois, I won’t get the government to stop you. Just don’t get mad when I’m not familiar with the exact label.

The pervasive emotional rhetoric of the left in recent years has caused words, rather than actions, to become the most important tools our society has to combat injustices. But, believe it or not, our economy cannot be willed back to health. Our border cannot be more secure through kinder labeling of illegal aliens. The threat of radical Islam cannot be quelled by avoiding the word “war” while dropping bombs on rural villages in Iraq. The left’s War on Words is unsustainable and unsubstantiated and only serves as a distraction from the pressing issues of the time. Perhaps that is the point.

Let the Law Handle Sexual Assault

Phil Parkes | *Staff Writer*

A Hamilton College “task force” convened over the summer to update the college’s sexual assault policies. On September 5th it presented a draft of its recommended policy updates in a meeting open to students and professors. A federal crackdown on sexual assault policies is putting pressure on school administrations to dodge federal inquiry and appear “tough” on sexual assault. In doing so, they have almost completely left behind the central issue: justice for the victims.

Schools have responded to the federal investigations by enacting policy changes that make it easier for students to report assaults while weakening the position of the accused. Hamilton College has accomplished this by eliminating courtroom-style “hearings” that force the complainant (the alleged victim), the respondent (the alleged perpetrator), and a governing body into confrontations. In its place Hamilton has installed a two-part investigative and deliberative process that separates the complainant from the respondent while

an investigation meets with each party individually. Then a deliberative panel, along with the Dean of Students, separated from the two respective parties, determines whether or not a policy violation has taken place.

According to Meredith Bonham, Title IX director and a member of the task force, these changes were enacted to provide “fair and compassionate” policies to address sexual assault. Indeed, separating students makes reporting sexual assault less intimidating. But at the same time, allowing only representatives of the college to conduct questioning erodes the ability of accused students to defend themselves. This is particularly troubling when the investigation is conducted by an institution under pressure to outdo other colleges in proactively addressing sexual assault.

The new policies are plagued with ambiguities and potential biases, like the “external expert investigators” appointed by the college who will “generally” be lawyers, chosen primarily for their level of “familiarity with Hamilton College culture.” These irregularities make it clear that the in-house administration of sexual assault policy is only “fair” to the extent that it yields outcomes subject to the college’s

interests.

But these issues aside, no college policy will render the outcomes that victims, not to mention perpetrators, of sexual assault deserve. The criminal justice system treats assailants who are proven guilty as the criminals that they are. And while police investigations and court appearances are at times extraordinarily difficult for those who believe they have been assaulted, the college's extralegal "justice" system may be hurting students more than it is helping them.

Support groups and school administrators concerned about the biases and trauma of police investigations should re-evaluate why more of their efforts have not been directed towards ameliorating those effects instead of circumventing the legal process. Given the wide array of student and administration groups on campus, supporting and encouraging complainants in their efforts to find legal redress through the courts is already possible. But providing this support does not make sense at a school completely convinced that its own policies are a fitting substitute.

Hamilton's investigation process is rooted in the idea that administrators are the sole authority over the students. But there are other authorities, some more capable of handling different types of issues. Campus police, for example, are better suited for breaking up parties than are the Kirkland Police, who should be addressing more serious crimes.

Likewise, the administrators should accept the fact that their own policies can only improve the current judicial court system in appearance. By circumventing the legal system, Hamilton contributes to the flaws of criminal investigations as much as it allows students to avoid them. Lost in the mix are victims of sexual crimes who trade the possibility of true and final justice for the mere dismissal of their attackers by a series of policies situated to grant the administration maximum control of outcomes.

Every college must confront sexual assault when it occurs on campus, and the ongoing "national conversation" makes for an ideal proving ground. At Hamilton College, the national conversation has become a springboard for policies that forgo the potential benefits of the judicial system while providing a biased and ambiguous solution in its stead. No school can hope to completely protect potential victims of sexual assault from the trauma of an investigation while simultaneously passing comprehensive and objective judgments, much less judgments that match the severity of the crime. As long as the Hamilton College administration continues to provide its own version of investigations, it will continue to view lending support to those who seek full legal redress impractical. The college's unfounded belief that it can create the perfect justice system has made it unable to empower and encourage those it set out to protect.

Republican Support for Over-the-Counter Birth Control

Taylor Elicegui
Staff Writer

Smiling women sit in a circle, cheering. A politician stands in the center, promising improved access to birth control by making the medicine available over the counter. Everything seems typical in the campaign ad during an election cycle where birth control is a contentious issue. But it isn't. The star of the ad is Congressman Cory Gardner, a Republican candidate in Colorado.

Over-the-counter birth control recently received support from an unlikely source: GOP Senatorial candidates. Along with Gardner, Thom Tillis of North Carolina, Ed Gillespie of Virginia, and Mike McFadden of Minnesota began campaigning on the promise to expand access to birth control by making the medicine available over the counter. The candidates join many health organizations that support over the counter birth control, like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health.

ACOG released a statement in 2012 supporting the measure, explaining that almost 50% of annual pregnancies in the United States are unintended, and that the associated expenses cost taxpayers \$11 billion every year. ACOG argues that making birth control available over the counter would allow more women access and help reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies.

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health expressed similar

sentiments: "Over-the-counter access will greatly reduce the systemic barriers, like poverty, immigration status and language, that currently prevent Latinas from regularly accessing birth control and result in higher rates of unintended pregnancy."

While birth control pills are not side-effect free, ACOG believes women can go through the trial and error process of finding the best fit for them without the guidance of a doctor. With so much at stake, making birth control available over the counter empowers women to protect themselves against unplanned pregnancy.

Planned Parenthood also recognizes the need to expand access to birth control. As Planned Parenthood's Vice President of Health Care Innovation Jill Balderston told Think Progress through email, "So many people struggle to balance work, family, school, and taking care of their health. Whether it's difficulty in getting an appointment, the distance to a health center, or a busy work schedule—Planned Parenthood knows that the more access patients have to a provider, the more they can get the preventive care they need, when they need it."

But instead of applauding the Republicans' support of their goals, Planned Parenthood attacked the candidates as being elitist and out of touch. It recently committed \$900,000 to opposing Gardner and Tillis. Planned Parenthood is meanwhile rolling out its own pilot program that would allow women in Minnesota and Washington have an online consultation with a doctor and receive birth control in the

mail via unmarked packages. Planned Parenthood, Gardner, and Tillis want to address the same problem through different means. Planned Parenthood wants to use technology; the candidates want to empower women to get medicine without a doctor.

By opposing these Republican candidates, Planned Parenthood demonstrates it cares more about party affiliation than ideas. Instead of attacking Cory Gardner and Thom Tillis, Planned Parenthood should applaud them for standing up for women. If we learned anything from the *Hobby Lobby* protestors, birth control is "not my boss's business." It's sad and yet somehow unsurprising that during this time of high partisan polarization, Planned Parenthood puts politics above solutions.

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