

# NATIONAL REVIEW

## Today's Intellectually-Challenged College Protestors

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Last night, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (with the assistance of the student Libertarian and Republican clubs) staged a debate at the University of Pittsburgh on immigration. The question: “Are Trump’s Immigration Policies Harming America?”

I was there to argue in favor of enforcing our immigration laws and the policies being implemented by the president. The other side was ably represented by Alex Nowrasteh of the CATO Institute. Alex and I almost entirely disagree on this issue, but we were able to do something that is unfortunately becoming rare on college campuses: engage in a substantive, professional, and civil debate on a contentious issue — a debate in which we stuck to the issue and avoided personal attacks on each other’s motives or character.

The moderator was Paul Kengor, an intellectual heavyweight who has written numerous books, including *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Communism* and his latest, *A Pope and a President: John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, and the Extraordinary Untold Story of the 20th Century*.

The room at the William Pitt Union building was packed. Of course, as seems inevitable on the modern university campus, we had a handful of protestors intent on disrupting the debate. As they started their protests, Kengor interrupted them to point out the absurdity of what they were doing. This wasn’t a one-sided presentation, he told them; this was a debate in which both sides were being argued and discussed.

What was so bizarre — and evidence that these protestors weren’t really interested in what was being said in the debate — is that they were at their loudest when Alex was speaking. Alex thinks most of Trump’s policies are wrong, which is the side the protestors were apparently taking, and yet they were interrupting the guy arguing for their side.

A number of protestors also stood up after putting cone hats on their heads — the kind of hats six-year-old kids wear at birthday parties — and then attempted to loudly play kazoos. What did they think they were achieving? Did they really think such infantile behavior helped advance their side of the argument and persuaded folks in the audience that they have the correct substantive view on immigration issues?

All the protestors did was annoy the audience, the overwhelming majority of whom were civil and polite and actually listening to the arguments of the debaters. And the audience members — undergraduate students — asked intelligent, germane questions during the question-and-answer period.

If the childish and thoughtless behavior of the protestors, however, was indicative of the type of intellectual rigor and cultural behavior being taught in our classrooms today, this country is indeed in trouble.