



Berkeley Vs. America, Again

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Michelle Malkin

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The troop-bashers in Berkeley are at it once more. But this time, the rest of America lashed back. Message to the Left Coast: It's not the 1960s anymore.

On Jan. 29, the Berkeley city council passed several measures targeting the lone Marine recruitment office in town. The anti-war harridans at Code Pink have been picketing the center for months. Last fall, they defaced the building by slapping a sign that read "assasination" (sic) in the military office window. Instead of rising to defend the recruiters' property rights, the city council and mayor voted to sabotage them further. They granted Code Pink special parking privileges directly in front of the Marines' workplace to facilitate their protests -- and also offered them a free sound permit for six months.

In the home of the free speech movement, the peace and love mob abused the power of government to help drive the Marines out of the city. They proceeded with zoning changes to treat recruiting centers like porn shops. They encouraged residents to continue to impede the recruiters' work. Never mind federal law making it a crime to willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States. If that weren't blood-boiling enough, the Berkeleyites put the troops under further siege by voting to send a letter to the U.S. Marine Corps calling them "uninvited and unwelcome intruders."

Video of the council meeting showed city officials trashing the Marines as "the president's own gangsters" and "trained killers" who are known for "death and destruc-

tion ... and maiming." One of the council members complained that our men and women in uniform were responsible for "horrible karma." Mayor Tom Bates offered to "help" the Marines evacuate.

But, of course, they continue to argue shamelessly that they're not against the troops. Just against President Bush's policies.

Only one council member, Gordon Wozniak, opposed the Code Pink measure -- pointing out that the council was bending the rules, intentionally setting up a confrontation between the group and the recruitment office, and "showing favoritism." He was outnumbered, 8-to-1. Code Pink co-founder Medea Benjamin and her minions gloated over the vote and turned up at the recruitment center to rub salt in the wound: "We are the defenders of democracy, the upholders of the Constitution. If it weren't for people like the people in Berkeley, standing up for what they believe, we'd be living under Hitler."

Her thugs defaced the recruitment center again -- this time with a banner of bloody handprints stretched across the window as recruiters tried to do their jobs.

In another decade, Berkeley would have gotten away with this intolerant, illiberal, un-American power trip. But in the age of the Internet, talk radio and YouTube, word of the siege at Berkeley spread like lightning. And citizens across the country weren't willing to look the other

way. The San Francisco-based Move America Forward, led by talk show host/conservative activist Melanie Morgan, launched an online petition protesting the city council measures. Republican Sen. Jim DeMint of South Carolina moved to strip Berkeley of pork barrel spending worth \$2 million.

The American Legion mobilized as well. National Commander Marty Conatser lambasted the votes: "The American Legion not only strongly condemns this action by the City Council but also believes that a sincere apology is in order to all Marines, past and present. ... What these recruiters do is essential to our national security. Without recruiters we have no military. And I don't think we can count on the flower children from Berkeley to protect this nation when it comes under attack. They have to remember that Marines are not the enemy; the terrorists are."

After feeling the heat, not just from veterans, military families and troop supporters outside of Berkeley but also from their own embarrassed citizens, the council is waving a partial white flag: Two council members will move to rescind the obnoxious letter and Code Pink privileges next week. It seems a little light bulb went off in Councilwoman Betty Olds' head: "I think we shouldn't be seen across the country as hating the Marines."

Too late. The city's "horrible karma" is on full display. Sit back and watch Berkeley be Berkeley? No more.

Michelle Malkin is a syndicated columnist and maintains her weblog at michellemalkin.com. She has also authored books such as [Unhinged](#) and [In Defense of Internment](#).

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