As we have had occasion to observe in the past, one of the unacknowledged and paradoxical side effects of the campaign for diversity is an increasingly severe effort to enforce strict conformity on any contentious issue. We say that this is paradoxical, but in fact it follows clearly from the emotional wellspring of the campaign for diversity, affirmative action, etc., namely the conviction that one is fighting for the imposition of virtue while one's opponents are benighted troglodytes ensnared by brutal self-interest. This has been a familiar scenario from time immemorial, and especially since the French Revolution when, inspired by the hothouse theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, insurrectionists like Robespierre, St. Just, and Gracchus Babeuf huddled under the banner of virtue while pursuing their murderous course.

The arrogance of virtue is not always murderous, but it is always coercive and repellent. American universities have furnished many splendid examples of the genre, but Americans have no monopoly on this sort of politically correct depredation. Consider the recent news, reported last month by The Jerusalem Post, that the British Musicians Union, representing thirty thousand members, has proposed banning Israeli musicians from appearing in Britain and British musicians from appearing in Israel until Israel withdraws from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (Let's see, why is Israel in those locations? Could it have anything to do with the fact that Israel has, from the day after it declared independence in 1948, been repeatedly attacked by Arab League nations, many of which deny its right to exist?)

The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Paris declared that the proposed ban would violate the anti-discrimination provisions of the European Union. No doubt that is true. But one need not appeal to Big Brother in Brussels to oppose this ludicrous plan. Does it have a chance of passing? It is hard to say. Until the end of the 1950s, as The Jerusalem Post reports, the union banned American musicians from performing in Britain, ostensibly because Americans would be taking work from British musicians. (The ban was rescinded only when the American Federation of Musicians countered by prohibiting British artists from performing in the U.S.) Fired this time by misplaced...
righteousness, who knows what the British Musicians Union will do. One cheering sign is that *The Guardian*, a notoriously left-wing, anti-Israeli (and anti-American) paper, described the union as “a left-wing, doctrinaire organization as secretive and tight-lipped as the KGB.” If even *The Guardian* finds the British Musicians Union beyond the pale, there are grounds for hope.