

A new, expanded edition of Rauch's **Kindly Inquisitors**
The Continued Attacks on Free Thought

“**A** liberal society stands on the proposition that we should all take seriously the idea that we might be wrong. This means we must place no one, including ourselves, beyond the reach of criticism; it means that we must allow people to err, even where the error offends and upsets, as it often will.”

So writes author Jonathan Rauch in *Kindly Inquisitors: The New Attacks on Free Thought*, which has challenged readers for two decades with its provocative exploration of the issues surrounding attempts to limit free speech. In a joint publication with the University of Chicago Press, the Cato Institute has released a new expanded ebook edition for the 20th anniversary of this modern classic.

Now a senior fellow in governance studies at the Brookings Institution, Rauch makes a persuasive argument throughout his book for the value of “liberal science,” based on the notion that conflicting views produce knowledge within society.

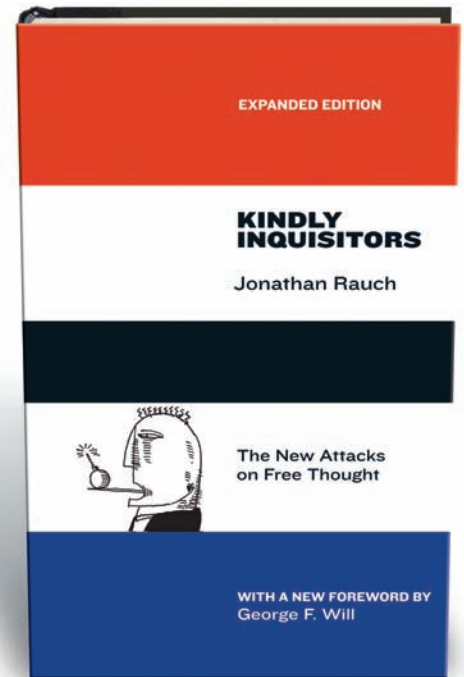
While some progress has been made in the two decades since the book’s initial publication, Rauch contends that free thought has nevertheless continued to be the object of a powerful ideological attack. The regulation of hate speech, for instance, has grown domestically—especially in American universities—and has spread even more internationally, where there is no First Amendment to serve as a meaningful check.

The problem with attempting to confine offensive thoughts, of course, is that some authority must first define what is offensive. “Does anyone seriously believe that today’s university anti-discrimination committees would treat offended left-wingers and offended right-wingers the same way?” Rauch asks. “Or that they would treat offended creationists and offended racial minorities the same way?”

The fundamental problem with censorship, in other words, is that the censors end up acting on behalf of the politically connected. “People who like authoritarianism always picture themselves running the show,” he continues. “But no one stays on top for long.” The answer to bias and prejudice, therefore, is pluralism—not purism.

Rather than attempting to legislate bias and prejudice out of existence or to drive them underground, we must pit them against one another to foster a more vigorous and fruitful discussion. It is this process that has been responsible for the growing acceptance of the moral acceptability of homosexuality in recent years. And it is this process, Rauch continues, that will enable us as a society to replace hate with knowledge, both ethical and empirical.

In this expanded edition of his work, Rauch elaborates upon his original argument, bringing that analysis fully up-to-date with contemporary examples. A new foreword by George F. Will offers a striking look at the book’s continued relevance



today. “Armed with it, readers can slice through the pernicious ideas that are producing the still-thickening thicket of rules, codes, and regulations restricting freedom of thought and expression.”

Unfortunately, the timeliness of Rauch’s arguments in *Kindly Inquisitors* is a testament to how far we still have to go to regain the core component of our First Amendment rights. “It is a melancholy fact that this elegant book, which is slender and sharp as a stiletto, is needed, now even more than two decades ago,” Will concludes. ■

Visit Amazon to get an ebook version of *Kindly Inquisitors* today; \$9.99.

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