

# Leftists are in firm control at The New York Times: Goodwin

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7-9 minutes

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In a [lecture at Hillsdale College](#) last year about the erosion of standards at The New York Times, I borrowed a memorable exchange from Ernest Hemingway's novel "The Sun Also Rises."

"How did you go bankrupt?" Bill asks. "Two ways," Mike responds. "Gradually and then suddenly."

For the Times, "suddenly" has arrived. Its standards are now bankrupt.

The [revolt of the paper's newsroom](#) over the publication of Sen. Tom Cotton's op-ed and the [craven surrender of management](#) marks the end of any semblance of basic fairness. The gradual metamorphosis of the Times from a great newspaper into a leftist propaganda sheet is complete.

Stick a fork in the Gray Lady.

Her obituary is a sad day and not just for journalism. Because the Times is a singularly powerful institution in terms of shaping public opinion, its cult of conformity is a dark day for America.

Last week's developments amounted to a hostile takeover of the

paper, as a friend put it. It's an apt description because the 800 staff members who objected to the [publication of Cotton's support for using the military](#) to quell the riots declared their hostility to the fundamental traditions of journalism.

Previous op-ed pieces from American adversaries — including [Vladimir Putin](#) and [the Taliban](#) — brought no such staff complaints. Nor did one from Turkey's strongman, [Recep Tayyip Erdogan](#), the world leader in locking up journalists. But Tom Cotton, an American senator, was beyond the pale.

For a day, the [climactic battle over his piece](#) was touch and go, but then the defenders of traditional standards raised the white flag.

Actually, they did something far worse. They switched sides and attacked the cause they had defended hours earlier.

Publisher Arthur G. Sulzberger said in a statement Thursday that "I believe in the principle of openness to a range of opinions, even those we may disagree with, and this piece was published in that spirit."

By Friday's group gripe session, he was calling the same article "contemptuous" and said it "[should not have been published](#)."

In between, the paper gave him cover to flip-flop by saying the process leading to publication did not meet the paper's "standards."

Enlarge Image

Arthur G. Sulzberger

Arthur G. SulzbergerThe New York Times via Reuters

That's an Orwellian choice of words because the only standards at the Times are double standards. Even on the op-ed page, supporting President Trump is forbidden and that's the standard Cotton violated.

Events began when Trump said he would [send in the military](#) if mayors and governors didn't protect their citizens from violent rampages connected to the George Floyd protests. Other presidents have deployed troops in similar situations and Cotton thought it was a good idea this time.

The paper's op-ed staff contacted his office with an invitation to explain why in the pages of the Times.

That offer kept faith with the original intent of the Sulzberger family when it created the modern op-ed page 50 years ago. The point was to present ideas that didn't conform to the paper's own positions.

Cotton, an Arkansas Republican, was perfect for the job because of his credibility on military matters. The Harvard Law School grad was a decorated infantry leader in Iraq and Afghanistan and serves on the Senate's Armed Services Committee.

Perhaps the oddest part of the debacle is that the man ultimately responsible had no direct role in the Cotton piece. But Executive Editor Dean Baquet's fingerprints are all over the revolt.

Baquet runs the newsroom, which is distinct from the editorial and op-ed pages. Or at least it was until the 2016 presidential campaign.

That's when Baquet, after Trump secured the GOP nomination, opened the floodgates by letting reporters voice their opinions in supposedly straight-news stories.

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Dean Baquet

Dean BaquetAlamy Stock Photo

Surprise, surprise, the result was a daily drumbeat declaring Trump unfit to be president, starting on Page One. That would have been shameful enough, but the Times also led the charge in spreading the Russia collusion story, which turned out to be false.

Although the paper did a mea culpa after the 2016 election by admitting its coverage failed to see the possibility of Trump's victory, it never conceded that its collusion coverage was deeply flawed and misleading.

The core problem was Baquet's decision to allow reporters to corrupt news articles with their personal bias. Without the check that fairness and restraint impose, the coverage reflected more leftist talking points than real reporting.

The opinion-dominated paper violates the standards that originated when Adolph Ochs bought control of the Times in 1896.

Ochs vowed his newspaper would be "clean, dignified, trustworthy and impartial." He also added the famous motto "All the news that's fit to print."

Nearly 125 years later, Baquet and Sulzberger have fully

severed the Times from those roots.

It is noteworthy that Baquet's reporters, and not opinion writers, led the attacks on Cotton. Accustomed to having their views rule the news pages, newsroom staffers have been itching to control the opinion pages as well.

Now they do. Their determination to silence opposing ideas resembles the heckler's veto that students have been granted on many college campuses. When the rare conservative is invited to speak, the result is more often a riot than a debate.

So the virus of intolerance has conquered The New York Times. It is a safe space, where no inconvenient facts and ideas will be heard.

But if Sulzberger thinks he has appeased his in-house mob, he will soon learn there is no limit to progressives' lust for power. Whatever you give them, it's never enough.

Now that he's shown he can be rolled, pressure will grow on the young publisher to silence anyone at the paper who doesn't endorse the notion that America is and always was a gigantic system of oppression, with white men holding everyone else down.

The view that America is racist to its core was part of the complaint against Cotton — that his support for troops puts black people at risk, including Times reporters. The outrageous claim proves the staff is anti-military as well as anti-police.

Not incidentally, the idea that America was born out of racism and slavery is the centerpiece of the paper's misbegotten 1619

Project. It has been roundly denounced by eminent historians, black and white, for presenting a simplistic and error-ridden version of the nation's founding.

But the Times is no longer restricted by facts and reality. Its oppression narrative guides front-to-back coverage on everything, from politics to business to sports to entertainment.

As such, the [1619 Project](#) and the revolt against Cotton are two aspects of the same obsession. Both reveal that the paper's virulent anti-Trumpism isn't just about him. More broadly, his America First agenda offends their elitist and globalist sensibilities.

Of course, it's true that nearly everybody at the Times actually hates Trump. But it's also clear that nearly everybody at the Times has contempt for most Americans, too.

From now on, nothing published in the Times will challenge their bias.