



The

Phyllis Schlafly Report

VOL. 28, NO. 8

Box 618, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002

MARCH 1995

How the Liberals Are Rewriting History

Don't assume that we can all forget about the controversial National Standards for United States History just because the U.S. Senate voted 99 to 1 to repudiate them. Don't think that those outrageous Standards have been cancelled just because Lynne Cheney, the Bush appointee who authorized the \$2 million taxpayers' grant, has been on television expressing indignation at how bad they are.

Thousands of copies of this 271-page attempt to brainwash students with leftwing revisionism have been flooding into schools across the country. Furthermore, its perpetrators are doing what all government handout recipients do when their mischief is exposed — engage in grassroots lobbying to keep the taxpayer funds flowing.

The National History Standards Project at UCLA (which authored this travesty) has just mailed out thousands of copies of a 13-page packet designed to motivate teachers to write their Congressmen requesting enforcement of these leftwing revisionist standards. The packet contains the names and addresses of key Senators and Congressmen, plus a long list of sample paragraphs to include in your letters (to discourage you from doing your own investigation).

The most revealing part of this lobby packet is the boast that "these standards have the support of all of the leading history and social studies professional organizations," including the National Education Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the American Historical Association, and the World History Association.

Assuming this is true, it proves that academic organizations are now dominated by leftwing radicals who are determined to drop the DWEMs (Dead White European Males) down an Orwellian Memory Hole and to replace history with "Oppression Studies," featuring third-rate feminist and minority writers who attack Western Civilization as sexist, racist, and oppressive.

Unfortunately, there are also some ex-Bush Admin-

istration officials who think that these History Standards need only a cosmetic face-lift. A little editing cannot possibly cure their fundamental defects. The whole idea of the Federal Government writing or financing public school curricula is an elitist, totalitarian notion that should be unacceptable in America.

The attacks on Western civilization so permeate these National History Standards that even American Federation of Teachers chairman Al Shanker said this is the first time a government has tried to teach children to "feel negative about their own country." The multi-cultural distortions of these National History Standards are so gross that even the *New York Times* complained that they teach students to admire Aztec architecture but do not mention the uncivilized Aztec practice of human sacrifice.

The adoption of national standards in major school subjects by all public school districts was mandated by the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, signed by President Clinton last year. The adoption of standards is called "voluntary," but the receipt of federal money appropriated in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is tied to the acceptance of the "voluntary" standards. So much for being voluntary!

Most state departments of education are well on their way toward writing the national standards into state law, into state mandates on local school districts, and into school curriculum. Local school districts will find it so easy to adopt the packaged thinking in the national standards rather than go to the trouble and expense of writing their own.

Beginning in 1993, many states signed contracts and paid big bucks to a private group called the New Standards Project (NSP) to write the state standards, which is why the various "state standards" look as if they were cut from the same cloth. NSP advertised that its state standards would be benchmarked to the national standards.

We have so much to be proud of about America.

Whether our young people will learn about our glorious history will depend on whether schools will teach them to read the history that really happened or to study the liberal brainwashing produced by leftwing academics with our tax dollars.

What Happened to American History?

Many of us remember American History as our favorite subject in school. It was so full of grandeur, heroism and achievement. It inspired and encouraged. It portrayed adventure, drama and romance. As the decades rolled along in our textbooks, we rejoiced in the exciting story of man overcoming all odds to build a better life — whether it was the Pilgrims huddled in a fragile sailboat as they dared to cross the cold Atlantic, or George Washington and his men in the bitter cold at Valley Forge, or the gutsy pioneers who braved the wilds of the Western frontier, or the modern heroes who brought us victory in World War II.

Some three decades ago, American History was subsumed into a new school subject called Social Studies. Probably most of the facts were still there, but American History lost its unique identity. Somehow, it seemed as though the heroes were fading away.

Meanwhile, the well-documented decline in academic achievement became general knowledge. SAT scores were down, illiteracy was up. American performance in international competitions was down, social problems in public schools were up. Conferences and seminars were held to determine the reasons for the disarray in schools, and spokesmen with impressive degrees presented a variety of solutions. One of these solutions was a demand for “national standards.” It was said that schools need to be told what students should know by the time they finish grade school and high school. It was asserted that national standards would give us a benchmark by which we could judge what schools were teaching and what students were learning.

It all sounded so reasonable. Of course, we need standards! It is elementary that all schoolchildren should be taught the historical facts about how America became a nation and grew to our present size and greatness. It should be so simple to give schools an outline of the basic facts of American History, with guidelines describing what should be taught at various elementary and secondary school levels.

The next step, of course, was to get the Federal Government to finance this worthy idea. And so it came to pass that a federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), gave \$2 million of the taxpayers’ money to a UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles) history project to produce a definitive set of standards setting forth how American History should be taught to all students in grades 5 through 12. This taxpayers’ grant was supplemented by another grant, almost as large, from the U.S. Department

of Education.

The result was a 271-page book called *National Standards for United States History*. It provides conclusive proof that the Federal Government should **never** write, or pay for the writing, of school curricula. The book is so bad that the U.S. Senate denounced it in a resolution by a vote of 99 to 1, and the one “no” vote was from a Senator who wanted a stronger resolution.

What Is History?

The dictionary defines history as the record of past events. *National Standards*, however, is not a narrative of past events, but is leftwing revisionism. The book is a prime example of Political Correctness (P.C.), the first tenet of which is to view everything through the prism of race and gender.

Accordingly, almost every event in American history is described as though it had race or gender motives and effects. Almost every page is calculated to teach girls and minorities that they have always been oppressed classes in America. It is a grievous disservice to American schoolchildren, as well as historically false, to view the entire panorama of American history as one long conflict about race and gender, in which all ethnic groups except white males are portrayed as victims.

The P.C. hostility to Western/Christian civilization is established right off the bat when children are taught that calendar time does not have to be identified as BC (as in Before Christ) or AD (as in Anno Domini), but rather as BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era). Completely ignoring the historical fact of the dominance of the Christian religion in America and its moral values and traditions, the student is taught an anonymous quotation from an 18th century New Yorker asserting that “The only principle of life propagated among the young people is to get money.”

National Standards begins its recitation with what America was like 30,000 years ago. Of course, nobody knows much of anything about our continent in that long-ago period, but this is included in order to drive home the point that pre-1492 events make us a multicultural nation. *Standards* includes instruction on many multicultural items that have had little or no importance in American History, such as the influence of Islam in West Africa. *Standards* instructs 7th and 8th grade students to analyze “the achievements and grandeur of Mansa Musa’s court [a 14th century West African king], and the social customs and wealth of the kingdom of Mali.” These assignments are called examples of student achievement.

Instead of learning history as it happened, *Standards* proudly proclaims that students will be “doing history.” That means developing fictional conversations among historical figures, role-playing fictional situations, creating fictional diaries, and engaging in revisionism on such matters as the life of Christopher Columbus.

Leftwing bias shows itself in the skewed selection of historical figures. Some of the most influential men in our history are ignored or given scant mention, while dozens of persons are singled out for study who have had little or no effect on American history, chosen obviously because of their race or gender.

Omitted from *National Standards*, for example, are Paul Revere, Thomas Edison, the Wright brothers, General Robert E. Lee, Albert Einstein, and Jonas Salk. On the other hand, Senator Joseph McCarthy receives 19 mentions (unfavorable, of course), Harriet Tubman gets six mentions, and students are told to study the influence of MTV, Madonna, Murphy Brown, and Roseanne. *Standards* also refers students to several Communists without identifying their un-American affiliation.

National Standards includes all sorts of exercises for the students to study and to construct biographical sketches about obscure figures chosen for their race, gender or ethnicity. George Washington's place in history is covered by telling the student to construct a fictional dialogue between Washington and an Indian leader at the end of the Revolution. Nothing is suggested to be taught about his extraordinary leadership and personal character, military prowess, presidency of the Constitutional Convention, or service as our nation's first executive.

Students are instructed to "read selections from the writings of major leaders" such as John Dewey, Margaret Sanger, and many obscure individuals of no influence or importance. No such instruction is given about George Washington.

Feminist and Liberal Brainwashing

Advocacy of the radical feminist ideology based on victimology runs throughout *National Standards*. The 1848 feminist Declaration at Seneca Falls is mentioned six times, making it more important than the U.S. Constitution or the Gettysburg Address, and at least on a par with our Declaration of Independence (which, incidentally, is equated with Zapata's "Plan de Ayala").

Students are instructed to study the National Organization for Women, and to read *Ms.* magazine plus feminist books by Betty Friedan and radical feminist ideologues. *National Standards* renders the opinion that feminism is "compelling in its analysis of women's problems and the solutions offered." No suggestion is made as to why feminism does not appeal to the majority of American women.

Examples of leftwing bias abound. *National Standards* tells students to analyze why Truman vetoed the Taft-Hartley Act, but makes no reference to why Congress passed that law over his veto. *Standards* calls on students to evaluate the accomplishments of John F. Kennedy's New Frontier and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, but they are not told to assess those programs'

costs and failures.

Value judgments are imposed on the student throughout *National Standards*. For example, students are instructed to conduct a "trial" of John D. Rockefeller on the charge that he "knowingly and willfully participated in unethical and amoral business practices."

Distorted versions of history appear on almost every page. Coverage of World War II relegates the Pacific theater to minor importance. *National Standards* dwells repeatedly on the internment of the Japanese Americans and provides exercises to get students to relive those unhappy experiences, but there is no reference to the cruelty of the Japanese, such as at the Bataan Death March.

National Standards tells students to describe how the SALT I and SALT II Treaties were advantageous to the United States. The book, however, does not mention the treaties' disadvantages, or that SALT I was repeatedly broken by the Soviets, or that the U.S. Senate refused to ratify SALT II.

National Standards makes it imperative that 5th and 6th graders define and understand the key terms associated with Watergate, such as "plumbers," "enemies list," and "CREEP." No such importance is laid on understanding the influence of great American inventors such as Thomas Edison, Eli Whitney, Robert Fulton, and how their inventions contributed mightily to American progress and achievement. When it comes to the history of Congressional leaders, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster are ignored, but former House Speaker Tip O'Neill rates a quote because he called Ronald Reagan "a cheerleader for selfishness."

National Standards instructs the students to survey their classmates to discover who their heroes/heroines are. That may be an interesting assignment, but it's not the study of history, it's the probing of personal attitudes. It is especially out of place in a book that has omitted so many real American heroes.

National Standards Are a Bad Idea

National standards are a bad idea even if they are promoted by former members of the Bush Administration. To centralize decision-making at the federal level means that we allow a select elite, with their own biases and agenda, to decide what lessons must be known by American citizens. The National History Standards are symptomatic of the elitist thinking that only those in the seat of power know what is best for all the people. National standards for our nation's schools are unacceptable even if written by the so-called "good people" or "experts."

Another problem is that the word "standards," as used by the education bureaucrats, no longer means standards of objective knowledge, facts and basic skills. As the advocates of the standards movement use the word, it means "performance standards," that is, how

the student feels, responds, believes and behaves. Thus, the assessments (tests) given to the students are for the purpose of ascertaining his attitudes, feelings, and adaptability to being remediated by the school, rather than the objective knowledge he has learned.

The anti-Western Culture and anti-Christian bias and the P.C.-ness of the National Standards movement are now infecting all the assessments (tests) that are supposedly being developed at the state level. Here is just one of numerous examples of how tests have been corrupted to test attitudes rather than knowledge. The National Standards for English include as a recommended activity the assignment to read the story "Sometimes I Don't Love My Mother." The student is told to express his feelings as he reads the story and tell about similar experiences in his own life.

The Davenport, Iowa Performance Assessment in Math includes a question that purports to require the student to calculate how a farmer can increase his profit from growing corn. In fact, the "scoring rubric" proves that the student cannot get the highest grade if he suggests that herbicides or insecticides can increase the yield of corn. That is P.C. environmentalist indoctrination masquerading as math.

Students at every level need to be inoculated against Political Correctness (P.C.), which is the prevailing environment in the academic world — in faculty bias, course content, professional societies, visiting speakers, and organizations and events on campus. Deviators from the P.C. party line are punished academically, socially and financially.

Here is check list of the principal tenets of Political Correctness: (1) Everything is political. All academic subjects must be seen through the prism of race and gender oppression. (2) Victimology. Every group is entitled to claim minority status as victims except, of course, white males and Christians. (3) Multiculturalism, which is a code word for the false notion that Western Civilization is bad and every other group, whether civilized or not, is superior. (4) Radical feminism. The entire world must be seen as one big conspiracy against women, and all men are guilty individually and as a group. Joking about this doctrine is not permitted. (5) Affirmative action. Reverse discrimination in admissions, grading, and employment for groups that proclaim their status as "victims" is not only mandatory, it is non-debatable. (6) Diversity. Having sex with anybody, anytime, is OK and may not be criticized. The social acceptance of homosexual behavior and activism is non-debatable. (7) Tolerance. That's a code word meaning tolerance for P.C. views, but not for the Politically Incorrect.

The Challenge to Americans

We must return to the teaching of American History as it really happened, not as some trendy revisionists

wish it had happened. To survive as a free nation, we must know the lessons of the past so we can apply them to the challenges of the present.

The challenge to parents who care about the education of their children is profound. If they fail to stop the brainwashing and revisionism that is going on today in the name of "standards," they will have lost control of their schools — and of their children.

The leftwing revisionism in the textbooks and the corruption of course content in schools and colleges are so pervasive that current and future students will not be able to avoid this type of indoctrination. The P.C. disease runs throughout the bloodstream of the educational system, and abolishing the discredited *National Standards for United States History* will not cure it.

The only real solution is for all young people to become good readers so they can go to the library and read the true history of American heroes and greatness. But here again, we face a tragic roadblock! National surveys show that nearly half of American adults are either illiterate or only semi-literate, which means their vocabulary is so small that they cannot read big words or big books. Other surveys show that the majority of schoolchildren read two years below their grade level, and that's *after* schooling has been dumbed down two years below school requirements of 50 years ago.

American families are going to have to teach their children to read at home (rather than relying on the schools) if they want their children to be able to read history. Fortunately, there is now a tool to enable parents to do this — *First Reader* by Phyllis Schlafly (First Reader System, P.O. Box 495, Alton, Illinois 62002, 1-800-700-5228). Once your children learn how to read by the proper phonics method, they will be able to read the great history of America, and the biographies of the great men who built America. Then, they won't be deceived and misled by the leftwing brainwashing.

Phyllis Schlafly, the author of *First Reader*, has her B.A. from Washington University, her M.A. from Harvard University, her J.D. from Washington University Law School, and an honorary LL.D. from Niagara University. Mrs. Schlafly taught her six children to read before they entered school, and all had outstanding academic careers. Her best-selling book, *Child Abuse in the Classroom*, was called "required reading for every parent" by Hoover Institution scholar Thomas Sowell. Her nationally syndicated daily radio commentaries and Saturday call-in radio programs are devoted primarily to education topics.

The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002

ISSN0556-0152

Published monthly by the Eagle Trust Fund, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002. Second Class Postage Paid at Alton, Illinois. Postmaster: Address Corrections should be sent to the Phyllis Schlafly Report, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002.

Subscription Price: \$20 per year. Extra copies available: 50¢ each; 3 copies \$1; 30 copies \$5; 100 copies \$10.