



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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Who Are the Real Censors?

"Censorship" has been a trendy media subject ever since People for the American Way (PAW), colloquially known as People for Norman Lear's Way, started issuing annual press releases on the subject about eight years ago.

The word "censorship" is completely misused by PAW. As the dictionary confirms, "censorship" is an act by a government or someone acting in an official capacity. What PAW continually complains about is not governmental actions but parents, taxpayers and citizens speaking out against something of which they disapprove. Surely they should enjoy a First Amendment right to do that.

The misused and overused word "censorship" reaches its height of silliness when it comes to the question of the selection of books for the public schools. Out of the millions of books available, only a tiny handful can possibly be used in the classroom. When a few score of books are chosen for classroom use, does that mean that the rejected millions are "censored"? The word loses all meaning in that perspective.

We can probably all agree that *Playboy* and *Hustler* should be prohibited for use in the public school classroom. Once we make that admission, it is clear that we are not wrestling with weighty issues of "First Amendment" or "academic freedom," but merely with matters of judgment as to what is wise and appropriate to give to other people's minor children, and at what age.

When parents attempt to protect their children from school materials offensive to their religion or values, PAW labels this "censorship," and asserts the right of the public school to force on children "a broad spectrum of ideas that may challenge comfortable assumptions or inherited wisdom."

But who gave the curriculum dictators the authority to select books that "challenge" the children's religion, values, or parents? How did such books get into the public schools in the first place? Don't the rest of us have any First Amendment rights NOT to be forced to read materials we find offensive?

The notion that school personnel have some kind of "right" or "academic freedom" to force reading or visual materials on an involuntary captive audience of other people's minor children, in contravention of parental wishes, was invented by liberal anti-parent pressure groups such as PAW, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the National Education Association (NEA).

According to People for the American Way's 1989 press

release called *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn*, parents and taxpayers are winning nearly half their local curriculum battles. That is good news, but PAW reports it as bad news. "The censors," PAW says, "were successful in banning educational materials or restricting their use in nearly half of the challenges to instruction." The "censors," of course, are those exercising their First Amendment right of free speech and their parental rights to protect the faith and morals of their children.

PAW's report consists of a state-by-state survey on parental challenges to classroom instruction materials. According to the PAW survey, the subject area that drew the largest number of complaints during the previous year was witchcraft, satanism and the occult. Here is a sampling of these complaints by parents as reported in the PAW booklet called *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn*.

In Colorado, parents objected to a curriculum containing "elements of hypnosis and self-hypnosis and new-age kinds of things." In Florida, parents objected to *Devils and Demons* because it "might lead children to a life of devil worship."

In two districts in Georgia, parents objected to the excessive number of books in school libraries dealing with the occult and satanism. In Iowa, parents objected to middle-school children being given *Unnatural Talent* because it promotes satanism.

In one Illinois district, parents objected to the classroom use of *The Charming* because its stories of "demonic power and possession" are unsuitable for sixth graders. Other Illinois parents objected to giving seventh graders the guide for the London Dungeon, a museum depicting torture practices.

In one Kansas district, parents objected to *The Headless Cupid* for "teaching witchcraft." In another Kansas district, parents objected to using *The Witch Grows Up* with elementary school pupils because it makes "witchcraft look like a viable lifestyle."

In Maine, parents filed a complaint against *Stars, Spells, Secrets, and Sorcery* because it features "step-by-step instructions to set up an occult group." In New Hampshire, parents objected to the use of "Dungeons and Dragons" in a junior high school course because it promotes satanism.

In New Jersey, parents complained about *Devils and Demons* because its discussions of witchcraft and satanism are inappropriate for elementary school students. Elsewhere in

New Jersey, parents objected to *Halloween ABC* because it contains "an offensive, evil, satanic theme which is inappropriate for younger children."

In Nevada, parents objected to second graders being given relaxation tapes that taught New Age and Far Eastern religions and which introduced them to a "white rabbit who is their friend and has the potential to invite a demon into their lives." In Ohio, parents of middle school children objected to *Curses, Hexes and Spells* and *Servants of the Devil* for containing "satanic material."

In Oregon, parents objected to *The Restless Dead* for being "demonic" and "totally preoccupied with the occult." In another Oregon district, parents objected to *The Magic Grandfather* because of its preoccupation with magic and witches. In a third district, Oregon parents complained about *The Devil's Piper* because it encourages young minds to "pursue the occult," and to *The Prince in Waiting* because it promotes "positive attitudes toward the occult and ridicule toward Christianity."

In Texas, community members objected to the *Invitation to Psychology* text because it "very blatantly teaches transcendental meditation" and promotes "Eastern religion." In Washington, community members objected to DUSO and other programs because they may indoctrinate children in "New Age spiritualism," "Eastern religion," and occultism. In Wisconsin, parents objected to the film *Children of the Corn* because it promotes "the occult and rebellion by children."

Those who object to this type of classroom abuse apparently must endure being called "censors" by PAW. But parents should consider that label a badge of honor; it shows their concern to protect their children from being scared in the classroom.

Who Selects Public School Books?

People for the American Way's 1988 report on alleged "censorship" in U.S. public schools set forth a long series of complaints made by parents about school curricula and classroom materials. Few people realize how really offensive are the materials involved in these incidents of alleged "censorship."

Here are some specific parents' complaints about textbooks and library books, as quoted in PAW's 1988 booklet on "censorship." Each individual phrase below is from a different incident and is a direct quotation from the PAW booklet. For convenience, these quotations are bunched in paragraphs according to subject.

One large category of parents' complaints involved the language used in the school books: "objectionable language . . . foul language . . . profanity and unsuitable language . . . every swear word there is . . . filth and smut . . . offensive language . . . littered with dirty words . . . full of obscenities . . . repulsive language . . . vulgar language . . . dirty, filthy language . . . obscene, trashy gutter language that would gag a maggot."

Another category involved incest: "a 14-year-old girl's experience of incest . . . passages on incest."

Many parents complained about "graphic sexual scenes . . . sexually oriented language and content . . . explicit sexual references . . . overly explicit . . . encouraging promiscuity . . . promote extramarital sex and casual sex . . . rape, prostitution and drugs."

Here is another group of textbook complaints made by parents in various states: "promoting the occult and the worship of Satan . . . witchcraft and the occult . . . demonic . . . mocking God . . . preoccupation with occult practices, violence and aberrant behavior . . . books on the occult . . . teaching magic and witchcraft . . . overtones of witchcraft, mysticism, and fantasy . . . the religion of the occult . . . advocating satanism, the occult, and witchcraft . . . teaching magic and witchcraft."

Parents objected to school books that promote off-beat behavior: "teach children how to feel comfortable with pornography and feelings of incest . . . promoting prostitution, promiscuity, homosexuality and bestiality . . . replete with scenes of intrusion, oppression, cannibalism, abduction, transformation, incantations, deceptions, threats."

Another category of parental complaints involved teaching religion in the classroom: "Hinduism, mind control, and brainwashing . . . yoga exercises . . . mind control techniques . . . promoting Far Eastern religion . . . discussing Eastern religions."

Some complaints involved attacks on religion: "teaching values and morals contradictory to Judeo-Christian traditions . . . implying that God is not sovereign . . . secular humanism . . . situation ethics . . . teaching religion and invading students' privacy."

Some parents complained about anti-parent textbooks: "discussions that questioned parental authority . . . anti-family . . . ideas that conflict with family values . . . persistent themes of rebellion against parents and authority figures . . . a negative value system."

Other parents objected to school books that indoctrinated children with concepts of "globalism (one-world government) . . . world peace through nuclear disarmament . . . lack of an American perspective."

Many parents complained that materials were simply inappropriate for school instruction at particular ages: "negative and frightening illustrations . . . too scary for first-graders . . . depressing . . . sarcasm and humor not comprehensible by children . . . filth and garbage . . . violent acts by children."

Every phrase above was a specific complaint about an actual book in use in public schools in 1988, according to the PAW report. The attempt by parents to protect their children from such material is labelled "censorship" by PAW.

Look Who's Censoring Books

John Buchanan, chairman of People for the American Way, appeared before the Alabama State Textbook Committee in January 1990 to urge censoring a 1989 supplementary science book called *Of Pandas and People* by Percival Davis, Dean Kenyon and Charles B. Thaxton.

What made this event so amusing is that PAW, which was founded by Norman Lear, has been carrying on a flamboyant national advertising campaign, with TV ads and direct-mail solicitations, opposing what it calls the "censorship" of books used in public schools or libraries. But when it came to the matter of this supplementary book for 10th grade Alabama public school students, PAW came down hard on the side of banning it from science classrooms.

Of Pandas and People was offered by Houghton Publishing

Company of Dallas for inclusion on the list of state-approved books which may be bought by public schools with state education funds. It was not suggested that the book be required or that it be adopted as the sole or even the primary science textbook.

Thousands of parents had complained to the State Board of Education that all the science textbooks currently used in Alabama public schools exclusively teach evolution as the only acceptable theory of life's origins. *Of Pandas and People* was written to conform to the guidelines in the U.S. Supreme Court's most recent decision about origins, *Edwards v. Aguillard*, as well as the Alabama State Board of Education policy that teachers may present "various scientific theories about the origins of life."

At this hearing, Buchanan called *Pandas* a "creationist tract" and said it "would breach the walls of church-state separation and use the public schools as branch offices of their churches." He did not explain how the book could do this, since *Pandas* does not mention God, church, creation, or the supernatural.

Pandas identifies evolution as a theory and analyzes scientific information said to support both the evolution theory and an alternate theory for the origin of life, which *Pandas* calls "intelligent design." This is the theory that organisms started with "a blueprint, a plan, a pattern, devised by an intelligent agent."

The book does not purport to give final answers to the question of biological origins, but is intended to be a balanced and intellectually honest treatment. Using a method of inquiry widely used in the sciences, the book presents students with fact as fact (such as the fossil record), theory as theory, and stimulates them to draw their own conclusions.

It was just this type of non-religious, non-dogmatic approach which the U.S. Supreme Court called for in *Edwards v. Aguillard*. The publisher of *Pandas* presented an impressive list of testimonials from scientists from a wide variety of universities, including Brandeis, Oxford, Princeton, Yale, Texas A&M, and the University of Texas.

Before the Textbook Committee voted, the publisher's attorney withdrew the book from consideration so that no action was taken on the book. The attorney, Francis H. Hare Jr., cited two reasons for his action. First, State Superintendent of Education Wayne Teague made several highly prejudicial and hostile remarks to the Committee, 73 percent of whose members were his own appointees. Teague called *Pandas* "another effort to circumvent some Supreme Court rulings that bar religion from public school classrooms."

The second reason cited by Hare was that the Textbook Committee adopted an unfair procedure for the hearing which did not comply with the Alabama Administrative Procedures Act and which denied the publisher due process and the opportunity to respond to its accusers. One member of the Textbook Committee, Norris Anderson of Birmingham, resigned because of what he called the "unfair way" in which the public hearing was conducted. Anderson, who has been a high school teacher and textbook writer, argued that *Pandas* would let schoolchildren think for themselves.

We will be watching People for the American Way's next annual report on censorship to see if *Of Pandas and People* is listed as one of the books censored during 1990.

Censoring Out Western Culture

The educators have come up with all kinds of excuses to explain why some minorities are falling behind in the essential skills and knowledge which we expect them to acquire during their years in public schools. The public is no longer willing to accept the explanation that the taxpayers have been stingy with money, since we are now spending about \$5,000 per pupil per year and getting a dismal product.

Some New York liberals have come up with a new theory to explain the high rate of dropouts and the high rate of illiteracy even among those who don't drop out. This theory is that minority pupils can't learn because of their low self-esteem, which in turn is allegedly caused because our educational system is "Eurocentric," that is, it accords preeminence to Western civilization.

In the spring of 1990, New York State Education Commissioner Leonard Sobol's Task Force on Minorities: Equity and Excellence, produced a 120-page report called *A Curriculum of Inclusion*. It proposes sweeping changes in textbooks and other educational materials to eliminate "European American monoculture" (that's one of the report's favorite words), and instead to impose "multiculturalism" on the entire curriculum in order to "adequately reflect the pluralistic nature of our society." The New York Board of Regents has not announced final action, but the curriculum is apparently behind the scenes moving ahead on schedule.

The task force's report charges that the current curriculum is "contributing to the miseducation of all young people through a systematic bias toward European culture and its derivatives." The report charges that the current curriculum is imbued with "white nationalism" and "deeply rooted racist traditions in American culture."

In order to eliminate these allegedly "racist traditions," the task force report makes three proposals. A new Special Assistant for Cultural Equity would enforce compliance with "multiculturalism" in the public schools, all the textbooks and curricula would be "infused" with "multicultural diversity," and all teachers would have to be certified as having proficiency in multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is the trendy new word to describe the proclaimed goal of this new type of gestapo-enforced thought control. It means rewriting history to eliminate, distort or deemphasize Western culture and the achievements of white Europeans and Americans, while filling up the curriculum with information or fictional representations about non-Euro-Americans.

The report's first sentence sets the tone of the report: "African Americans, Asian Americans, Puerto Ricans/Latinos, and Native Americans have all been the victims of an intellectual and educational oppression that has characterized the culture and institutions of the United States and the European American world for centuries."

The report minces no words in attacking our American institutions. Calling our U. S. Constitution "a seriously flawed document," the report says, "There is something vulgar and revolting in glorifying in [sic] a process that heaped undeserved rewards on a segment of the population while oppressing the majority."

These radicals even want to drop Christopher Columbus down the Memory Hole because "the erroneous and racist

attribution of Christopher Columbus as so-called 'discoverer' and 'civilizer' is an essential part of the ideology of 'white nationalism' designed to justify the exploitation and eventual genocide of indigenous Americans."

Of course, it's a good idea to give minorities role models from their own race and culture. But it is not helpful when the Sobel report recommends Pedro Albizu Campos (whose Puerto Rican nationalist group tried to assassinate Harry S. Truman) as a role model for Latino youngsters.

It is not necessary to be a conservative to believe that the Sobel report is a travesty. *The New Republic* concluded: "It is hard not to read the Sobel report — both in its specific recommendations and in its often strident tone — as a call for the school system to inculcate in black students, immigrants, and other minorities resentment and bitterness toward the chief institutions in American life."

Censorship By The TV Networks

A gutsy New York businessman who puts his money where his mouth is, J. Peter Grace, tried to buy television time in 1986 to air a spot urging an end to federal deficits. Would you believe! All three TV networks refused to air this spot for which he was willing to pay commercial rates. The reason, as explained by the CBS spokesman, was: "The subject matter is controversial." But that is patently ridiculous because all the networks air highly controversial subject matter.

The real reason the networks censored the ad is that it is against network policy to air anything with editorial content that the network did not produce. That's how the big-media liberals maintain their control over what Americans think — and also over what they think about.

The network liberals don't want Americans to think about what Peter Grace is thinking about, namely, cutting federal spending. The liberal line is that it is impossible to cut spending — so we must raise taxes. The networks didn't want Americans to think that network news coverage and documentaries about the Vietnam War were dishonest, so they refused to air Accuracy in Media's documentary called "Vietnam: The Impact of the Media." The networks didn't want Americans to think about Soviet nuclear superiority, so they consistently refused to sell time to the American Security Council for its several splendid documentaries, and instead aired only network programs promoting the false liberal notion that the Soviets are peace-loving. The networks don't want Americans to think about building a U.S. defense system to shoot down enemy missiles (SDI), so they refused to sell time for programs or spots to High Frontier, and instead air only programs that lead Americans falsely to believe that the only possible result of nuclear attack would be the devastation pictured in ABC's "The Day After."

Usually, the networks don't give a reason for refusing to air programs or spots over which they don't have editorial control. Sometimes, they give an obviously untrue excuse such as claiming that it is "too controversial" or "not up to our standards." But once upon a time, CBS let the cat out of the bag and admitted the real reason.

In 1966, Schick Safety Razor Company produced a first-rate, dynamic musical called "Up With People." It was endorsed by Walt Disney, John Wayne, and others as great entertainment; it received standing ovations when it was

performed live, and it was aired on local television stations.

But it was banned on the networks and on their owned-and-operated stations. The then CBS Vice President Craig Lawrence sent a telegram to Schick spelling out the CBS policy that no sponsored program may express an editorial or ideological viewpoint unless the program is produced by CBS itself and expresses CBS's own editorial viewpoint. Lawrence's telegram explained: "CBS has long had a policy against the inclusion in the entertainment program, of this kind of editorial views on current issues . . . It is CBS policy not to sell time to sponsors for the expression of such views."

That is one of the most revealing statements ever made by an insider in the U.S. communications media. It contains two vital admissions: (1) CBS will not permit its network or the stations it owns to air "this kind of editorial views," that is, the kind of editorial views expressed in "Up With People"; and (2) CBS will not "sell time to sponsors" to express views of the sponsor's choice.

This monopoly control of news exercised by the TV networks is out of place in a democratic society whose functioning depends on the free interchange of news and opinion. The First Amendment belongs to *all* the American people, not just to the TV networks.

Another type of network TV censorship occurred in 1985 when ABC-TV network spiked its 20/20 segment on the death of Marilyn Monroe. (To spike means to kill a news story in order to accommodate the politics of the powers that be.) This segment was a 26-minute investigative news report on the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of Marilyn Monroe. Originally scheduled to air September 26, it was reduced in length to 17 and then to 13 minutes, postponed to October 3, and then spiked. As one staffer described it, "Sylvia Chase was in the studio getting her hair and makeup done when it was canceled."

Marilyn Monroe's romantic liaisons with both President John F. and Senator Robert Kennedy had been known for years. What was sensational about the 20/20 segment was the new evidence that Bobby Kennedy visited her the day she died, and that Kennedy's brother-in-law Peter Lawford helped to "sanitize" her home after her alleged suicide by removing notes, papers and diaries.

The 20/20 segment wasn't produced by right-wing Republicans trying to buy network time to destroy the Kennedy image, but by ABC's top team of reporters. Host Hugh Downs called the segment "solid journalism," and Sylvia Chase "double-checked the segment." Barbara Walters joined with those two in protesting ABC's decision.

But, funny thing, we heard no protest from People for the American Way about ABC's interference with our "right to know." It wasn't listed in PAW's annual press release which catalogues the "increase in incidents of censorship."

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