

Academic Watchdog Acts To Threaten Real Freedom

EDITOR'S NOTE: Twenty years ago, freedom of speech was threatened by a state law in North Carolina banning "communist" or "subversive" speakers on college campuses. Today, the writer of the following article argues that freedom of speech is again under attack. As part of the national college community, we should be aware of what Accuracy in Academia (AIA) stands for and formulate an individual response.

By ANTHONY PODESTA

Efforts to make people conform to one particular position or ideology are almost always justified with lofty-sounding rhetoric, such as the need to protect our country from subversion, or the need to preserve order. The New Right has just come up with a new excuse for intimidating those who don't agree with its ideology: to protect college students from "misinformed" or "inaccurate" teaching.

This fall a new national organization was founded called "Accuracy in Academia." While AIA claims to "combat the dissemination of misinformation" on our college and university campuses, it epitomizes the New Right's theory of education, in which diverse points of view and the free flow of ideas are seen as un-American activities.

AIA's founder, Reed Irvine, has headed up an organization for the past 16 years entitled "Accuracy in Media," whose purpose is to intimidate and harass the members of the media who don't agree with his right-wing views. Irvine has built his reputation, and a \$1 million organization, on the principle that there is only one "accurate" way for a journalist to cover a story. Now he's decided there's only one "right" way for a professor to teach a course.

When "Accuracy in Academia" was announced this summer, many were horrified by its rhetoric, but few took it seriously. AIA, however, is emerging as a formidable institution. It already has volunteers

on about 150 campuses across the country, and has raised \$50,000 of a \$160,000 annual budget. Now AIA has hired as its new director a former New York Congressman, John LeBoutillier, whose skill is fundraising is matched only by his talents at red-baiting those with whom he disagrees.

When LeBoutillier warns against creeping socialism, he's referring to activities by members of the Democratic Party leadership, like House Speaker Tip O'Neill. According to LeBoutillier, former presidential contender Senator George McGovern is "scum." When he talks about radical brainwashing, he's talking about what Harvard professors did to him. LeBoutillier contends that leading America journalists and numerous liberal groups are pawns in a Soviet-sponsored "disinformation" campaign, and while in Congress, co-sponsored a bill that would have created a House subcommittee on internal security.

Given AIA's founder and new director, it comes as no surprise that this new watchdog group isn't concerned, as the name suggests, with upgrading the quality of education at our nation's institutions of higher learning. It's not interested in encouraging academic freedom or balance in the classroom. Instead, it is designed to intimidate those who are teaching what AIA's first director, Malcolm Lawrence, calls "incorrect information which leads to conclusions that may be distasteful from the point of view of our nation heritage or national security... Just plain bad facts."

Take, for example, Dr. Mark Reader's political science course at Arizona State University. According to AIA, it constitutes "anti-nuclear propaganda" because it overemphasizes such things as "fears of nuclear war, power and weapons." It isn't "verifiable" facts AIA is worried about, it's "bad" facts.

Take Cynthia McClintock, an associate professor of political science at George Washington University. Her course syllabus includes U.S. government pap-

ers and a textbook put out by the conservative Hoover Institution. But she's on AIA's hit list because she shows a film that is critical of the U.S.-backed contras in Nicaragua.

AIA "logic" dictates that there is only one correct way to teach students about our involvement in Vietnam; there is only one true cause of the Civil War; and there is only one acceptable interpretation of Franklin Roosevelt's presidency. And if a professor doesn't toe AIA's line, he or she will be investigated by AIA, perhaps pressured to change the content of the course, or vilified in AIA's new national newsletter. And it's not just professors who are being intimidated. Students will wonder if their future might suffer by asking questions or revealing their political beliefs and ideas.

Such chilling activities are highly inappropriate anywhere. They seem particularly offensive on a university campus, where teaching different viewpoints and interpretations is an integral part of the education process. The losers in AIA's efforts are ultimately the students.

Any effort to limit the exchange of ideas leads to the "dumbing down" of education as a whole. Those who are trying to keep "biased" facts or "bad" ideas out of the college classroom are following in the tradition of those who want to keep the teaching of evolution out of high school science classes, and who want to censor Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. They have forgotten that the purpose of education is to teach students to grapple with complexities and learn how to think. Not, as Reed Irvine would have it, what to think.

Anthony T. Podesta is president of People for the American Way, a 200,000 member nonpartisan citizens organization concerned with protecting constitutional liberties, including the freedom to learn. An attorney and educator, Podesta was a political science instructor and director of admissions at Barat College of the Sacred Heart in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Crossword Answers

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Greek Spotlight

PI EPSILON

Pi Epsilon Wesleyan's first sorority, was founded in 1968. The sorority strives to increase activity on campus for the students and to provide service to the college when needed.

Last semester, the sorority held movie nights in Edgecombe lobby, opened its lounge during midterms to provide a place to relax and enjoy refreshments, and catered both the Pops Concert and the Christmas Concert.

Last year, Pi Epsilon won the Student Life Organization Award and was the runner-up in the Homecoming parade in October 1985. In the future, the sorority hopes to increase its involvement both on campus and in the community.

The officers of Pi Epsilon are as follows: Cindy Bovee, President; JoAnne Strickland, Vice-President; Liz Carroll, Secretary/Treasurer; Laura Stvis, Marshall. The sorority is located on third floor of Edgecombe.

SIGMA PI

Sigma Pi is an organization that symbolizes brotherhood and is the largest fraternity on the North Carolina Wesleyan campus.

Sigma Pi is going National on April 5, 1986. In order to go National, Sigma Pi had to work hard in planning community service projects. For example, the brothers assisted in working the annual Bishops Fun Run during homecoming, and helped needy families over the Thanksgiving holidays. In this project Sigma Pi received canned goods and money from the public and donated them to three needy families in the Rocky Mount area.

The Brothers of Sigma Pi also did many things for the college itself, including helping the Halloween dance in Nash dorm.

As for going National it has taken a lot of time and effort for the members of this organization to achieve this goal. Sigma Pi stand as a family which will be united on April 5, 1986.

The officers of Sigma Pi are as follows: Mike Dolliver, Sage; Bill McGee, First Counselor; Jamie Thorn, Second Counselor; Randy Sands, Third Counselor; Jaycee Chadwick, Fourth Counselor. Their lounge is located on the second floor of Nash Hall.

SIGMA PHI DELTA

Sigma Phi Delta Sorority was founded in 1971 with the purpose of establishing a sisterhood which encourages friendship and the sharing of common life goals. The sorority strives to work together for the benefit of the college and to unifying the student body.

Their activities include participating in Rocky Mount Community Service projects, annually hosting the Wesleyan Women's Tea, and raising fund through carnation sales.

Sigma Phi Delta's future consists of change while maintaining its traditions and purpose for its existence.

The sorority is led by Kim Ross, president; Tressa Simmons, vice-president; Sara Livelysberger, secretary; Debbie Jones, treasurer; Diane Ciasca, pledge mistress; Kelly Kent, historian; Beverly Woodcock, social chairperson. Sorority members live on the third floor of North Hall.

NU GAMMA PHI

Chartered 1967, the Brother of Nu Gamma Phi are active on the Wesleyan Campus and in the community. Their activities include sponsoring parties including seasonal and organizational functions as well as putting their efforts into community service projects such as the campus blood drive, the Bud Lite Rock 93 Volleyball Marathon for Easter Seals, painting the bleachers for the ballfield, and volunteering at Nash General Hospital.

Rather than explaining more about the fraternity's meaning and purpose in this short article, the Brothers invite interested persons to come by their fraternity lounge on the third floor of Nash Hall at anytime to talk to them.

Nu Gamma Phi's officers are as follows: Mike Trubey, secretary, Joel Pearce, Rush Chairman.

ALPHA DELTA CHI

The purpose of Alpha Delta Chi Fraternity is to establish an organization which provides for the association of students enabling them to better promote in themselves qualities of brotherhood, scholarship, and loyalty to Wesleyan which will serve the interests of the college as a whole.

Last year, the brotherhood participated in a walk-a-thon for the March of Dimes and is currently collecting tabs (from aluminum cans) to benefit patients on kidney dialysis.

Alpha Delta Chi will celebrate its twentieth anniversary during Spring Fling of this year.

The officers of the fraternity are as follows: Steve Scalyi, president; John Hartigan, vice-president; Mark Crum, secretary/treasurer. Alpha Delta Chi is located on the third floor of South Hall.

THEATRE AUDITIONS

N.C. Wesleyan play auditions are January 29 from 3:30 p.m. until 5 p.m. and January 30 from 7:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. Auditions are open to all students, regardless of prior acting experience, and you may come to Coltrane Theatre any time during the audition periods. Remember, Wesleyan theatre is for students who want to experience something new, for we no longer have theatre majors. We need you. Do you need us?

RUSH DATES

Women's — Jan. 27-Feb. 1
Men's — Feb. 3-8