

THE NEW RED SCARE

While the '60s are often noted for their demonstrations of peace and openness, the '80s are often described as a reaction to this liberal era. Many scholars compare the present conservative mood in the United States with that of the '50s, especially the imminent fear of communist insurgency which seem to have surfaced once again at the White House. In this age of Contra Aid and an American administration unwilling to tolerate the presence of a Marxist government in its hemisphere, paranoia has reached alarming levels. Again, incidents of commie-bashing have victimized innocent people, simply because they hold certain beliefs contrary to conventional American ideology. Unfortunately, this is what many Americans believe is the way they should protect their democratic rights. In the following article, Excalibur's *Graham Thompson* outlines the development of this New Right and the strategies they have created to battle this perceived threat from the left.

By GRAHAM THOMPSON

When US President Ronald Reagan said that the Soviet Union has subverted "a great many in the media and press in America," during a *Washington Post* interview last week, it was not simply an off-the-cuff remark from a lame duck president. Since the early 1970's, a barrage of neo-conservative lobby groups have sprung up across the US trying to counter what they believe is left-wing subversion in the media and academia.

"There are a lot of journalists who fall for this kind of thing, themselves thinking like communists," said Reed Irvine of Accuracy in Media, (AIM) a Washington-based media watchdog. Leading their list of suspect media organizations are the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, CBS News and the Public Broadcasting System (PBS). Irvine says these groups are "not fair," but "conditioned" by leftists and Marxist-

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Leninists. These remarks came in a documentary titled *Deceiving America*, shown at York University's Osgoode Hall in September by its producer Angus Sullivan.

CBS News anchorman Dan Rather was accused of being soft on communism when he interviewed Cuban President Fidel Castro. "He let Castro get away with all kinds of lies," Irvine charged. Irvine said PBS was "showing left-wing documentaries," and that the documentary *Vietnam: The 10,000 Day War* received "rave reviews in Hanoi," Vietnam's capital. The major news wire services were also singled out for allegedly producing news "couched in Soviet terms." The wire services are the vehicles by which "soviet propaganda is assumed by mainstream western journalism," said Jim Tyson, author of *Target America*.

Universities are also under the New Right's suspicion for being hotbeds of Marxist influence. When an Osgoode student confessed that three of seven philosophy professors at his previous university were Marxists, Sullivan said "I've seen estimates go as high as 10,000" (such professors teaching in North American universities).

To counter this perceived threat, AIM and Alternative Education Foundation have been lobbying against professors they believe to be

anti-capitalist, as well as financing new student newspapers to promote right-wing causes on campuses across the continent.

This movement was already coalescing during Jimmy Carter's troubled Democratic presidency from 1976-1980. In his 1978 book *A Time for Truth* William Simon, a former treasury secretary, sounded the call for corporations to invest their profits into a New Right "counter-intelligentsia," and stop funding universities "hostile to capitalism." "Funds generated by business," Simon wrote, "must rush by the multimillions to the aid of liberty. Foundations . . . must take pains to funnel desperately needed funds to scholars, social

scientists, writers and journalists."

By December last year, upwards of 30 campus newspapers with a total circulation of 250,000 were supported by the Institute for Educational Affairs which Simon heads. They are currently setting up a national advertising network in an attempt to make the papers self-supporting. Ironically, the papers may be forced to moderate their content if they want to attract the mainstream campus audiences that advertisers are interested in. The funds for these New Right organizations come from wealthy industrial moguls such as Richard Mellon Scaife, the great-grandson of the founder of the Mellon empire, and beer baron Joseph Coors. From 1973-1981 Scaife made \$100 million in donations from his family's trusts to conservative and New Right causes, the *Columbia Journalism Review* reported in 1981. The Alternative Education Foundation received \$900,000 in 1981 from Scaife alone, while AIM netted \$150,000 of his money. The same year the Heritage Foundation also received \$900,000 from Scaife and \$300,000 from Coors.

Reporter Karen Rothmeyer of the Wall Street Journal, found out what the New Right thinks of journalists who antagonize them when she followed Scaife to a Pittsburgh restaur-

ant for an interview. "You communist cunt," screamed Scaife, "get out of here." Rothmeyer had asked Scaife why he gives so much money to the New Right.

George Mair, a former editorial director at a Los Angeles CBS radio affiliate, received \$100,000 from Scaife to start up a public relations organization that would promote goodwill between business and the media. "They always wanted me to tell them how things worked at CBS," Rothmeyer quoted Mair as saying. "They seemed fascinated by the media and loved to hear all the gossip. But at the same time, they had a conspiratorial view of how the media worked." Mair left after his organiza-

tion became too political for his liking.

In August 1986, AIM was reported to have an annual budget of \$160,000 and a network of informers at over 160 colleges and universities in the US. In September 1986 Saul Landau, a professor of history at the University of California (Davis), received a nasty shock when he opened the campus student newspaper. Under the headline "Should Saul Landau Be Allowed Here?" he was accused of being an "avowed Marxist" who had an "extremely close" relationship with "Cuban dictator Fidel Castro." The story was written by a member of a group called Students for a Better America (SBA).

An SBA informant badgered Landau in class; letters against him were sent to the editor of the student paper; and leaflets were distributed outside his classroom and at his film showings. After a support group mobilized students and faculty on his behalf, SBA called in State Senator H.L. Richardson to join the fray.

"Richardson announced he would investigate my hiring," Landau wrote in *The Nation*, "and demanded that the University turn over my file." Richardson threatened that he would bring the matter up when the state legislature approved the university's budget if they did not hand the file over. The university stood behind Landau and refused to hand over the file.

What worried Landau the most, he wrote, was that "current and former members of the intelligence community showed themselves ready to aid this kind of assault by providing classified material," on his personal background to the student groups out to remove him.

Linda Arnold, an historian teaching at two Virginia universities, was the subject of Accuracy in Academia's third newsletter. Irvine telephoned Arnold to complain about her classroom use of the book *The Twentieth Century* by Howard Zinn. He said it portrayed General Douglas MacArthur and Henry Ford as "villains," Arnold said. "Three times he asked 'don't you think the book should be burned?'" He said I should be teaching about the entrepreneurial spirit: for instance, the people who created MacDonaldis. I told him I'm more interested in the people who eat at MacDonaldis," Arnold said in *The Nation*.

While students may join these organizations for many reasons, political convictions is not the only one. Like the mythic student radicals of the 1960's, many are "attracted by the notoriety and power that come with tweaking established authority and making outrageous statements in print," says Jeff Pasley of *The New Republic*. Career prospects are another possible reason for interest in New Right organizations. The New Right offers many positions in its counter-bureaucracy in Washington for members of its "counter-intelligentsia."

"It was an unforeseen development that so many of these kids have ended up in the conservative bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.," said a former officer of the Institute of Educational Affairs. Both the IEA and the Leadership Institute have placement services that find jobs for its members in such lobby groups as the Heritage Foundation.

Since 1984 various student papers funded by IEA have been distributed at Canadian universities such as York, the University of Toronto, Queen's University in Kingston, and Montreal's McGill University.

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