

Pennsylvania Squashes Campus Gestapo Project

by Anton Chaitkin

The crusade for fascism in colleges, publicly identified with rightist provocateur David Horowitz, but directed from the household of Vice President Dick Cheney, has been stopped cold in the state of Pennsylvania. Decisive actions by the state legislature, and by the voters, blocked the Cheney's initiative in that state, which was considered the test case and show-down site for this national conflict.

The fight started in 2003, when the Bush-Cheney Administration, through various front groups, began pushing for Federal and state action to intimidate and silence dissent on college campuses. Under this pressure, in July 2005, the Republican majority in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives created the Select Committee on Academic Freedom in Higher Education.

The Brawl Begins

The Committee held hearings where rightist agents alleged that abuses by teachers required the state to adopt a Goebbels-like, misnamed "Academic Freedom" code, with a potential purge of enemies of the Administration.

Testimony was presented by Anne Neal, president of the American Council for Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), whose chairman emeritus is Mrs. Lynne Cheney, the Vice President's wife. Neal claimed that colleges lack "diversity"—i.e., that conservative students complain that teachers are inappropriately criticizing the Administration and its policies, when they should stick to their subjects. "If they are teaching Medieval English literature, we expect them to be lecturing on Chaucer, not Condoleezza Rice," Neal huffed. She demanded legislative action: "In the face of years and years of inaction, I submit it is up to elected officials to make sure the academy puts up, or holds its peace."

David Horowitz, founder of the campus Gestapo, Students for Academic Freedom, testified for a crackdown on those who advocate "social justice," which he defined as "a generally recognized code for socialism." He claimed teachers are being hired because they are leftists, which violates state and Federal law. Horowitz made the issue plain: "Many professors seem to find it necessary to make speeches against the Bush Administration in classes whose subject matter is not American Presidents, the Administration of George Bush, or the war in Iraq." He cited an alleged complaint from a Temple University student: "The chairman of the history department, who is my advisor, told me during advising that, 'If Bush gets re-elected we will have a fascist country. . . .'" Logan Fisher, identified as "a student of Temple University" (actually an officer in David Horowitz's organization) complained about anti-Bush sentiment among teachers.

The Select Committee's ranking Democrat, Rep. Lawrence Curry (from Jenkintown, Pa.), blasted Horowitz as a liar, face-to-face in Committee hearings, and in Curry's meetings with teachers and unionists around the state. Curry attempted to interview students who had been cited by Horowitz and Cheney's ACTA as complaining about their teachers' political views, and found that these students "never materialized."

The question of whether the Committee would call for harsh laws against dissident teachers, was to be decided, at the latest, when the Committee was to file its final report, before the end of November 2006—around the time of the national elections. Meanwhile the rightist propaganda hitting college campuses was aimed at chilling the political environment and discouraging the youth vote.

LYM Takes It to a Boil

In mid-October 2006, some three weeks before the national and state elections, the Lyndon LaRouche Political Action Committee (LPAC) suddenly raised the political temperature, releasing a pamphlet, "Is Joseph Goebbels on Your Campus?" which exposed the advocates for this crackdown as, in reality, a single fascist apparatus run from Washington. LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM) members distributed 750,000 of these pamphlets on campuses around the nation, including in Pennsylvania; the pamphlet was also widely distributed among Pennsylvania state legislators.*

In the Nov. 7 election, Democrats swept back into power in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, after the LYM mobilization had greatly stirred up a decisively Democratic youth vote.

The national wave hit Pennsylvania, rolling over the Cheney-Horowitz apparatus. The Republican chairman of the Select Committee, Rep. Tom Stevenson, lost his seat in the primary, as did Rep. Gibson Armstrong, whom Horowitz had gotten to introduce the bill setting up the Committee. Another Republican Committee member lost in the general election, and a fourth Republican retired, leaving only three of the seven Republican Committee members now slated to return to the legislature in 2007.

All six Democrats on the Committee were reelected.

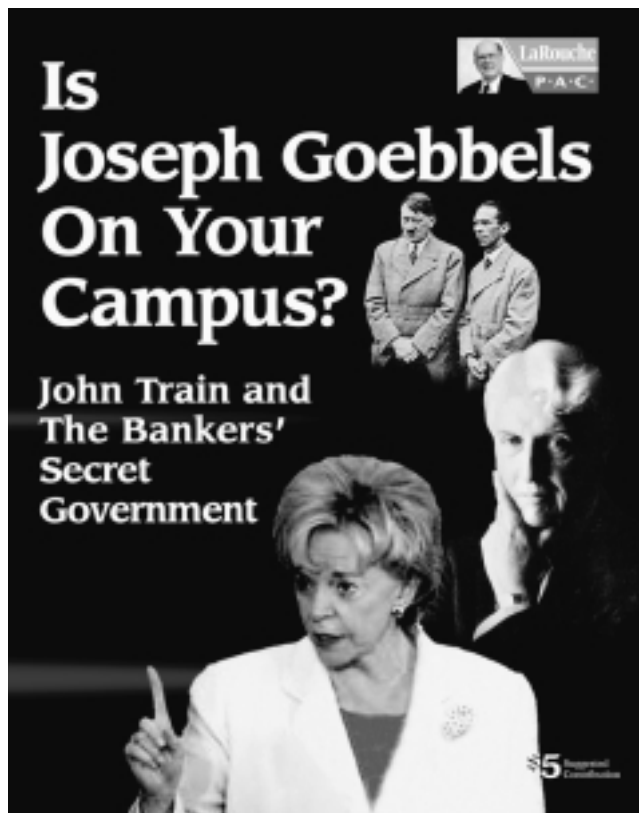
Cheney Is Skunked

After these election results, the sobered Committee, including the defeated Republicans, voted *unanimously* on Nov. 21, to publish a final report concluding that the state's colleges had no problem with academic freedom that would need fixing by Horowitz's fascist methods. The Committee, still under a Republican majority, even deleted from the final report the entire, bogus testimony that had been given by the Cheney/Horowitz activists at the Committee's hearings.

The report declares, "Based on testimony provided at the four public hearings, the Select Committee came to a general consensus that legislation requiring the adoption of a uniform statewide academic freedom policy, which was referenced by several testifiers, was *not* necessary. . . . The Committee received testimony from each sector of public higher education and determined that academic freedom violations are rare."

On his website, FrontPage.com, Horowitz raged against what he called "the breathtaking audacity of the theft of the

*The pamphlet definitively proved that "The Cheney faction and its financier sponsors, intent on a catastrophic war escalation and anti-Constitutional measures to retain power, have assembled a political dirty-tricks cartel, centered on the Vice President's wife, Lynne Cheney, and Wall Street operative John Train. Made up of nominally separate but absolutely interlocked groups, this cartel is attempting to impose a gestapo over American education that would wipe out resistance. . . . All of the supposedly separate pro-Cheney organizations deploy as a single entity, promoting one another's gang-up operations on targeted professors, students, and campus organizations that defy the policy agenda of the 'Conservative Revolution.' "



An attempted takeover of colleges in Pennsylvania by the Cheney/Horowitz right-wing campus Gestapo, was stopped dead in its tracks, aided by the LaRouche Youth Movement, which distributed 750,000 pamphlets throughout the nation.

report by the Democrats and the unions." He denounced the Republicans on the Committee as "spineless."

For three weeks after the election, the control over the Pennsylvania House of Representatives was undetermined due to slow counting of absentee ballots in some districts.

A dramatic decision came on Nov. 29.

In Chester County, officials finally declared that Democrat Barbara McIlvaine Smith had won the 156th district House seat, by a margin of only 23 out of 23,205 total votes. With this result—assuming it holds up against any potential recount or court challenge—Democrats have won a control of the lower house of the state legislature by a one-seat margin, 102-101.

Though the Republicans will still control the state Senate, the House turnover means that the project of Lynne Cheney, David Horowitz, et al. for fascism on campus has been squashed for now in Pennsylvania.

With a Democratic-controlled House, any new attempt by Cheney/Horowitz to introduce Gestapo legislative schemes would be blocked by an alert and seasoned team led by Rep. Lawrence Curry. Horowitz's nemesis, Curry, is now expected to become chairman of the House Committee on Higher Education.