PS for 2/15/90

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 not spending $5,000 per pupil per year and getting a dismal product.

So 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.

New York State Education Commissioner Leonard Sobol's Task Force on Minorities: Equity and Excellence, has produced a 120-page report called *A Curriculum of Inclusion*, which will be voted on later this month by the New York Board of Regents. 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 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 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."

The whole idea is Orwellian – ideology rewriting history. 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 Sobol report is a travesty. *The New Republic* concluded that, "It is hard not to read the Sobol 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."

Quite apart from the dishonesty of rewriting history to fit an ideological mold is the fact that the Sobol report was commissioned in the first place to find out how to help blacks and Hispanics who are doing poorly in school. There is no evidence that anything recommended in the report will help them to do better.

There is also no evidence that multiculturalism will lead to an improved self-image, or even that having a good opinion of yourself will cause you to be more successful in school. Maybe an improve self-image will just lead you are doing well in school when in fact you are not learning what you ought to learn.