Controversial History Standards Fight Back

By Phyllis Schlafly March 16, 1995

Don't think that we can all forget about the controversial National Standards for United States History just because the U.S. Senate voted 99 to I to repudiate them. Don't think that those outrageous Standards have been cancelled just because Lynne Cheney, the Bush appointee who authorized the $2 million taxpayers' grant, has been on television expressing indignation at how bad they are.

Thousands of copies of this 271-page attempt to brainwash students with leftwing revisionism have been flooding into schools across the country. Furthermore, its perpetrators are doing what all government handout recipients do when their mischief is exposed -- engage in grassroots lobbying to keep the taxpayer funds flowing.

The National History Standards Project at UCLA (which authored this travesty) has just mailed out thousands of copies of a 13-page packet designed to motivate teachers to write their Congressmen requesting enforcement of these leftwing revisionist standards. The packet contains the names and addresses of key Senators and Congressmen, plus a long list of sample paragraphs to include in your letters (to discourage you from doing your own investigation).

The most revealing part of this lobby packet is the boast that "these standards have the support of all of the leading history and social studies professional organizations," including the National Education Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the American Historical Association, and the World History Association.

Assuming this is true, it proves that the current crop of academic professionals is determined to drop the DWEMs (Dead White European Males) down an Orwellian Memory Hole and to replace history with "Oppression Studies," featuring third-rate feminist and minority writers who attack Western Civilization as sexist, racist, and oppressive.

Unfortunately, there are also some ex-Bush Administration officials who think that these History Standards need only a cosmetic face-lift. A little editing cannot possibly cure their fundamental defects. The whole idea of the Federal Government writing or financing public school curricula is an elitist, totalitarian notion that should be unacceptable in America.

The attacks on Western civilization so permeate these National History Standards that even American Federation of Teachers chairman Al Shanker said this is

the first time a government has tried to teach children to "feel negative about their own country." The multicultural distortions of the National Standards are so gross that even the *New York Times* complained that they teach students to admire Aztec architecture but do not mention the uncivilized Aztec practice of human sacrifice.

Distorted versions of history appear on almost every page. Coverage of World War II relegates the Pacific theater to minor importance. The Standards dwell repeatedly on the internment of the Japanese Americans and provide exercises to get students to relive those unhappy expe riences, but there is no reference to the cruelty of the Japanese, such as at the Bataan Death March.

The Standards tell students to describe how the SALT I and SALT II Treaties were advantageous to the United States. The book, however, does not mention the treaties' disadvantages, or that SALT I was repeatedly broken by the Soviets, or that the U.S. Senate refused to ratify SALT II.

The adoption of national standards in major school subjects by all public school districts was mandated by the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, signed by President Clinton last year. The adoption of standards is called "voluntary, " but the receipt of federal money in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is tied to the acceptance of the "voluntary" standards. So much for being voluntary!

Most state departments of education are well on their way toward writing the national standards into state law, into state mandates on local school districts, and into school curriculum. Local school districts will find it so easy to adopt the packaged thinking in the national standards rather than go to the trouble and expense of writing their own.

Beginning in 1993, many states signed contracts and paid big bucks to a private group called the New Standards Project **(NSP)** to write the state standards, which is why the various "state standards" look as if they were cut from the same cloth. NSP advertised that its state standards would be benchmarked to the national standards.

If parents fail to stop the brainwashing and revisionism that is going on today in the name of "standards," they will have lost control of their schools -- and of their children.

We have so much to be proud of about America. Whether our young people will learn about our glorious history will depend on whether our schoolchildren can read well enough to read history books, and, if so, whether schools will require them to read the history that really happened, or to study the liberal brainwashing produced by leftwing academics with our tax dollars.