FROM: Phyllis Schlafly

68 FAIRMOUNT, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002 / (618) 462-5415

RELEASE: MAY 30, 1985

DETENTE VS. DISINFORMATION IN A DICTIONARY

A popular television commercial shows a man asking, "what is hamburger?" The ad leads the viewer to believe that the answer to that question is not what's in the meat, but what kind of steak sauce you put on top.

I was reminded of that bit of advertising gimmickry when I saw a news item about the special English-language dictionary published by the Oxford University Press for sale inside the Soviet Union. A "sauce" has been poured over it which changes the taste for certain words even though, of course, it cannot change the substance.

The Oxford University Press has a tremendous reputation in the English-speaking world for its mammoth, authoritative 21-volume Oxford English Dictionary. The Oxford Press was embarrassed to have the world learn that the English-language dictionary it sells to the Soviet Union has very different definitions of certain words.

What is capitalism? Well, it all depends on whether you look up your definition in the British edition or the Muscovite edition of the Oxford Dictionary.

The British edition defines capitalism as "the condition of possessing capital or using it for production; a system of society based on this; dominance of private capital." The Soviet edition, however, defines capitalism as "the last antagonistic social and economic system in human history, based on the exploitation of man by man, replacing feudalism and preceding Communism."

What is Marxism? The British Oxford defines it as "pertaining to, or characteristic of ... the doctrines of Karl Marx." The Soviet Oxford calls it "teaching on the main laws of development of nature and society."

What is imperialism? The British Oxford says it is the rule of an emperor. The Soviet Oxford defines it as "the highest and last stage of capitalism."

The Soviet Oxford Dictionary defines Maoism (a doctrine unacceptable in the Soviet Union) as the "opportunist ideology and policy of the ruling circles in China, named after Mao Tse-tung." The Soviet Oxford definition of Zionism is "the ideology and policy of the

bourgeoisie in Israel, supported by certain imperialists."

It's no wonder that the Soviet Oxford is marked "special edition for the U.S.S.R." and warns in both Russian and English that the Oxford University Press "sanctions this edition for sale only in the U.S.S.R."

The Soviet Oxford Dictionary comes in two versions: the $5 single volume or the $15.10 two-volume set. Both versions carry the revised definitions obviously demanded by the Soviets. They are available in selected Moscow bookstores for hard currency only.

The British Broadcasting Company asked the chief executive of the Oxford University Press, George Richardson, for his comment. After explaining that the decisions were made by agreement with the Soviets before he came aboard with the company, he said that his predecessors would probably justify the alterations by saying, "Well, we've aligned, at Russian request, these words to the usage of that country."

But he added ruefully, "I think it's rather unfortunate that it's turned out this way. I think that its political overtones should have been thought about more carefully."

Pardon me, Mr. Richardson, it looks like your company gave too much attention to the "political overtones." You accommodated your definitions to suit the politics of your big Soviet customer (300,000 copies in 1983 and '84). You should have thought more carefully about the overtones of your intellectual integrity.

Here's a good multiple-choice question to ask the liberals. How would you label the Oxford University Press' accommodation of the Soviets: (a) censorship, (b) disinformation, (c) dishonesty, (d) propaganda, or (e) detente?

Playing with words to manipulate political thought is not uncommon among liberals. The Washington Post must be embarrassed by a full-page newspaper ad in a competitor newspaper showing a most interesting graph which tracks both U.S. unemployment figures since 1980 and the Washington Post's use of the term "Reaganomics."

As unemployment rose, usage of "Reaganomics" increased. In March 1982 the Post used the term 59 times in 32 stories. In September 1982, when unemployment reached its highest levels, the Post used "Reaganomics" 235 times in 85 stories.

After unemployment dropped, so also did use of the term. By 1984, when it was clear that Reaganomics had brought about economic recovery, funny thing, the Post didn't talk about Reaganomics any more.