

Extracurricular Activity

In the summer of 1990, a group of right-wing professors on campus, mostly members of the Texas Association of Scholars, led the charge against the revision of English 306. Members of the group lobbied alumni and openly rebaited both the course's syllabus and its advocates. And the group itself bought advertising opposing the course in *The Daily Texan*, although it failed to identify its sponsor. These tactics succeeded — the course was eventually postponed.

The backlash against the course has a carefully crafted political agenda, one that needs to be clearly understood as a local manifestation of a national right-wing assault occurring on university campuses. Partly it can be deduced from reading the one Texas Association of Scholars newsletter and statements by its members. But far richer is the array of materials, statements and actions generated by its parent organization — the National Association of Scholars.

Origins of the NAS

The NAS apparently began in 1985 when the right-wing Committee for the Free World, directed by Midge Decter, member of the board at the Institute for Educational Affairs and Heritage Foundation board-member (and wife of neo-conservative Norman Podhoretz), helped found a group called the Campus Coalition for Democracy (CCD), using money obtained from the equally right-wing Smith-Richardson Foundation. The CCD's chairman of the board was Herbert I. London, a dean at New York University, and its president was Stephen Balch, a professor of government at the City University of New York.

In spring of 1986, *Society* magazine published a series of articles, introduced by Balch, attacking "the politicization of scholarship" by the left. In October 1986, the conservative journal *Commentary* published a similar but much longer article on "The Tenured Left" by Balch and London. In those articles they construct two arguments: First, that "the left" was well on its way to taking over the academy, and second, that previous efforts to check this leftist takeover — specifically cited was Reed Irvine's notorious Accuracy in Academia — had failed. They called for a new, more effective campaign to kick the Marxists out of academe.

In 1987, the same year Alan Bloom published his book-length attack on radicalism in the University, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Herbert London intensified his own offensive against the left. In the January issue of *The World and I*, he warned of "Marxism thriving on American campuses." In the May-June issue of the *Futurist*, he prophesied the "Death of the University." London's article in *The World and I* merits interest more because of its place than its content. *The World and I* is published by the political network built by

the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, a religious-political fanatic with close ties to fascists and other ultra-rightists all over the world. London, as it turns out, also writes regularly for another Moonie publication, *The New York Tribune*, and sits on its editorial board of advisers.

By late 1987 and early 1988 the National Association of Scholars formed, with London as chairman of the board and Balch as president. A new journal, *Academic Questions*, was published to provide a vehicle for publicizing their

\$125,000 according to the 1989 Olin Foundation annual report.

In his best-selling 1979 book *A Time for Truth*, Simon lays out his Ayn Randian philosophy concerning philanthropy: "Business must cease the mindless subsidizing of colleges and universities whose departments of economics, government, politics and history are hostile to capitalism." Simon fears that "capitalism is no longer the dominant orthodoxy" in universities today, and believes that sound, pro-capitalist philanthropy can save the universities.

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Gribben

views. London, who edits the journal, laid out the battleground in that first issue: The enemies were the "radicals" and the "liberal majority" that surrendered the initiative to them.

The prime targets of that first issue were feminist scholarship, literary theory and student evaluation of teachers. Since then, various issues have carried articles attacking affirmative action, peace studies, evolution and "left" influence in African, Latin American and Asian studies. In the journal — as well as the NAS newsletter — there have also been reports from the front lines of the crusade: sometimes lamenting defeats, as at Stanford where the Western Civilization course was broadened, and sometimes celebrating victories, as at Michigan where a proposed anti-harassment code was successfully undermined.

Following the Money

A look at the funding sources of the NAS confirms its right-wing bias. Its two main funding sources are the right-wing John M. Olin and Sarah Scaife Foundations. The Olin Foundation, which boasts as its president William Simon, noted New Right author and activist and treasury secretary under Richard Nixon, donated \$85,000 to the NAS in 1988 according to its 990-F tax return, and upped its donation to

"Business money must flow generously to those colleges and universities which do offer their students an opportunity to become well-educated not only in collectivist theory but in conservative and Libertarian principles as well."

The Sarah Scaife Foundation lists as its president Richard Mellon Scaife, heir to the Mellon fortune and important funder of the New Right. According to a landmark July/August 1981 *Columbia Journalism Review* article, Scaife teamed up with Joseph Coors to provide



Horn

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Joe Horn, Texas Association of Scholars president

Personalities and Activities

The NAS lists as its supporters an impressive array of rightist scholars. Its board of advisers' names: Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and conservative activist; Irving Kristol, neoconservative editor of *The Public In-*

ous letters to administrators.) Feulner also sits on the board at the Institute for Educational Affairs.

Scaife owns several media outlets, including newspapers in the Northeast, and during the late '60s and '70s operated Forum World Features, a London-based news agency. The *Review* article says, "Scaife shut down Forum in 1975 shortly before *Time Out*, a British weekly, published a purported 1968 CIA memorandum, addressed to then-director Richard Helms, which described Forum as a CIA-sponsored operation providing 'a significant means to counter Communist propaganda.'" The Forum-CIA tie, which lasted into the '70s, has been confirmed by various British and American publications. Scaife's foundation funds right-wing organizations from Accuracy in Media to Freedom House to the Committee on the Present Danger.

Apparently the Scaife Foundation feels it's getting its money's worth from the National Association of Scholars — in 1988 Scaife gave NAS \$50,000 according to its tax return; in 1989 according to the Scaife annual report, the NAS received \$300,000.

Dues paid by NAS members go to the national organization, presumably to pay for subscriptions to *Academic Questions*. According to two TAS members, the funds for TAS functions like its spring conference and its newsletter come from the national organization.

That a national conservative crusade on college campuses should be funded by right-wing sources is not surprising; it merely illustrates the particular political character of the enterprise.

terest; and John Silber, fired UT Arts and Sciences dean and current arch-conservative candidate for governor in Massachusetts.

According to its literature, the NAS operates a "Speakers Bureau on American Education ... staffed by NAS members who have earned national reputations as writers and speakers on a wide range of educational issues." Among the topics listed in this "wide range" are: "Academic Freedom," "Academic Feminism," "Affirmative Action and the University," "Education and Indoctrination," "Ethnic Studies," "The Nature of the Core Curriculum," "The Place of the Great Books in the Curriculum," "The Politicization of Education," "The Decline of Intellectual Standards" and "Western Civilization and its Critics."

Speakers in the Bureau include both Balch and London, representatives of the Institute for Educational Affairs, and Alan Kors, a history professor from the University of Pennsylvania known for his polemical and inflammatory statements.

The NAS's latest project attempts, like the anti-E306 campaign did, to change universities by lobbying groups outside the university. Specifically, according to a letter received by an NAS member, "the NAS is now collaborating with two other organizations, the Madison Center and the Institute for Educational Affairs, to produce what we think will be a rather innovative guide to American undergraduate education; one that seriously examines issues relating to curricular structure, intellectual standards, the politicization of campus life, safety on campus, etc. The objective will be to create a ready reference tool for students and parents."

The Madison Center was founded in 1988 by Alan Bloom and former right-wing Education Secretary-turned-drug czar William Bennett, who worked for the Heritage Foundation before joining the Reagan administration.

The questionnaire itself, sent to all NAS members, stands at 36 pages and asks members questions like, "Are there any groups on campus critical of the core [curriculum]? If so, which groups and why?" Or, "Do homosexuals comprise a vocal, active interest group on campus? ... What are their objectives?" Madison also wants to know "Are there minority and/or women's studies centers on campus? If so, what is their role?" Another question asks "Are many courses used for indoctrination?"

Clearly from the questions asked and the people chosen to answer them, the Madison Center doesn't intend to create an apolitical handbook to choosing universities. Instead, the academic right will use this "guide" as a club to scare universities into caving in to its agenda for fear of a parental backlash.

The Local Boys

The University's local affiliate of the NAS, the Texas Association of Scholars, made its public debut last March with the publication of a

Once upon a time, it was easy to dismiss the conservative faculty that opposed the new E306 as a few isolated traditionalists. But as more information surfaces about the National Association of Scholars, it becomes clear that the defeat of multiculturalism at the University is only a component of a much larger nationwide crusade for conservatism.

story by Scott Henson and Tom Philpott

newsletter. Psychology Professor and former Associate Dean of Liberal Arts Joe Horn serves as president of the TAS, and serves along with psychology Professor Del Thiessen as editor of the newsletter. An anonymous TAS "Policy Statement" on the first page of the newsletter mimics NAS redbaiting rhetoric, saying the TAS is "concerned that extremist ideological currents are influencing academia in ways that are antithetical to constructive scholarly exchange." It also called for the creation of an "information base that can be used by administrators, legislators and others for evaluating academic policy."

In that same issue, an example of Horn's scholarship appeared on page one, where he announced that "Many people believe that inadequate funding is responsible for the poor academic performance of children. ... A better explanation is found in the fact that we do not require our children to do better!"

TAS then sponsored a March 30 conference entitled "Ideologically Based Suppression of Research in Social Science" — the timing of which countered the University of Texas' nationally famous Heman Sweatt Symposium on Civil Rights. The primary field of "research" whose suppression worried speakers was sociobiology — examples chosen included work on aggression (psychology Professor Del Thiessen) and group differences in intelligence (Joe Horn) and performance (psychology Professor Robert Young). There was also a complaint about political bias in examples used in philosophy texts (philosophy Professor Daniel Bonevac).

According to observers, the conference as a whole was only concerned with restrictions on right-wing research and completely ignored institutional bi-

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ases in the social sciences against the left. Indeed, as the attack on E306 made clear, the TAS systematically and dramatically overstates the influence of the "left" in the academy in order to attack it.

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In the winter '89-'90 issue, we find Horn's article titled *Truth, Gender, and the SAT*. In it, he purports to show that the disparity between men's and women's scores on the SAT reflects not a "gender gap" but indeed a "truth gap" — in other words, men get higher SAT scores because they're smarter.

The four-page article, which contains all of *five* footnotes, teems with assertions undistracted by argument or documentation. For example, he alludes to "evidence that grades vary widely according to subject matter and that course-taking differs by gender." He never cites a source for this. Another example: "In high school and college," he declares, "women generally take easier courses than men and their grade point averages are slightly higher as a result." Again, no source. Is he making this up?

Marvin Olasky, a journalism profes-

sor, distinguishes himself from his two TAS colleagues by actually having written a scholarly article for *Academic Questions*. His article, published in the same issue as Horn's, contains some 34 footnotes from primary sources, dwarfing the combined number of footnotes in Horn's and Gribben's articles. (Back issues of *Academic Questions* are available in the periodicals section of the PCL.)

What is to be done?



unning through the literature of NAS and TAS scholars is the theme of Marxist academics "politicizing the academy" by opening the curriculum to diverse cultures. But with their radical tactics and constant redbaiting, as well as their right-wing politics and funding sources, these professors reveal a clear political agenda of their own. Their scholarship may sometimes seem silly or beneath contempt, but their ability to manipulate campus politics is established. Progressives, at the University of Texas as well as other schools, can't afford to ignore them. ■

The preceding is an updated version of an article that appeared in The Polemicist, of which Henson and Philpott are editors.