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## When Education Becomes Propaganda

By **Thomas K. Lindsay**

"There are irrefutable and compelling reasons to believe that Bill Ayers and his wife Bernardine Dohrn ... are large responsible for the bombing of Park Police Station." So **wrote** the San Francisco Police Association in 2009. The 1970 bombing killed a policeman and wounded eight others. The perpetrators have yet to face justice.

Ayers long ago gave up bomb-making. So, why this history lesson? Ayers's case is merely illustrative of a larger trend: He moved from working as an America-loathing terrorist to working as an America-loathing professor of education.

For the first activity you can get -- as some argue he should have gotten -- life in a state penal institution. For the second, you can get -- as he got -- life tenure at a state institution of higher learning. In the process, he has continued warring on America.

How? In 2008 -- the same year he became a household name again as the friend of then-presidential candidate Obama -- Ayers was elected vice president for curriculum studies of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), one of the country's most prestigious teacher-education groups, with **a membership** of 25,000. In 2011, the AERA awarded Ayers its "Social Justice in Education Award." According to the AERA's **website**, the awardee "should exemplify the goal of linking education research to social justice," and this is part of the AERA's **"Social Justice Mission"** to "promote social justice principles and policies in the conduct of education research; that is, in funding of research and training."

What does "social justice" mean for Ayers and the AERA? **This five-minute interview** from *Fox & Friends* offers an explanation. In the 2012 video, host Steve Doocy interviews economics professor Jack Chambless of Valencia College. There, Chambless reports the results of a writing assignment he gave all his students on the subject of "The American Dream." Over 80 percent of the students, as you'll see in the video, expect government to pay their college tuition, their down payment for a house, and their health care. Many of those surveyed believe the money for these subsidies should come from increasing taxes on "the rich."

When Doocy asks Chambless whether these views were inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement, Chambless replies that it was, in fact, the other way around. The student surveys took place before Occupy had garnered national attention. Instead, answers Chambless, the spread-the-wealth-around attitudes of his students come from "the public schools."

His conclusion is bolstered by a review of the AERA's website, which, in addition to announcing the organization's Social Justice Award, carries this **"Message"** on "The Shifting Production of Difference/Otherness": "As researchers/scholars, teachers and students, it's important for us ... to address/trouble the shifting production of differences/otherness. Especially in an era that some think of as post- (post-racist, post-sexist, post-difference), we are still finding ways to other, to create binaries of inclusion and exclusion, and to reproduce hierarchies of power.

"Social justice" and "otherness" research now stand alongside teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. Are they also pushing aside reading, writing, and arithmetic?

One can wonder after reading a study by the National Council on Teacher Quality, titled "**Teacher Prep Review.**" Produced with *U.S. News & World Report*, the study finds university teacher-education programs abound in "mediocrity," credentialing K-12 teachers who are dramatically unprepared for their tasks.

Ed schools are the conduit between higher education and K-12, and ideology is coming to exercise **a stranglehold** on both. Critics argue that the increasingly lackluster quality of American education, at all levels, owes in part to the rise of indoctrination over education. As economist Thomas Sowell **puts it**, "a student can go all the way from elementary school to a Ph.D. without encountering any fundamentally different vision of the world from that of the prevailing political correctness." As a result, "education is not merely neglected in many of our schools today, but replaced to a great extent by ideological indoctrination."

What will be the effects on the nation's politics of this growing, concerted effort to indoctrinate students? Watching the Chambliss interview, I could not help but be reminded of Abraham Lincoln's **statement** on the subject. In a debate with Stephen Douglas (1858), Lincoln observed, "Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions."

A 1975 observation by Milton Friedman harmonizes with Lincoln's: "I do not believe that the solution to our problem is simply to elect the right people," said Friedman. Instead, what is required is the establishment of "a political climate of opinion which will make it politically profitable for the wrong people to do the right thing." Why? "Unless it is politically profitable for the wrong people to do the right thing, the right people will not do the right thing either, or if they try, they will shortly be out of office."

In moving to teacher education, Ayers seems to have learned Lincoln and Friedman's lesson on the omnipotence of public opinion. But his real teacher is more likely Marx, who declared that "the educator must himself be educated

Courtesy of Ayers and the AERA, and, of course, with a generous donation made by you, the U.S. taxpayer, America's teachers are getting the education Marx envisioned.

Still wondering why more and more American kids think they're owed a living?

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