

Soviets, U.S. map attack on free speech

by Leo F. Scanlon

Parallel laws passed by the top legislatures in Washington and Moscow in April foreshadow an attack on free speech and a desperate effort to silence resistance against the policies of the condominium partners. In both countries, the laws bear the dubious title of "Hate Crimes" acts, and serve to criminalize broad categories of speech deemed "offensive" to one or another constituency. In the Soviet Union, the law is clearly aimed at insurgent nationalities; in its U.S. guise, the law is the spearhead of a complex of state and federal statutes which constitute an "Orwellian" attack on free speech, according to Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

The French daily *Le Figaro* reported that the Soviet legislature passed a bill which aims at preserving "territorial integrity" of the U.S.S.R. by strengthening punishment against any movement or group that undermines the "equality of ethnic and national rights" and that harms the "unity of the territory of the Soviet Union by force." According to the paper, the legislation also mandates that any group that appeals to "national hate" can be declared illegal. As *Figaro* comments, "with this law, it becomes possible to suspend all types of organizations. And why not the Baltic Popular Fronts?"

The French daily says that under the rubric of "protecting the interests of the Russians," the Soviets can invoke the law in various Soviet republics against groups of movements seen to be anti-Russian. It can be invoked in various ways, including by direct presidential decision. *Figaro* calls this the "most disturbing" of a series of laws that have been passed with the purpose of reinforcing "public order" against "nationalist" movements, but in such a way that the overt brutality of the April 9, 1989 bloody crackdown in Tblisi, Georgia is avoided.

The Hate Crimes Statistics Act was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives within days of the Soviet act and will require the Justice Department to report the number of "crimes" stemming from bias based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. The bill has been bouncing around in the Congress since 1985, when it was first proposed by forces connected with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, an organized crime-linked outfit pretending to be a civil rights group. The ADL has orchestrated support for the

bill on the spurious contention that there is an increase of anti-Semitic incidents in the country—of the sort which the ADL itself has been caught instigating in the past, as a means of motivating its fundraising drives.

Prominent support for the bill has also come from the well-organized homosexual lobby, which hopes to criminalize the teaching of traditional, family-oriented notions of sexual behavior. The ADL has been at the forefront of legal efforts to outlaw expressions of religious belief which are considered "offensive" to atheists, pagans, and sodomites.

Statistical reporting to create 'race laws'

The ADL will now be in the center of a reorganization of the Uniform Crime Reporting program (UCR) by which the FBI collects and publishes national crime statistics, which in turn motivate various types of anti-crime legislation. "Hate Crimes" are a separate category, and will bring law enforcement powers to bear in any number of cultural and religious matters of conscience.

The FBI has been developing a substantial revision of the UCR since 1982, which is now complete. The new system, known as the National Incident-Based Reporting System, will collect information on a much wider variety of crimes and will catalogue the race, age, ethnicity, and gender of the victim and perpetrator. Now, isn't this handy: The ADL will get a free, *government-staffed, financed, and approved* set of statistics to use for fundraising!

The FBI's statistical procedures are consistent with the curious features of the 1990 Civil Rights Act which creates an "anti-discrimination" enforcement apparatus which is nothing less than a system of race laws—in no way different from the apartheid system, or the laws that define and control nationalities in the Russian empire.

Supreme Court attacks free speech

The effort to restrict speech is not limited to the cultural and religious dissent which is the real target of the Hate Crimes Act. A Supreme Court ruling on March 27 has given important support to laws that aim to shut down political debate in the United States. The Court upheld a Michigan statute that prohibits corporations from endorsing or supporting political candidates or their platforms. Justice Kennedy, dissenting from the ruling, pointed out that, "with the imprimatur of this Court, it is now a felony in Michigan for the Sierra Club, or the American Civil Liberties Union, or the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, to advise the public how a candidate voted on issues of urgent concern to their members. In both practice and theory, the prohibition aims at the heart of political debate."

A Florida law, modeled on a statute passed by 20 state legislatures, defines an editorial endorsement of a candidate as "contribution in kind" to the campaign, thereby including press coverage in the spending limits otherwise imposed on political organizations.