

EIR Feature

Gulliver travels to 'politically correct' Stanford University

by the Editors

If Mr. Lemuel Gulliver's travels were somehow to take him to Stanford University or any other top campus in America today, he would doubtless be struck by a familiar high-pitched whinnying sound echoing across the commons—the curious language of the Houyhnhnms, a species which one might mistake for our own *Equus caballus*, were it not for their ability to lend a certain degree of intelligibility to their utterings. Yet the sounds would have filled him with a sense of ghastly foreboding, the tone of these once-companionable creatures sounding somehow more clipped, more shrill. Upon listening more carefully, he would have been able to distinguish certain disjointed phrases, such as *hnym-houyhnhnee* (“anti-racism”), *hyahoomn-liuhnee* (“multi-culturalism”), and *hee-hawee* (“deconstruction”), this last phrase being uttered with particular distinctness.

And his queasiness would have turned to outright dismay, had he followed the sounds to discover their source. Upon entering a classroom, he would have witnessed a most curious scene: a member of the Houyhnhnm species, entirely without clothing save for a shiny jackboot neatly fitted onto each hoof; and, following him about on all fours as he marched around the classroom, a bevy of creatures which one might mistake for human college students, were it not for their no less curious behavior: Namely, whenever a member of the scruffy, ill-behaved assemblage would bump into any of their fellows, they would scratch and claw at each other wildly, shouting in a barely discernible Yahoo parody of the Houyhnhnm tongue, “My personal needs! My feelings!”

The scene witnessed by Mr. Gulliver is not far from the truth, as the fascist philosophy of political correctness infects college classrooms across the country, its guru-professors peddling the anti-human idea that a person's race, sex, and ethnic origin determine *who they are*. It is a philosophy which denies young people access to the greatest classics of western civilization—the works so-called dead white European males—which are the foundation of the intellectual and moral advancement of *any* human individual, regardless of origin.



"Political correctness" in the era of Jonathan Swift: The fat Puritan knight Hudibras consults an astrologer while on a quest to make the world conform to his bigoted views. The stuffed crocodile is an age-old symbol of hypocrisy. (Drawing by Hogarth, c. 1725.)

Indeed, these new-age thought-police have repudiated the very notion of the "individual," described by a University of Pennsylvania official as "a red flag phrase today considered by many to be racist." What is important about you, they insist, is not your mind, your potential for creativity, but the *group* into which you were born.

Early this year, two of Gulliver's modern-day descendants undertook an expedition to the home of political correctness, Stanford University, to more closely assess the effects of this policy. Of the six students whom they were able to engage in discourse (*language*, you see, has been banned—see box on page 40), three were foreigners, not yet infected by the virus of political correctness. The other three were white, angry, and ignorant. One answered the Gulliverians' advocacy of "cold fusion," with the scientifically absurd idea, "Don't you know this will mean a nuclear bomb in everyone's back yard?"

Irrationalism, the new religion

At Stanford, the student body in 1988 successfully overturned the university's long-time requirement for a wide range of readings in important works of western civilization. Under the influence of the new literary theory known as deconstructionism, the students claimed that they would only be liberated if the reading of dead white European male authors (DWEMs) were replaced by allegedly more-relevant women, homosexual, and Third World authors. With the Rev. Jesse Jackson at their head, one student demonstration

chanted, "Hey, Hey, Ho, Ho, Western Culture's Got to Go!"

Stanford's combination of brainwashing and intimidation is now touted as the example for universities around the country; on Jan. 25, for instance, Hunter College in New York City proudly announced a new curriculum requirement based on race, women's issues, and sexual orientation "more stringent than those adopted in recent years by Stanford University."

Political correctness has been an issue of growing national debate since about 1988, with the publication of the late Prof. Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*. The free-trade moguls at the *Wall Street Journal* subjected it to an editorial attack on Nov. 26, 1990; the following year saw the well-publicized neo-conservative attack, *Illiberal Education*, by Dinesh D'Souza. But, Bloom and all the conservative critics who have followed him, have underestimated the problem, while posing no real solution to it. These are not leftish "campus antics" that will eventually pass, and they cannot be combatted by hoisting the flag of eighteenth-century British liberalism.

Indeed, many of the neo-conservative critics of political correctness share the racist assumptions of its supporters.

It must be emphasized that political correctness is the most fashionable new cloak for a very old, racist evil. As LaRouche develops the point most recently in "On the Subject of God," just published in the Schiller Institute quarterly *Fidelio* (Spring 1993), the history of philosophy can effectively be divided into two schools: the Socratic tradition which seeks universal truths and accepts as primary the sov-

ereign "divine spark of reason" in every individual; and the opposing, Aristotelian ideology which claims that scientific knowledge is, fundamentally, unknowable, and that nature somehow differentiates humanity into higher and lower orders, with some destined to be masters and others slaves. Over the last two millennia, as LaRouche demonstrates, the ruling oligarchies have heavily sponsored the Aristotelian method, both as a theoretical justification for their racist rule, and as a means of ensuring that the educated among the ruled never obtain the intellectual tools to free themselves.

The critics of political correctness have either not understood this fundamental conflict, or they have cast their vote deliberately on the side of Aristotelianism.

Most of Bloom's book, for instance, is devoted to a single thesis: American education is ultimately based on eighteenth-century British liberalism; however, this liberalism has allowed

itself to be subverted over the last 100 years by what Bloom called "the German invasion." Specifically, American philosophy has become dominated by ideas from three sources: the nineteenth-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, his twentieth-century follower Martin Heidegger, and the Critical Theory of the so-called Frankfurt School, including Georg Lukacs, Herbert Marcuse, and Theodor Adorno.

Bloom is wrong in thinking that British liberalism is the positive basis of American education. At its best, American education was based on the German system of classical education, the same system subverted in Germany by Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Institute for Social Research (Frankfurt School). Bloom's criticism of the latter as the source of political correctness is on the mark. However, he is ultimately unable to effectively combat it, because he has no rigorous basis for criticizing British liberalism.

LaRouche: a matter of human survival

As opposed to the neo-conservative critics who confine themselves to impotent finger-pointing at the campus lunacies, Lyndon LaRouche emphasizes the strategic and philosophical importance of the problem. "What I object to in Stanford," said LaRouche, "is highlighted by the resolution supported by students who ought to know better, but don't, under the name of 'sensitivity,' for banning the requirement that students study the words of 'dead, white European males.' Now, it happens that most of what we know on this planet, at least most of that upon which we *depend* to maintain a population of more than five and a half-billion people on this planet, certainly depends upon the contributions (admittedly there are other contributions from other sources) of dead, white European males.

"If people don't know these things, they don't know much about civilization, and therefore can't make much of a decision about matters either in terms of domestic or foreign policy. . . . These people who are now going to premium colleges like Stanford . . . 20 years from now, these are the people who will be coming into the dominant, ruling positions in our government and in our institutions. With people like that, whose brains have been destroyed, is there any chance of the nation surviving? You're paying \$10-20,000 per year for the destruction not only of your children's minds and your own mind, but also the destruction of our society, by turning people from human beings into baboons."

The insanity of 'post-modernism'

"Political correctness" was a phrase originally used in Communist Party intellectual circles in the 1930s and 1940s. It was revived by neo-conservative authors around 1990 as an insulting characterization of a general school of thought that might be more scientifically called post-modernism.

All the lunacies being taught on campus are post-modernism. The post-modernists spend much of their time polemicizing with each other over who, exactly, has possession of the true grail of post-modernism; thus, there are structuralists, post-structuralists, feminist deconstructionists, Third World lesbian feminist deconstructionists, and so on. However, all post-modernist thought has its proximate origins, as Bloom implies, in the three sources of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Frankfurt School. What, then, is post-modernism?

In 1936, Nazi Culture Minister Josef Goebbels, on orders from Adolf Hitler, formed a committee of academics to edit the complete works of Friedrich Nietzsche. Martin Heidegger was placed on that committee; in preparation, Heidegger prepared a series of lectures on Nietzsche's work. Heidegger concluded that the most important thing that he shared with Nietzsche was the commitment to extinguish the last traces in western civilization of what he called "metaphysical humanism." This commitment was also shared by the Frankfurt School.

Nietzsche, Heidegger, the Frankfurt School, and every single advocate of political correctness today shares this hatred of "metaphysical humanism," the idea that the individual, through the exercise of his or her reason, can discern the Divine Will in an unmediated relationship; that the individual can change the physical universe in the pursuit of the Good; that mankind can have dominion over nature as commanded by the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis. This hatred of the divine spark of reason led Lukacs, in 1914, to write his great complaint, "Who will save us from western civilization?"

When the students of Stanford University chanted, "Western Culture's Got to Go," they were giving their own answer to that famous question.