

# ***Anti-Anti-Communism and the Academy***

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*“Academics consider anti-communism and anti-communists to be vulgar and simple-minded. There are very few communists [among academics], but many, many anti-anti-communists.”*

*—Richard Pipes, Professor Emeritus, Russian History, Harvard University<sup>j</sup>*

## **Introduction**

This conference is about the frequent failure of modern higher education to teach about the reality of communism. There was no greater threat to faith and freedom worldwide over the last 100 years than communism. There is no disputing that reality. And yet, the failure to teach that essential truth—essential because of the unprecedented destructiveness of that very real communist threat—is itself an affront. Sadly, there are few greater failures in modern academia.

As Mikhail Gorbachev aptly stated, the Bolsheviks—the godfathers of the communist experiment—carried out a comprehensive “war on religion.”<sup>ii</sup> Gorbachev lamented that his early predecessors, even after the Russian Civil War ended in the early 1920s, during a time of “peace,” had “continued to tear down churches, arrest clergymen, and destroy them. This was no longer understandable or justifiable. Atheism took rather savage forms in our country at that time.”<sup>iii</sup>

The Soviet Union, reflective of the communist world as a whole, was openly hostile to religion and officially atheist. With (ironically) religious-like devotion, the USSR doggedly took the position that there was no God. Moreover, that atheism translated into a form of vicious anti-religion that included a systematic, often brutal campaign to eliminate belief. This began from the outset of the Soviet state and still continues in various forms in communist countries to this day, from China to North Korea to Cuba.

The roots of this hatred and intolerance of religion lay in the essence of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Karl Marx had dubbed religion the “opiate of the masses,” and opined that, “Communism begins where atheism begins.”<sup>iv</sup> Vladimir Lenin said far worse. Speaking on behalf of the Bolsheviks in his famous October 2, 1920 speech, Lenin stated matter-of-factly: “We do not believe in God.” Lenin insisted that “all worship of a divinity is a necrophilia.”<sup>v</sup> He wrote in a November 1913 letter that “any religious idea, any idea of any God at all, any flirtation even with a God is the most inexpressible foulness ... the most dangerous foulness, the most shameful ‘infection.’” Russia scholar James Thrower of the University of Virginia says that in this letter the type of “infection” Lenin was referring to was venereal disease.<sup>vi</sup>

“There can be nothing more abominable than religion,” wrote Lenin in a letter to Maxim Gorky in January 1913.<sup>vii</sup> On December 25, 1919, Christmas Day in the West, Comrade Lenin issued the following order, in his own handwriting: “To put up with ‘Nikola’ [the religious holiday] would be stupid—the entire Cheka must be on the alert to

see to it that those who do not show up for work because of ‘Nikola’ are shot.”<sup>viii</sup> Under Lenin, this was not an isolated occurrence.

With Leon Trotsky as his trusty comrade, Lenin became involved in the creation of groups with names like the Society of the Godless, also known as the League of the Militant Godless, which was responsible for the dissemination of anti-religious propaganda in the USSR.<sup>ix</sup> Not surprisingly, this institutionalized bigotry continued to thrive under Lenin’s disciples, most notably Stalin, and even under more benign leaders like Nikita Khrushchev.

**Instilling this atheism was a central goal of communist education, from primary school to the university and even to the factory. Atheism was taught in school. Courses on atheism were mandatory in the Soviet Union. Workers at factories were assembled into meeting rooms where atheist professors from the local university were brought in to deliver lectures on the “stupidity” of “cults” and belief in God.**

This atheism was endemic to the communist revolution. Even those communists unable to secure political power—and thus lacking the ability to persecute believers—still did their best to persecute the teachings of organized religion and ridicule the idea of the existence of God. In fact, even in America, it was no surprise to stroll by a city newsstand and catch bold front-page headlines like this in the *Daily Worker*, the communist organ published by CPUSA: “THERE IS NO GOD.”<sup>x</sup> Communists were proud of their atheism, and often quite militant about it—and never shy about it.

What I’ve offered thus far is a kind of snapshot tutorial on the communist war on faith, which traversed national boundaries, ethnicities, and people of every kind throughout the world since 1917. The communists were remarkably consistent in their vicious bigotry toward religion. Alas, I could likewise expound upon added evils wrought by communist hatred, such as the infinitely more painful figures on the unprecedented number of body bags generated by the ideology—easily exceeding 100 million from 1917 to 1979. We now know that even the most authoritative sources, such as the seminal Harvard University Press work, *The Black Book of Communism*, were conservative when estimating *only* 100 million deaths at the hands of communist governments. The latest research, for instance, claims that Mao Zedong alone was responsible for the deaths of at least 60-70 million in China, and Joseph Stalin alone may well have killed 60 million in the USSR<sup>xi</sup>—those are just two communist countries that managed to far surpass the entire combined death toll of World War I and II, the two worst wars in the history of humanity.

Oddly enough, however, this grisly history of Red terror—so recent to the human experience that billions of its persecuted victims remain alive to witness to the atrocity—is too often neglected in the modern classroom at the typical American university. That may seem difficult to believe, but it is true, to the great frustration of those aware of the slight and the slaughter.

I know this very well, and personally, not only as a recent former student myself (I was in graduate school in the 1990s), but as a professor who speaks at colleges around the country. Of all the lectures that I do on college campuses, none seem to awaken the audience as much as my discourse on the savagery of communism. In these lectures, which are usually connected to my study of certain Cold War figures, I do a 10-15 minute backgrounder on the crimes of communists—from their militant attacks on private property, on members of all religious faiths, and on basic civil liberties, to the one product they produced better than any other: bloodied, emaciated, rotting corpses.

As I review the casualties, the students in the audience—born around or after the fall of the Berlin Wall—are amazed at what they are hearing. They seem especially struck that I always ground every fact and figure in reliable research and authorities—books published by the top university presses, quotes from the likes of Mikhail Gorbachev and Vaclav Havel and Alexander Yakovlev, anti-Soviet appraisals from Cold War Democrats like Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy and early liberals like Woodrow Wilson, anti-communist assessments by leftist intellectuals and Cold War scholars like Allen Weinstein, Sam Tanenhaus, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., George F. Kennan, and John Lewis Gaddis. I rarely use conservative sources because I do not want the professors of these students to be able to later poke holes in my presentation to try to undermine the overall thesis.

**And speaking of those professors, that gets to the central point of this paper: As the young people in the audience are engaged, hands in the air with question after question—obviously hearing all of these things for the first time in their lives (as they are eager to inform me after my talk)—the professors often stare at me with contempt. In one case, a British professor, who could not step sighing, squirming, and rolling her eyes as I quoted the most heinous assessments of religion by Marx and Lenin—the quotes cited earlier in this paper—got up and stormed out of the room.**

These professors glare at me as if the ghost of Joe McCarthy has flown into the room and leapt inside of my body. In fact, that is the essence of their criticism: the anti-communism they are witnessing appalls them. It helps explain how, and why, this greatest of human-rights atrocities can be dismissed by so much of the professoriate, which I shall begin to unpack in the next section of this paper.

### ***Trends, Fads, and Anti-Anti-Communism***

Academia has been beset by many trends, fads, sentiments, and at times outright silly ideas. In more recent years, beginning with the emergence of political correctness on college campuses in the 1980s,<sup>xiii</sup> academia has offered a sacred-like status to a unique trinity of ethnic, gender, and sexuality diversity. “Diversity” itself has become a kind of idol at the modern university, especially secular colleges.

Of course, that diversity is, ironically, not fully diverse at all; it is very narrowly defined, restricted to ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, and is most assuredly not extended to where diversity should matter most at a university: intellectual diversity. Regrettably, diversity of thought, of ideas, and even of religious belief, is not the dominant spirit of the ideologically homogenous modern college. The forces of multiculturalism and “tolerance” can be downright intolerant of beliefs they do not embrace. Really, the phrase “diversity” is a fraud, conveying something else that violates the very meaning of the word.

**It is crucial to pause here to note that the disciples of diversity, as well as its bishops, approach the altar from the political left. The diversity movement is a left-of-center movement. Conservatives are not only not part of the movement—nor welcomed, given their ideology—but their conservatism is considered antithetical to the faith.**

This overall leftward tilt of the academy is not disputed by anyone. Survey after survey have shown that upwards of 80-90% of college professors identify themselves as politically liberal,<sup>xiii</sup> proportions considerably out of sync with the American public, where conservatives outnumber liberals by quite sizable margins, and where Republicans and Democrats are nearly equal among registered voters.<sup>xiv</sup> This academic bias has made itself obvious, even allowing for those commendable professors who manage to present both sides of an issue. Indeed, liberal professors tend to dispute concerns about the lack of ideological balance by claiming that the imbalance does not matter, since they are professionals capable of being fair in the classroom.<sup>xv</sup> The “doesn’t-matter” tack is a safer course, far more anecdotal and difficult to prove, especially compared to the easy-to-demonstrate fact (quantifiable via surveys) that most professors are liberal.

Yet, not surprisingly, this staunch left-wing bias influences the way numerous subjects are taught. Among them, one of the longest standing biases in modern academia, stretching all the way back to the 1940s, concerns the subject of communism, and particularly communism in America. Despite the claims of many on the political right, the bias here is not a matter of a huge number of, say, history or sociology or political science professors being Marxists. Many such professors exist, but they are a minority; while colleges lean decidedly left, they do not lean quite *that* far to the left.

**Of course, some of the most popular history books ignoring the horrors of communism are written by Marxists, Marxist sympathizers, or general radicals—Eric Hobsbawm, Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky.<sup>xvi</sup> Yet, in the vast majority of cases, the bias in the classroom comes not from the pro-communist sympathies of true believers and fellow travelers but from the hearty anti-anti-communist tendencies of non-communist liberals.**

The bias regarding communism that exists in modern academia is not one so much of pro-communism—though, as shown below, there are undeniable sympathies—

but a very strong dislike, bordering on disgust in many cases, for *anti*-communism. What prevails in modern academia is more a matter of anti-anti-communism than anything else; in other words, these professors are not so much in favor of the communists, but strongly *against* anti-communists.<sup>xvii</sup> It is not so much that these professors approve of communism as much as they disapprove of—actually, utterly despise—anti-communism. To repeat: they are *anti*-anti-communist more so than pro-communist.

This is also because they reflexively recoil at the right. As James Burnham, the great convert to anti-communism, famously remarked, for the left, “the preferred enemy is always to the right”—never to the left.<sup>xviii</sup>

**So, I implore conservatives to understand this, so as to avoid broad-brushing, losing credibility, and attacking with the same lack of charity and nastiness by which the left frequently engages. Sure, a lot of professors are Marxists, and many more share the utopian goals of Marxism, but the vast majority are simply leftists.**

Being on the left often entails some confusing standards, one of which is this bizarre revulsion toward anti-communists. These leftists—to their credit—despise fascism, and will preach anti-fascism until they are blue in the face. They are as appalled by fascism as conservatives are by communism. But while conservatives detest *both* communism and fascism, liberals only detest one of the two.<sup>xix</sup>

Why does this matter? Is this a mere academic observation? Not at all.

On a smaller scale, it provides an important political and almost psychological explanation for why these professors think the way they do on this subject. In so doing, it clarifies something that has long baffled both moderates and conservatives alike. It also, thereby, ought to help diffuse conservatives’ anger toward these professors, who are often derided, unfairly, as “a bunch of commies,” which they are not. At the same time, these professors often defend the commies, while not defending the anti-communists, whom they view with disdain. They are so hostile to the anti-communists that they often refuse to engage in any discussion that might appear to strike a kinship with the beliefs of anti-communists; the end result is an unbalanced presentation that appears more pro-communist.

On a larger scale, this question matters for an important reason pertaining to American higher education, and especially what is being taught in our colleges: The fact is that there was no greater, longer-running conflict in the last 100 years than the grand ideological struggle between Western democratic capitalism and Soviet-based totalitarian communism. This was the dominant battle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fully infusing American and world politics for generations. Even then, it was much more than that, since it involved the slaughter of countless lives.

Consequently, as the carnage alone demonstrates, this subject matters. If professors are to be teachers—teachers of fact, teachers of history, teachers of factual history—here is one issue they need to get right. Quite the contrary, as attested by anyone who has attended these colleges and read the texts, modern academia does a miserable job in underscoring the dark side of communism, a horrible failure that is not at all the case when documenting the crimes of the other vicious “ism” of the last century: Nazi fascism.

### ***Pipes and Brovkin***

An especially instructive example of all this can be told through the eyes of two Harvard professors of Russian history: Richard Pipes and Vladimir Brovkin.

Richard Pipes was born in Poland on July 11, 1923. As a 16-year-old Jew at the time of Hitler’s invasion, Pipes escaped the country, thanks to a very clever and very wise father, a move that he is convinced saved his life. He credits not only his father for his survival but also providential intervention. That experience, and those that followed, taught Pipes a number of life lessons. In his *Vixi: Memoirs of a Non-Belonger*, he wrote: “The main effect of the Holocaust on my psyche was to make me delight in every day of life that has been granted to me, for I was saved from certain death. I felt and feel to this day that I have been spared not to waste my life on self-indulgence or self-aggrandizement but to spread a moral message by showing, using examples from history, how evil ideas lead to evil consequences. Since scholars have written enough on the Holocaust, I thought it my mission to demonstrate this truth using the example of communism.” Pipes would do exactly that.

Pipes arrived in the United States in July 1940. He ultimately earned a doctorate in history at Harvard in 1950. He would spend the next 50-plus years at Harvard, where he was professor of Russian history, director of the Russian Research Center, and is now Principal Investigator of the excellent Harvard Project on Cold War Studies. He was always well-received at Harvard. His classes were large and full. In 1996, he retired from the classroom, though his association with Harvard continues as, among other things, Baird Professor of History, Emeritus. Among his most important publications are *Russia Under the Old Regime* (1974), *The Russian Revolution* (1990), *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime* (1994), *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive* (1996), and *Communism: A History* (2001).

For decades, Pipes has been consistently attacked by liberal colleagues for being too harsh on communism. In 2005, I interviewed Pipes about this phenomenon. He visited Grove City College at the invitation of the Center for Vision & Values to deliver the annual J. Howard Pew Lecture. Here’s an excerpt:

Q: Dr. Pipes, academic historians have done an extremely thorough, commendable job documenting the horrors and crimes of the fascist Nazis but not the communist Bolsheviks. Why is that?

Pipes: This is quite true. And the answer is difficult. One reason is that many of them [academic historians] politically agree, at least in theory, with many of the goals of the communists—equal distribution of wealth and income equality, for example. Certainly this is one reason. In practice, though, they [communist regimes] achieved none of this. In practice, communism was sheer barbarism. Intellectuals love ideas, and they loved many of these ideas—so, they tolerated even many of the negatives of communism. When I pointed out many of these negatives in *The Russian Revolution*, I was accused of being bitter and unduly harsh.

Q: That's an accusation that historians of the Nazis were never charged with....

Pipes: Yes, that's right.

Q: What explains this double standard? This bias within academia? This unwillingness to dwell on the evils of Bolshevism and communism generally? I heard an interview with Robert Conquest [Hoover Institution, Stanford], who said that while the reason is rooted in the leftist bias of academics, it is not the result of pro-communism by these academics but, rather, the result of "anti-anti-communism." In other words, said Conquest, they dislike the anti-communists. In fact, it seems they detest the anti-communists and view them in much lower repute than even the communists. Does anti-anti-communism explain this?

Pipes: Yes, that's quite right. Academics consider anti-communism and anti-communists to be vulgar and simple-minded. There are very few communists [among these academics], but many, many anti-anti-communists. Plus, they say they need to be impartial in dealing with the Bolsheviks, for example, rather than condemning them in their scholarship—which, in actual effect, in practice, can mean being supportive.... They were rightly partial in dealing with Auschwitz, while, in many cases, ignoring the gulag.

Q: When I speak at universities on the subject of Bolshevik crimes and the Soviet war on religion, and I list death tallies and share horrific quotes from Lenin and Stalin, most of the audience is riveted, as if I'm providing completely new information (which, to them, I am), whereas professors in the crowd sometimes glare at me with contemptuous looks....

Pipes: That's not a surprise.

Q: You say that there is more to the question of this Nazi-Bolshevik double standard among academic Sovietologists; that the question is complicated, and there's more to the answer. Could you elaborate?

Pipes: Well, it is a very complicated question.... Again, one reason why intellectuals are so much more obsessed with Nazi crimes than Soviet crimes—even though in terms of human lives lost the Soviets way exceeded the Nazis—is that intellectuals, by the very nature of their professions, grant enormous attention to words and ideas. And they are

attracted by socialist ideas.<sup>xx</sup> They find that the ideas of communism are praiseworthy and attractive; that, to them, is more important than the practice of communism. Now, Nazi ideals, on the other hand, were pure barbarism; nothing more could be said in favor of them. In the case of the Soviet Union, [intellectuals] could say, “Well, yes, the practice of Soviet communism was perhaps quite bad, but the ideas are wonderful, and if we did not disturb the Soviets and did not fight them or resist them, but, instead, helped them, they might have realized these ideas.”

A second reason is that Germany is in the heart of Europe; it is one of the great civilizations of Europe. Therefore, what happens there affects us in the West far more than what happens in outlying areas. Russia is on the periphery of Europe. We see this today, where there are horrible atrocities committed in the Third World and we don't get very upset about it. If what happened in Russia under the communists had happened in a Western European country, everyone would have been upset by it.

Q: What about the Bolsheviks' brutal persecution of religious believers? Haven't historians ignored this as well?

Pipes: Yes. In fact, in *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*, I devoted a full chapter to the persecution of the Church. To my knowledge, this was the only history of the Russian revolution to include that focus. In [Edward H.] Carr's history and others, there's virtually nothing on the subject.... Russia was a very religious country. It's quite true that the subject has received little to virtually no attention from scholars.

Q: Your book on the Lenin letters, *The Unknown Lenin*, was so crucially important in exposing the real Lenin, the monstrous Lenin, and what Lenin was all about—

Pipes: —but it got almost no attention.

Q: No attention?

Pipes: No. The book did not sell many copies. That's because it depicted Lenin as he really was. And the whole establishment, [including academic Sovietologists in the West,] wanted to depict Lenin as an idealist who was betrayed by Stalin. So, when you have these letters that show how cruel Lenin really was.... They simply didn't want to talk about it. One reviewer on Amazon actually said that I fabricated the letters! Others said, “Well, you show only the nasty side of Lenin.”...

By earning tenure early in his career, and before anti-anti-communism pervaded academia, Pipes managed to survive the condemnation of his colleagues for daring to be so harsh on communism. Unfortunately, a close colleague of Pipes was not able to survive. That colleague is Vladimir Brovkin, who came to Harvard 40 years after Pipes first arrived, and was unable to quickly secure the shield of tenure he would need to fend off the intellectual left.

Like Pipes, Vladimir Brovkin, as a young man, escaped totalitarianism. For Brovkin, however, it was the totalitarian of the far left—the brand that much of the

academic left is loath to condemn. He is a survivor of the communist slave state, with indispensable firsthand knowledge of what Boris Yeltsin called the “horror house” that was the Soviet Union.

A native Russian, Brovkin graduated from Leningrad University in 1973. He came to the United States to earn a master’s degree in Russian studies from Georgetown in 1977 before earning a Ph.D. in history at Princeton in 1984. Having successfully escaped the USSR, Brovkin became a U.S. resident, publishing three books on the Soviet Union and joining the faculty at Harvard as an associate professor of history in 1990.

Yet, in short order, by the late 1990s, Brovkin was being railroaded by fellow Sovietologists for being too anti-Soviet. A series of works on communism that he planned to write for Yale University Press were rejected because of what his critics called the “excessively ‘anti-Bolshevik’ tone” of his work. The alleged problem was evident in the heart of Brovkin’s proposal for the series, especially his desire to focus on the gulag, where he endeavored to explain “how and why a monstrous system of mass terror came into being.” Such an approach, claimed one of the reviewers who rejected Brovkin’s proposal, would “threaten the scholarly reputation of the entire project.” Another reviewer complained that Brovkin had failed to understand that Soviet prisoners were sent to the gulag “in accordance with the laws of the land.”<sup>xxi</sup>

This criticism would be amusing if not so sad. Imagine, by comparison, a scholar on the Nazi concentration camps being chided for not understanding that Jews were sent to Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen “in accordance with the laws of the land.” Indeed, precisely that thought occurred to Dr. Pipes, who a half-century earlier had Jewish friends and relatives sent to such places, where they died. Remarking on Brovkin’s critics, Pipes noted: “I’ve never seen a respectable historian criticize a German scholar for demonizing Hitler or being too anti-Nazi.”<sup>xxii</sup>

**Pipes, who was there at Harvard with Brovkin in the 1990s, agrees that Brovkin got in trouble because he was considered “too passionately anti-communist” and had indeed “demonize[d] the Soviet regime.”<sup>xxiii</sup>**

Brovkin would face excommunication for his sin of anti-communism. It was for such reasons, he says, that he was denied tenure at Harvard and eventually sent packing, exiled to the academic gulag of anti-communists who dare to criticize the USSR. Says Pipes of the revisionists who have blacklisted Brovkin: “they make it very hard for anyone who holds a different point of view to get a job. [Brovkin] is a very good example.”<sup>xxiv</sup>

Jacob Heilbrunn, the senior editor at *The New Republic*—the always honest, always interesting bible of the left—who highlighted Brovkin’s troubles in the 1990s, was even harsher to the revisionists: “The Soviet studies field has been captured by revisionists who dismiss as Cold War humbug the notion that the Soviet Union was a

totalitarian country.... These American revisionists are spouting the same propaganda the Soviet government dispensed from the 1920s onward.”<sup>xxv</sup>

Brovkin is today a teacher in a high school in Florida, having not attained the “proper” worldview of the professoriate. Brovkin has been blacklisted for his anti-communism.

### **“Insane” Solzhenitsyn**

It will astound many to read this, but another Russian often dismissed around the faculty club was no less than the face of the gulag itself: Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the greatest of dissidents. One example with relevance to this April 2009 conference was shared by Mark Hendrickson, economics professor of Grove City College, immediately after the recent August 2008 death of the esteemed anti-communist, who died at the age of 89.

It is impossible to adequately capture here what Solzhenitsyn meant, lived, and how he went about translating it to the West in a special way, most notably through his majestic, *The Gulag Archipelago*, and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, both shocking, autobiographical, Nobel winning, firsthand accounts of the Soviet forced-labor-camp system. These books hit the world in the 1970s, when much of the truth about the Soviet system had not been known, and certainly never so concisely and gruelingly telegraphed as in the pages of Solzhenitsyn. His groundbreaking work unearthed gem after gem to an outside world not yet fully acquainted with the awful Soviet state.

Solzhenitsyn’s salvos in the 1970s, thanks to the unfiltered voice of a free American press, exploded like cannon fire at the Iron Curtain. The Soviets recoiled each time Solzhenitsyn’s words were broadcast in the West, enraged that he had survived the gulag to blow the whistle and tell the truth to a world that needed to hear it—including to American college students who were often being indoctrinated into believing that the systems of the United States and USSR were morally equivalent. That brings me to Mark Hendrickson’s experience.

Hendrickson recalls being handed *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* in January 1974 as a young student at Oxford, given the book as his first assignment by the great Miltonian scholar Archie Burnett. Prior to that, not more than two years earlier, Hendrickson had considered himself a socialist, maybe even a communist. The book was a thunderbolt. “After reading this book,” said Hendrickson, “I forever closed the door on my youthful flirtation with Big Government.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

**On the other hand, some of those who badly needed to hear the message of Solzhenitsyn did not want to hear it, including some in the United States, namely in the academy. As Hendrickson recalled, the message “didn’t stop many liberals in the West from remaining active apologists for the Soviet communists.” Quite the contrary, Solzhenitsyn had made them angry, angry not at Soviet**

**communism but at Solzhenitsyn—at the *anti-communism* on display by the dissident. Hendrickson recalls: “One liberal professor stridently told me that Solzhenitsyn belonged in an insane asylum.”**

This was more than a distasteful, ridiculous remark by the professor. It was actually a literal Soviet talking point. As Hendrickson notes, this was “a telling remark, since the Soviets themselves used insane asylums as a preferred place of imprisonment for dissident intellectuals.”

That is absolutely correct. One who suffered such humiliating treatment was Vladimir Bukovsky, who spent 12 years in the Soviet gulag system, where he was shifted between work camps, prisons, and lunatic asylums, and ultimately treated as a madman for not thoroughly enjoying the utopian paradise.<sup>xxvii</sup> Bukovsky was likely in a nuthouse at the very moment that the liberal American professor suggested to Hendrickson that Solzhenitsyn be sent to one as well.

Indeed, the U.S. Congress, at this same time, was researching this issue anew. In the summer of 1976, the U.S. House subcommittee on international political and military affairs heard testimony on Soviet torture of religious believers. Witnesses spoke of the routine mental abuse pursued in state experimental camps and psychiatric clinics, where Christians in particular were abused. As one dissident put it, Christians were “treated for their faith,” often by heavy drug sedation, as well as the newer tactic that dissidents termed “physical annihilation.”<sup>xxviii</sup>

It was so bad in the Soviet Union that for the first time in U.S. history, the Congress—Democrats and Republicans alike—went on record approving a resolution condemning Soviet persecution of Christians specifically and the insane-asylum treatment generally. It passed 381 to 2 in the House in October 1976.<sup>xxix</sup> And yet, this was nothing compared to the 1920s and 1930s and what Solzhenitsyn himself had witnessed.

The professor who made that point, notes Hendrickson, was not a communist, but a liberal anti-anti-communist. He was most assuredly unwittingly toeing the Moscow line. The professor was, plainly, a dupe, unknowingly doing the truly dirty work of Solzhenitsyn’s torturers. As for the great dissident, it was no surprise to be told he was crazy by his Soviet tormentors inside the Gulag Archipelago, but it would have floored him to hear the charge from an American professor with a PhD.

### ***Trickle-Down Civics***

There are numerous such examples of this anti-anti-communism that could be cited in this paper. One more focus, however, is crucial. Notably, this final case floats between anti-anti-communism and pro-communism, and—sadly—directly into our public schools.

This ideological mindset within the academy has had a terrible trickle-down effect on the teaching of these subjects in high schools. That should not be a surprise, given that the history/civics texts used in high schools are written by these same professors. I know this in an informed, systematic way, given that I was hired to conduct a comprehensive, two-year study on “World History” and “Civics” texts used in high schools. The June 2002 study, which is available on the Internet, looked at roughly 20 texts used in public schools in the state of Wisconsin, which are generally the same texts used in public schools throughout the United States, given that there is little variation from state to state.<sup>xxx</sup>

**The treatment of communism in these texts is both depressing and an outrage. The greatest abuse is the sins of omission: what is not covered. I could not find a single text that listed figures on the total number of deaths by communist governments, even though data was provided in other categories, such as war-time deaths—and even though new, widely publicized data had just been made available in seminal, respected post-Cold War works like *The Black Book of Communism*.**

These texts’ failure to highlight the historical scourge of communism was not repeated for historical events like the Inquisition, the Crusades, slavery, the internment of Japanese Americans—which, incidentally, never mentioned Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s role—or other tragic episodes that featured infinitely lower casualties. “Right-wing” dictators like Cuba’s Batista and Chile’s Pinochet were treated far more harshly than Fidel Castro, who generated far more victims and was still in power.

Likewise, the treatment of Red China was extraordinarily weak, including no condemnations of modern human-rights crimes like the one-child policy. To the contrary, the texts offered outright rosy descriptions of life in the contemporary Chinese classroom and of “youth groups” like the Young Pioneers. One text, titled, *Global Insights*, served up this glossy sidebar on Chinese “Young People:”

Although Chinese students work hard at their studies, they still find time to participate in activities outside of school. Many young people are involved in youth organizations. The Young Pioneers is a children’s organization to which about 50 percent of China’s youngsters belong. Its purpose is to train children to be good citizens. The Communist Youth League, on the other hand, is an honor organization for high school students. To become a member, a student must be at least 15 years of age and have an excellent academic and political record.<sup>xxxi</sup>

This brief, cheery section, which includes no critical examination or explanation—I’ve quoted the section in its entirety, with nothing omitted—is followed up by a touching profile of a Chinese Olympic gymnast. It literally reads like official agitprop from the Chinese Central Committee.

The same text makes the indefensible claim that Mao’s Great Leap Forward—which, it neglects to note, created the largest mass starvation in the history of the world,

with roughly 60 million deaths in about four years—enabled China to “make significant economic gains under communist rule. By the mid-1960s, it was ranked among the ten leading industrial nations in the world.”

Most offensive in these high-school texts was the downright bizarre claim—made by more than one text—that communism, whether in the USSR or Mao’s People’s Republic of China, was a historic, glorious triumph for women. In regard to the first decade of the Bolshevik revolution, one text explained: “legally speaking, Russian women were better off than women anywhere in the world.”<sup>xxxii</sup>

That claim, obviously, is utterly absurd. How could it be remotely possible? What evidence might be somehow summoned by the professors who wrote the text? The authors provide an explanation in the next sentence: Russian girls as early as 1920 had access to abortion.

None of this is a surprise, given that these texts are written by modern professors. You reap what you sow.

And, naturally, this trickles down to the classroom. Teachers are always asked to teach subjects that they do not know—or, at the least, subjects in which they are lacking expertise. In those frequent cases, as any high-school teacher will admit, the teacher refers students to the text: “For the exam, read pages 120 to 130 on Castro’s Cuba.” That is an inevitable, albeit gloomy, prospect.

As far as the effect on individual teachers in the classroom, I could share innumerable personal examples from my own experience and from reports by former students who have entered the classroom as teachers.

One former student, John, Grove City College class of 2000, told me about his first assignment as a teaching assistant in a high-school history class about 30 miles from Grove City, Pennsylvania. John, who had been a double major at Grove City, both education and history, offered to cover some of the lectures on the Soviet Union in the 1930s. His supervising teacher agreed. So, John methodically covered the famine in the Ukraine, Stalin’s purges and Red Terror, the Hitler-Stalin Pact, and gave carefully sourced figures on the millions of Stalin’s victims. It is flatly impossible to give anything but a negative account of Stalin in the 1930s; a biased presentation would be a lecture that was *not* negative. To live in the USSR in the 1930s was to live one of the worst nightmares in human history.

John was pleased at how the students were electrified, many hands in the air, many questions—clearly learning all of these hideous things for the first time in their lives. Yet, he also noticed the dirty looks from his supervisor stationed at the back of the room. At the end of John’s presentation, the teacher testily reprimanded him: “Look, John, I want you to ease up on the Red-baiting and commie-bashing. Besides, these students are going to get a decidedly different view on communism from me.” She promised to teach “a softer side of communism.”

Imagine this situation in reverse and applied to, say, Nazism. The teacher would be written up in the local newspaper and probably fired.

Another student of mine, Sean, Grove City College class of 2001, told me of the elite Christian private school he attended in the Cleveland area, where the newly hired teacher, fresh out of college from a major university in Pennsylvania, told the students that he was a “Christian communist,” and that anyone who he is a Christian should be a communist. “Communism is misunderstood,” was the teacher’s refrain.

That was also the argument pushed by a teacher in the Allegheny County school district, which was relayed to me by a freshman student in a 1996 course I taught at Robert Morris University. This young woman was angry. She said the teacher had “convinced” the entire class that Marxism was a “wonderful” but “misunderstood” system that simply had not been tried correctly. “He absolutely brainwashed us,” she told me.

These are merely three anecdotal examples. Honestly, I have never had an occasion where some young person has not paused to tell me stories like this after I have completed a lecture on the atrocities of communism. The students are often quite bitter, as if they have been misled, misinformed, and betrayed.

## ***Conclusion***

The leftist intelligentsia that dominates higher education, and which writes the history/civics texts used in high schools, and which trains the teachers who teach in high schools, is not in the slightest bit notably anti-communist. Generally, these non-communist liberals do not teach the correct, crucial lessons of communism.

What is more, aside from failing to instruct their students in the crass facts about communism’s unprecedented destruction—its purges, mass famines, show trials, killing fields, concentration camps—these educators are negligent in failing to teach the essential, non-emotional, but crucial Econ 101 basics that contrast capitalism and communism and, thus, that get at the heart of how and why command economies simply do not work. Each semester in my Comparative Politics course at Grove City College, it takes no more than 30 minutes to matter-of-factly lay out the rudimentary differences: Whereas capitalist systems are based on the market forces of supply and demand, which dictate prices and production levels and targets, communist systems are based on central planning, by which a government bureau attempts to manage such things. The latter system is based on private ownership; the former on public ownership. The latter thrives on small government and taxes; the former on large government and taxes, typically progressive income-tax rates and estate taxes—both advocated explicitly by Marx—and much more.

This material is not rocket science. It is easy to teach, if the professor desires. The problem is that it is too often willfully neglected and not being taught. Consequently, Americans today do not know why communism is such a devastating ideology, at both

the level of plain economic theory and in actual historical practice. It is a remarkably hateful system, based on targeted annihilation of entire classes and groups of people, which its practitioners have candidly conceded since 1917.<sup>xxxi</sup> (Nazism sought genocide based on ethnicity; communism sought genocide based on class.)

Most Americans generally know that the USSR was a bad place and that it was good that the Berlin Wall fell; they lived through that. But they know little beyond that, especially young Americans in college today, born around or after the time the wall fell. The current generation of college students was not inspired by JFK's or Ronald Reagan's speeches near the Berlin Wall, by Pope John Paul II's pilgrimage to Poland in 1979, by Margaret Thatcher or Mikhail Gorbachev, by Vaclav Havel or Lech Walesa, by the Solidarity or Charter 77 movements, by the Hungarian uprising of 1956 or the Prague Spring of 1968. No, today's freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, who voted for the first time on November 4, 2008, were born after these historic events. They have received their education on communism from their professors, which means they have received either little or no education at all on the unparalleled slaughter formally known as Marxism-Leninism, or, to the contrary, they have heard only dark, dire lectures about the malevolence of anti-communism—of McCarthyism. They have been carefully trained to view Joe McCarthy as more insidious than Joe Stalin.

All of this makes Americans not only ignorant of communism but prone to support far-left economic policies or to elect people who have been mentored by communists, have links to communists, or subscribe to forms of socialism. An American politician could literally run for office with a slogan of "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," and a shockingly large segment of the public would have no idea what was being espoused.<sup>xxxi</sup> The nation is now extremely vulnerable to the very ideas of collectivism and redistribution that it vanquished in the Cold War.

Moreover, because of the leftist establishment's indoctrination of anti-anti-communism, the left creates bad guys out of the anti-communists who are legitimately blowing the whistle on policies or policy-makers pushing concepts rooted in or resembling Marxist thinking. When the 1960s leftists started saturating higher education—as well as the media—they really knew what they were doing. This was a coup for them and their worldview, with ripple effects we can scarcely imagine.

The Santayana aphorism is correct: those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it. For decades now, we have not taught the next generation what it needs to know from its immediate past. It will come back to bite us, if it has not already. We won the Cold War but are in danger of losing the ideological debate at home. We lost not on the battlefield but in the classroom. It has been a remarkable victory for the anti-anti-communists of the academy.

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<sup>i</sup> Pipes said this in an interview that I did with him during a visit to Grove City College on September 27, 2005, where he gave the annual Pew Lecture. That interview will be further referenced throughout this paper.

<sup>ii</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (NY: Doubleday, 1996), p. 328.

<sup>iii</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 20-1.

<sup>iv</sup> The “opiate of the masses” remark is well-known. The source for the quote, “communism begins where atheism begins,” is Fulton J. Sheen, *Communism and the Conscience of the West* (Indianapolis and NY: Bobbs-Merrill, 1948). Sheen, who spoke and read several languages, translated the quote into English from an un-translated Marx work.

<sup>v</sup> Lenin wrote this in a November 13 or 14, 1913 letter to Maxim Gorky. See: James Thrower, *God’s Commissar: Marxism-Leninism as the Civil Religion of Soviet Society* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), p. 39.

<sup>vi</sup> Quoted in Thrower, *God’s Commissar*, p. 39. Another translation of this quote comes from Robert Conquest, in his “The Historical Failings of CNN,” in Arnold Beichman, ed., *CNN’s Cold War Documentary* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2000), p. 57.

<sup>vii</sup> See: J. M. Bochenski, “Marxism-Leninism and Religion,” in B. R. Bociurkiw et al, eds., *Religion and Atheism in the USSR and Eastern Europe* (London: MacMillan, 1975), p. 11.

<sup>viii</sup> This item was published in a 2002 book by Yale University Press. See: Alexander N. Yakovlev, *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 157.

<sup>ix</sup> See: Daniel Peris, *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

<sup>x</sup> See: Bertram D. Wolfe, *A Life in Two Centuries* (Stein and Day, 1981), pp. 403-4.

<sup>xi</sup> Alexander Yakovlev, the reformer and close Gorbachev adviser, who in the 1990s was tasked with trying to tally Stalin’s victims, reports the 60-million figure in his seminal work published by Yale University Press. See: Yakovlev, *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia*.

<sup>xii</sup> The seminal early work on this subject was Dinesh D’Souza’s ground-breaking 1991 book and excerpted article, “Illiberal Education,” which ran as the cover feature in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

<sup>xiii</sup> These surveys are easy to track down. I cited several of them in Paul Kengor, “Reagan Among the Professors,” *Policy Review*, December 1999 / January 2000. Among data I cited was the fact that Stanford’s department of history had 22 Democrats but just two Republicans; Dartmouth had 10 Democrats and zero Republicans; Cornell had 29 Democrats and not a single Republican. Reflecting the sort of political diversity seen in Castro’s Cuba and the Ayatollah’s theocracy, the University of Colorado-Boulder registers stupefying single-party numbers: In the departments of history, English, and philosophy there were 68 Democrats but no Republicans, according to a survey in the late 1990s. Of the 190 professors surveyed in the university’s social sciences and humanities department, 184 are Democrats and six are Republicans. A nation-wide poll from the early 1990s found 88% of “public affairs” faculty identifying themselves as liberal, 12% claiming to be “middle of the road” and, remarkably, 0% opting for the conservative label.

<sup>xiv</sup> Self-identified conservatives and registered Republicans have declined during the unpopular presidency of Republican George W. Bush. Still, the number of registered Republicans is very similar to the number of Democrats, and self-identified conservatives usually rank around 40% of the public, compared to liberals who fall somewhere in mid- to upper-20% range.

<sup>xv</sup> For yet another interesting twist on this defense, see: Patricia Cohen, “Professors’ Liberalism Contagious? Maybe Not,” *The New York Times*, November 3, 2008.

<sup>xvi</sup> Among these, see Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (NY: Vintage, 1994).

<sup>xvii</sup> I first heard this observation on “anti-anti-communism” from Robert Conquest during a July 1994 interview of Conquest by William F. Buckley Jr. on Buckley’s PBS’s series, “Firing Line.”

<sup>xviii</sup> Burnham said this in his classic, *Suicide of the West*, first published in 1964.

<sup>xix</sup> For instance, the flagship conservative publication *Human Events* recently created a list of top 10 worst books ever written, which included, as the top two, Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* (#1), followed by Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* (#2). That ranking is easily defended solely on numbers: Hitler killed at least 10 million; communism killed at least 100 million. Either way, *Human Events*, a conservative newspaper, deserves to

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be commended for putting both communism and fascism in its top two. Yet, conversely, any liberal version of such a list would not even place the *Communist Manifesto* in the top 10. One could be almost certain that liberals who read the *Human Events* list snickered at its alleged Neanderthal anti-communism.

<sup>xx</sup> Liberals agree with communists on many key sympathies: workers' rights, the spreading and redistribution of wealth, a narrow income gap, a wide array of "free" government services, a favoring of the public sector over the private sector, class-based demagoguery toward the wealthy, progressively high tax rates, an expansive central government, a cynicism of business and capitalism, to name a few. The differences are typically matters of degree rather than principle.

<sup>xxi</sup> Robert Stacy McCain, "Revisionists close the book on Soviet historian," *The Washington Times*, October 19-25, 1998 (National Weekly Edition), p. 14.

<sup>xxii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Mark W. Hendrickson, "Thank you, Alexander Solzhenitsyn," Townhall.com, August 8, 2008.

<sup>xxvii</sup> This information is based on an interview I did with Vladimir Bukovsky on March 5, 2003.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Janis Johnson, "Movement Grows in Congress for Soviet Christian Support," *Washington Post*, July 31, 1976, p. A3. Also see: "Seven Soviet Christians Appeal to World for Aid," *Religious News Services* (published in the *Washington Post*), August 13, 1980, p. C6.

<sup>xxix</sup> Janis Johnson, "Congress Decries Soviet Christian Persecution," *Washington Post*, October 8, 1976, p. B18; and Johnson, "Movement Grows," p. A3.

<sup>xxx</sup> See: Paul Kengor, *Evaluating World History Texts in Wisconsin Public High Schools*, Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, June 2002, Volume 15, No. 4. The website for the report is [www.wpri.org](http://www.wpri.org).

<sup>xxxi</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Ibid, pp. 13-15.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> "We are exterminating the bourgeoisie as a class," explained a candid M.Y. Latsis, Lenin's ferocious Latvian henchman. See: George Leggett, *The Cheka: Lenin's Political Police* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 103.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> See the shocking results of the economic literacy survey released in November 2008 by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. Also, one of the top three syndicated talk-show hosts during the 2008 presidential-election season asked supporters of Barack Obama if they agreed with Obama's slogan, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." The Obama supporters eagerly agreed, not realizing the host was tricking them by quoting Karl Marx. In the 2008 election, I had numerous exchanges with people who said things like, "Even if Obama is a socialist, why would that be a bad thing?" or "So what if he's a socialist, or even if he's a communist. He has a right to believe that in America." The concern, of course, is not whether an America has that right—we have that right—but whether such a person, assuming the person truly believed those things, should be president of the United States of America. The point here is not to assert that Obama is a socialist, but, rather, to emphasize the critical that point that if he were a socialist, or a Democrat concealing socialist-Marxist beliefs, most Americans would neither recognize the difference nor even care. That is at least in part because of very poor education.

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“We now know that even the most authoritative sources, such as the seminal Harvard University Press work, *The Black Book of Communism*, were conservative when estimating *only* 100 million deaths at the hands of communist governments...The grisly history of Red terror—so recent to the human experience that billions of its persecuted victims remain alive to witness to the atrocity—is too often neglected in the modern classroom at the typical American university. That may seem difficult to believe, but it is true, to the great frustration of those aware of the slight and the slaughter.”