

Communist Ideology Being Force-fed to Our Kids On Many College Campuses

By Cliff Kincaid

The prominent “progressive” historian Howard Zinn, whose books are force-fed to young people on many college campuses, was not only a member of the Moscow-controlled and Soviet-funded Communist Party USA (CPUSA) but lied about it, according to an FBI file released late in July.

The file, consisting of three sections totaling 423 pages, was made available on the FBI’s website and released in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from this writer.

Zinn taught in the political science department of Boston University for 24 years, from 1964 to 1988, and has been a major influence on the modern-day “progressive” movement that backed Barack Obama for president.

Although Zinn denied being a member of the CPUSA, the FBI file discloses that several reliable informants in the party identified Zinn as a member who attended party meetings as many as five times a week.

What’s more, one of the files reveals that a reliable informant provided a photograph of Zinn teaching a class on “Basic Marxism” at party headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, in 1951. A participant in the class said that Zinn taught that “the basic teaching of Marx and Lenin were sound and should be adhered to by those present.”

The FBI file also includes information on Zinn’s pro-Castro activism and support for radical groups such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Progressive Labor Party (PLP), Socialist Workers Party (SWP), and Black Panther Party. Much of the latter was in connection with Zinn’s support for a communist military victory in Vietnam. His dealings with the Communist regime in Hanoi included a visit to the communist capital.

Zinn was included on the “Security Index” and “Communist Index” maintained by the FBI. The “Security Index” was more ominous and included individuals who could be detained in the event of a national emergency.

The files confirm Zinn’s membership in the party from 1948-1953 and one says he was “believed to be a CP member as of October, 1956.” However, he denied membership in the party when interviewed by the FBI in 1953 and 1954 and claimed to be just a “liberal” or “leftist.” He did admit involvement in several CPUSA front organizations, the documents say.

A 1964 FBI memorandum refers to Zinn as “a professor and writer who has a background of known membership in the Communist Party (CP) and has continued to demonstrate procommunist and anti-United States sympathies.” It says that while Zinn had denied membership in the CPUSA, his denial “was not supported by facts”—a reference to the substantial evidence and eyewitness testimony provided by informants in the CPUSA.

In 1961, it says, Zinn “attempted to recruit students to attend 8th World Youth Festival [a communist-front gathering] and was described as pro-Castro in 1962. He publicly protested United States demand for withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba.”

Hence, Zinn wanted the United States and its citizens to be vulnerable to a Soviet nuclear attack.

In 1966, Zinn’s name appeared on a list of sponsors of a testimonial dinner for Herbert Aptheker of the American Institute for Marxist Studies. Aptheker was a member of the national committee of the CPUSA. After his death earlier this year, tributes for Zinn came from such luminaries as Bob Herbert of *The New York Times*, Eric Foner in *The Nation*, *The Huffington Post*, convicted cop-killer Mumia Bu0Jamal, Jane Fonda, Ralph Nader, and Bill Moyers.

A video tribute to Zinn has been posted by the Institute for Policy Studies, the pro-Marxist think tank in Washington, D.C. Nader was one of the speakers, praising *The Progressive* magazine for regularly running Zinn’s column, including one in which Zinn had attacked Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians.

For its part, *The Progressive* carried three tributes to Zinn after his death. “I hope, in sharing our thoughts, we can mitigate the grief and summon the energy to carry on. That’s what Howard would have wanted,” said Matthew Rothschild, editor of *The Progressive*.

Nader proposed a “Zinn Institute for Peace and Justice” to carry on his work.

But in the same way that he tried to deceive the FBI agents who interviewed him about his CPUSA membership, it is now obvious that Zinn had been deceiving his “progressive” and “liberal” fellow-travelers for decades.

This includes most recently the Hollywood left.

Zinn’s book, *A People’s History of the United States*, was made into a film, “The People Speak” which aired on the History Channel on cable television. It includes performances by actors and artists such as Matt Damon, Josh Brolin, Viggo Mortensen, Marisa Tomei, Bruce Springsteen, John Legend, and Danny Glover.

Dr. Libby H. O’Connell, senior vice president for outreach and chief historian for A&E Television Networks, described the film in glowing terms, saying that Zinn was “moving his message from high schools and college campuses to film...” and that A&E’s History channel was honored to be the vehicle for that. She said that “The performers’ commitment of Zinn’s message makes this [film] a labor of love.”

A&E Television Networks is a joint venture of The Hearst Corporation, Disney-ABC Television Group and NBC Universal.

In the film, actor Matt Damon observes, “Change doesn’t come from the top, but rather from the bottom. Without everyday citizens pushing to make a difference, there would be no America.” Damon reads the Declaration of Independence in the production.

But viewers were never told that Zinn favored the imposition of communist dictatorships on the people for whom he was supposedly speaking. And that his commitment, at least when he was a CPUSA member, was to the Soviet Union, not the United States or its founding documents.

However, at the time of the airing of “The People Speak” last December 13, some critics detected something was seriously wrong with the propagandistic effort. Liberal television reviewer Tom Shales of the *Washington Post* called the film “heavy-handed and agitprop.”

Worse than that, we now know that Zinn had been a secret communist who duped the Hollywood figures and rock stars into playing roles in his Marxist propaganda campaign.

And the campaign continues. “The People Speak” is now being distributed in the form of “The People Speak DVDs,” complete with screening kits and gear. Proceeds go to the “Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport” community campaign “dedicated to extending Zinn’s vision and inspiring people to stand up and SPEAK OUT.”

Although one FBI document says that Zinn’s listing on the FBI security index was cancelled in 1955, another document shows Acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray informing the U.S. Secret Service in 1972 that Zinn was “potentially dangerous” because of various factors, including his involvement in groups “engaged in activities inimical to [the] U.S.”

Of course, this is not how the “progressives” who idolized Zinn and voted for Obama see it. Dave Zirin wrote in the “progressive” publication, *The Nation*, after Zinn’s death that he was “a historian who made history” and that “we should strive to build on Howard’s work and go out and make some history.” He also spoke at the Washington, D.C. tribute to Zinn, calling him “our teacher” and a “fellow fighter for social injustice.”

Bill Bigelow of the “Rethinking Schools” website said Zinn was “an activist—a socialist, a pacifist, an anti-racist, who never strayed from his conviction that humanity was capable of making this a much better world.”

That “much better world” turns out to be communism.

While Zinn usually avoided sounding too pro-communist in his public statements, he gave an interview in 2003 defending collaboration with ANSWER, an “anti-war” group sponsored by the Communist Workers World Party. “I don’t believe in setting political test for a broad-based movement that is centered on one issue, like ending the war,” Zinn said.

He rejected “red-baiting,” explaining, “My own attitude is: if there is a demonstration against the war, and I believe in the goal of ending a war, I won’t ask who organized the demonstration. You march with people who have signs representing many different groups and ideologies but you are all there for the same purpose, stopping the war. I distrust the sincerity of people who peck away at broad-based movements by point to organizer or participants who have special political positions.”

He restated: “We should not give political tests to people who do good organizing work.”

Asked if the “war on terrorism” was “just a cover to perpetuate US global hegemony,” Zinn replied, “Exactly. It is also a way to cover up the failure to solve domestic problems and build support for a President [George W. Bush] who got into office through a political coup and needs to show he has a mandate he doesn’t deserve.”

Not surprisingly, the Socialist Workers Party and International ANSWER also sent in tributes posted on the official Howard Zinn web page.

On the website of the Center for American Progress, the pro-Obama group funded by billionaire George Soros, Matthew Yglesias conceded the point that Zinn’s popular *People’s History* book was “neither good history nor good politics, offering basically nothing in terms of ways to think about solutions to the problems of the world...” But he said it was nevertheless ready by “most of the best people” and “that’s a pretty impressive achievement.”

It is shocking that so many of these “best people” were taken in by Zinn’s secret agenda of installing communist dictatorships in such places as Cuba and Vietnam in the name of “the people.”

Now, in death he may be hoping to see “the people” take power in the United States.

**Cliff Kincaid, Editor of Accuracy in Media, can be contacted at cliff.kincaid@aim.org.*