

CONSERVATIVE THINK TANKS AND HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY:  
SELECTED PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND THEIR VIEWS  
ON ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Susan Marie Willis

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Approved by Doctoral Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_Advisor  
Department of Educational  
Foundations and Inquiry

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate College Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was two-fold: (1) to describe four conservative public policy research institutions as organizations in comparison with more traditional policy organizations such as the Brookings Institution, and (2) to examine their views on current issues in higher education in relation to selected national higher education reports. The four conservative "think tanks" chosen were the Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute, the Free Congress Foundation, and the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

A review of the literature and related research revealed that no study of this topic had been undertaken previously. Data about the conservative think tanks were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Telephone interviews with selected individuals were also employed in a very limited way. Ten national higher education reports published between 1980-90, and a survey of articles published in *Change* magazine during the same period, were examined to discover which higher education issues were receiving attention from professional educators. Articles and lectures published by the conservative policy institutions were likewise examined to determine the content of their views on higher education issues.

The study revealed that these conservative think tanks are substantially different from more traditional policy institutions in their open advocacy of a particular viewpoint, and in the relative weakness of the scholarly credentials and policy experience of their personnel, compared to more established policy organizations. Their positions on higher education issues focused on a perceived decline in the teaching of Western culture, opposition to affirmative action and multicultural studies, and calls for decreases in funding for higher education. By contrast, the issues addressed in the national reports and in *Change* were concerned

with opportunity, access, diversity in higher education populations, and belief that the federal government has an important responsibility in the funding of American higher education. On only one point was there agreement: that the undergraduate liberal arts curriculum should be strengthened.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Reasons for the Study .....	3
Statement of the Problem .....	8
A Note on Special Terms.....	10
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY .....	12
Choice of Methodology .....	12
Delimitations of the Study.....	13
Identification of the Think Tanks .....	15
Data Collection .....	15
Changes in Original Research Plan .....	17
CHAPTER THREE: POLICY EXPERTS AND "THINK TANKS" .....	19
CHAPTER FOUR: AMERICAN CONSERVATISM AND CONSERVATIVE THINK TANKS .....	33
The Old Right .....	34
The Neoconservatives .....	37
The Libertarians.....	40
The New Right.....	41
The Heritage Foundation.....	46
The American Enterprise Institute.....	55
The Free Congress Foundation.....	60
	Page

The Ethics and Public Policy Center .....	64
CHAPTER FIVE: THE NATIONAL REPORTS, CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGY, AND ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION.....	68
The Department of Education.....	69
Dominant Themes in the New Right Critique .....	74
The Conservative Think Tanks and Higher Education .....	78
The National Higher Education Reports .....	92
<i>Change Magazine</i> .....	104
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	108
BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY .....	118
REFERENCES .....	123
APPENDIX A.....	134
APPENDIX B .....	136

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 has been viewed as ushering in a new era of conservatism in American society and politics. There was the full expectation that federal policy, especially domestic policy, would be recast in a more conservative mold. A basic tenet of this conservative approach proved to be, as expected, a retreat from the formerly activist role of the federal government, both in funding and in initiating social programs, including those concerned with higher education.

However, developments on the right of the political spectrum in the United States which made possible the Reagan and Bush presidencies reflect a fundamental questioning of many of the accepted post-World War II assumptions concerning economic, social, and foreign policy: a questioning which had been gathering strength and momentum for at least two decades prior to the 1980 election. It has been suggested that this alteration in the American political climate was spurred in part by the influence of certain conservative intellectuals and writers disillusioned with the idealistic enterprises of the New Frontier and Great Society years.<sup>1</sup> Michael Harrington named these converts to conservatism “neoconservatives” (e.g., Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, and Nathan Glazer), and, while they may not always support particular policies of the conservative Republican administration, it may be argued

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<sup>1</sup>Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 4

that they paved the way for Reagan's election by lending overall intellectual legitimacy to conservative philosophies of government.<sup>2</sup>

The subject of this dissertation is selected research institutes and foundations - "think tanks" -- which manifest a neoconservative or New Right ideological orientation, particularly the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Free Congress Foundation, and the Ethics and Public Policy Center. These organizations will be discussed with reference to the more traditionally-conceived think tanks such as the Brookings Institution and the RAND Corporation. More specifically, this investigation focuses on those conservative think tanks that publish material related to policy formation for higher education, the content and philosophical values espoused in that published material, the channels of dissemination chosen for these publications, and a comparison of the issues in higher education policy addressed by these institutions, including those addressed in some of the more important national education reports and studies of the past decade. These reports include, but are not limited to, such documents as *Three Thousand Futures* (1980), *A Nation at Risk* (1983), and *One-Third of a Nation* (1988). Some of them, e.g., *A Nation at Risk*, were issued by the federal government; others were published by prestigious education study groups in organizations like the Carnegie Foundation and the American Council on Education.

In addition to the explicit presentation and discussion of information on higher education policy views of selected conservative policy research institutes, the author places these institutions in an organizational and political context intended to illuminate their origins and their current role in public policy debate. Any consideration of conservative think tanks must take into account the general development of this type of institution as a factor in the federal policymaking process,

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<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.

as well as how the various conservative policy groups themselves perceive their own and other think tanks. Some attention is given also to the place of conservative philosophy – in its variations – in American political thought, particularly as it is expressed in educational philosophy.

It is not possible, of course, to speak of a monolithic conservative philosophy. There are other strains of thought on the political right which, while often reaching conclusions very similar to those of the neoconservatives, derive more from the populism and single-issue orientations of the New Right and the religious right. It is in the striving for intellectual respectability and for opportunities to have an influence on public policy formation that various elements of the American right began employing, largely since the early 1970s, the tactics of intellectuals and consultants who have provided rationales for the activist, expanding federal presence seen in domestic policy over the past twenty-five years. The establishment of public policy research institutes and think tanks, ideologically conservative yet intended to be on the model of RAND and Brookings, has been an expression of this search for legitimacy and influence. It is entirely fitting that the so-called conservative "revolution," placing as it does so much value on the power of ideas,<sup>3</sup> be examined from the standpoint of the think tank which has been in this century the point of intersection for those in transit between government and the university, trading both in policy and in ideas.

#### Reasons for the Study

One of the most important justifications for this study is that in the last fifteen years there has been a proliferation of conservative institutes and foundations which have created a completely new source of policy rationalization for American

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<sup>3</sup>Sidney Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment: From Conservative Ideology to Political Power* (New York: Random House/Times Books,

conservatives and New Rightists. Indeed, observers from all sides have agreed that the Reagan victory in 1980 signaled fundamental change in what had been since the New Deal the “liberal consensus” in American public policy. Easterbrook credits the emergence of the new conservative intelligentsia with upsetting a whole generation of thinking about government and transforming the basic terms of public policy debate – from an emphasis on an expansionist welfare state to one more limited and subject to a “free market” standard in every sphere of endeavor.<sup>4</sup> Blumenthal, delving more deeply into the ideological and political undergrowth, asserts that there has appeared a conservative “counter-establishment” since the early 1970s in reaction to what they traditionally have regarded as the “liberal Establishment” of big business, big government, the universities, and the media. Because conservatives see a hegemonic liberal network everywhere, Blumenthal calls their efforts to counter it “shadow liberalism”: they derive meaning from what they define as their opposite, while seeking to emulate its perceived methods. “Their shadow liberalism spurs them on, but also marks the edge of their universe; if they sail beyond it, they fear they will fall off.”<sup>5</sup>

The conservative think tanks have been an integral and intentional part of the conservative ascendance in political discourse. In *A Time for Truth* (1979), William Simon, later Treasury Secretary in the Reagan administration, wrote:

Funds generated by business...must rush  
by multimillions to the aid of liberty...to  
funnel desperately needed funds to scholars,

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1986), p. xiv; Robert K. Landers, "Think Tanks: The New Partisans?" *Editorial Research Reports*, 1:471, June 20, 1986.

<sup>4</sup>Gregg Easterbrook, "Ideas Move Nations: How Conservative Think Tanks Have Helped Transform the Terms of Political Debate," *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1986, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup>Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, pp. 4-6.

social scientists, writers, and journalists who understand the relationship between political and economic liberty.<sup>6</sup>

He also called on business to "cease the mindless subsidizing of colleges and universities whose departments of economics, government, politics, and history are hostile to capitalism."<sup>7</sup> Even earlier, in 1970, Patrick Buchanan -- now widely known as a television commentator with right-wing views -- suggested, "There is a clear need for a conservative counterpart to Brookings which can generate ideas Republicans can use."<sup>8</sup>

Not only is it germane to examine these research institutes because their existence is a socio-political phenomenon; their own self-proclaimed importance, and perhaps the perception in the wider public that they *are* powerful, renders them interesting. Burton Pines, Senior Vice President and Director of Research at the Heritage Foundation, believes that these think tanks reinforce and guide the conservative resurgence:

In the war of ideas, traditionalism is winning victories and framing the manner in which issues are considered. Solid scholarship is producing evidence and amassing data to bolster traditionalist arguments....The very weight of this intellectual output is tilting the scale of opinion to the right and snapping the hold on the nation's minds long wielded by the conventional wisdom of the left.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Quoted in John S. Saloma, *Ominous Politics: The New Conservative Labyrinth* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p. 65.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>8</sup>Quoted in Trevor Armbrister, "Think Tanks With Clout," *Readers Digest*, January, 1982, p. 180. While *Readers Digest* is by no means a scholarly source, its use here is indicative of the relatively scarce material on conservative think tanks.

<sup>9</sup>Burton Y. Pines, *Back to Basics: The Traditionalist Movement That is Sweeping Grass-Roots America* (New York: William Morrow, 1982), pp. 246-247.

“We are,” he has said, “the intellectual shock troops of the conservative revolution.”<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, the Heritage Foundation was credited with being the shadow government of the Reagan administration, providing the massive *Mandate For Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration* as a transition blueprint for the new president,<sup>11</sup> and basking in visits and praise from high-ranking administration officials. It was widely believed among educators that President Reagan would adopt the *Mandate* education recommendations in full, particularly because so many individuals serving on the Department of Education transition team had helped write the report.<sup>12</sup> Journalists even reported that Soviet leader Gorbachev was aware of how much influence the Heritage Foundation wielded.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, these research institutes are important because a number of research fellows and scholars connected with the think tanks have served, or are serving, in the Reagan/Bush administrations. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett came out of the American Enterprise Institute, and had ties to the Heritage Foundation, before he joined the Reagan cabinet. Former United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick is still a fellow of the American Enterprise Institute. Former Attorney General Edwin Meese and former Deputy Secretary of State Elliott Abrams are fellows of the Heritage Foundation.<sup>14</sup> According to one Heritage

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<sup>10</sup>Quoted in Amy Wilentz, "On the Intellectual Ramparts," *Time*, September 1, 1986, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup>Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup>Sheldon Steinbach, *et al.*, "Three Perspectives on the Report on Post-Secondary Education by the Heritage Foundation," *Change*, March, 1981, p. 30.

<sup>13</sup>Amy Reilly, "Heritage Ascendant: Even Gorbachev Knows the Power of This Right-Wing Outfit," *Fortune*, June, 1986, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup>"Capital Clout," *Foundation News*, 30:4, July/August, 1989, p. 15.

official, “Dozens and dozens of ‘movement conservatives’ have found jobs at the second and third levels of virtually every government agency.”<sup>15</sup>

Yet another reason for this study is its timeliness. There has now been a sufficient amount of time since the founding of the Heritage Foundation in 1973, and the subsequent flowering of its sister institutions, for more reflection on the content of their higher education policy. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the conservative think tanks and higher education policy have been neatly joined as subjects in the recent outburst of criticism leveled at the universities by writers such as Dinesh D’Souza, a policy analyst at the American Enterprise Institute. In his book *Illiberal Education* he assails everything from affirmative action policies on campus to deconstructionist literary theory.<sup>16</sup> Charles Heatherly, a senior staff member at the Heritage Foundation, has proclaimed:

The universities are being transformed into a base-camp for a guerilla war against the rest of society, a war that is being financed by the victims – the students, parents, corporations, and philanthropic institutions that finance higher education.<sup>17</sup>

The nature and scope of these arguments on higher education, encompassing as they do such broad areas as freedom of speech and interpretations of Western civilization in the curriculum, presage future ideological battles in academe. They may also reflect the evolving power of the conservative think tanks to define the terms of social

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<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.* This seems ironic, in view of the chronic rightist accusation that the Washington establishment controls a vast liberal network.

<sup>16</sup>Dinesh D’Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

<sup>17</sup>Quoted in "Salvatori Center for Academic Leadership," unsigned, unnumbered pamphlet, Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, [n.d.].

and cultural debate. However, as subsequent chapters in this study demonstrate, the concerns and values emerging on the right in reference to higher education are not new at all.

Given the fact that public policy research institutes, independent of the state and the universities, are unique to the United States,<sup>18</sup> the emergence of new ones with an explicitly partisan viewpoint is vital to a more complete understanding of perceived changes in the American political climate throughout the 1980s. They are thus significant as cultural phenomena, and as such, an ethnographic/historical examination of their origins and activities, even if limited to the area of pronouncements on higher education, will serve to shed light on contemporary social and intellectual currents, particularly as the conservative vision is articulated as a philosophical basis for public policy.

#### Statement of the Problem

It is appropriate to draw together some basic factual information about the conservative think tanks, and the older, prototypical institutions such as RAND and the Brookings Institution, in order to set a context for discussion of their publications and philosophical views. There are three main components of this research topic which may be expressed in the following questions:

What are the organizational characteristics of these think tanks?

How did they originate?

How are they structured?

How large are they in terms of staff and budget?

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<sup>18</sup>Donald T. Critchlow, *The Brookings Institution, 1916-1952: Enterprise and the Public Interest in a Democratic Society* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985), p. 6.

How are they funded? Are they non-profit, tax- exempt?

Do they fund others?

As organizations, are they registered as

lobbyists, or are any of their staff members  
registered as lobbyists?

How are they similar and different to older, more  
established policy research institutes?

What are the philosophical values reflected in their publications on  
higher education policy, and which issues do they address?

How many and what types of publications

(monographs, position papers, etc.) are  
produced on higher education topics?

What is the ideological cast of this material?

Neoconservative? New Right? Libertarian?

Which topics are addressed, compared to those in the

national higher education reports and such  
organs as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Change  
Magazine*?

What scholarly credentials do the authors of this material have?

How are the publications and viewpoints of these think  
tanks disseminated?

What audiences are targeted in the distribution of publications?

Do they sell most of their publications, or are they distributed free?

Do they sponsor conferences and public forums?

Do staff members from these institutions testify before  
government agencies and committees? How often?

A Note on Special Terms

When the late Michael Harrington baptized Irving Kristol, Daniel P. Moynihan, Michael Novak, *et al.* as “neoconservatives,” he was using that term in the sense that these men were “newly” converted to conservatism from their previous positions as liberals or leftists. Besides their philosophical rebirth, these individuals also have in common their roots and affiliations in journalism and the academic community, many of them in the so-called Eastern intellectual Establishment. It is this characteristic which distinguishes them among the strands of thought on the right, and which is used most often by writers such as Peele and Crawford to differentiate them from the New Right. Crawford, in *Thunder on the Right*, is very explicit in defining the *neoconservatives* as true intellectuals, as opposed to members of the *New Right*, such as Richard Viguerie and Paul Weyrich, and the *religious right*, such as the Reverend Jerry Falwell, all of whom he describes as suspicious of the cultural and intellectual traditions of the East and the universities, and as being very much in the lineage of populist, anti-intellectual “common men.”<sup>19</sup> The self-made individualists of the so-called Sunbelt and the Far West are practical examples. Likewise, Crawford writes of the *libertarians* as being the “borderline anarchists” of conservatism because they stress individual freedom above all other values, even at the sacrifice of national defense and nearly all public services.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Alan Crawford, *Thunder on the Right: The "New Right" and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 173.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 98.

Because it will be necessary at times in this dissertation to draw meaningful distinctions among these conservative cohorts, and because these labels and definitions have largely been accepted by the groups themselves,<sup>21</sup> they are so used. The term “conservative” is used in a general sense when the more precise definitions are not essential to clarity. Differentiation among the viewpoints and motivating values of these groups is made in greater depth in Chapters Four and Five.

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<sup>21</sup>Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 55.

## CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

### Choice of Methodology

An historical research design was chosen for this study as being most appropriate to the subject matter. Not only was the investigation concerned with actions performed or completed in the past, e.g., the founding of certain conservative policy institutes, but it also encompassed present and ongoing activities of these organizations and individuals associated with them. Therefore, ethnographic techniques were used to a very limited degree, i.e., telephone interviews with individuals at the four think tanks. “Ethnographic” is most descriptive of this research technique in the sense that, as with the historical method, the researcher typically does not start with specific hypotheses but rather with a broad theoretical framework.<sup>22</sup> In addition, “ethnographic” connotes the present and continuing aspect of the researcher’s inquiry, e.g., in the telephone interviews, current staff members at the think tanks were questioned about immediate or very recent events such as the acute interest in multiculturalism and so-called “political correctness” on college and university campuses.

The main methodology employed, however, was the historical. Although the prevailing research methodology in education remains the quantitative approach modeled on research design in the natural sciences, the historical lends itself more usefully to the interpretation of complex ideas and philosophies. As Borg and Gall have pointed out, historical research in education allows detection and consideration of interrelationships through time which may not be possible with the quantitative

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<sup>22</sup>Walter R. Borg and Meredith D. Gall, *Educational Research: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 493.

method.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, there are some who urge greater use of this methodology. Thelin asserts, "Serious study of the history of higher education ought [to] strive to provide contemporary leaders with a grasp of the complexities – not the simplicities – of the past," in order to question previous convenient stereotypes and to see issues and problems in context.<sup>24</sup> Certainly the confluence of social and political ideas which make up the American conservative spectrum, and which are so integrally related to these think tanks, cannot be examined to much benefit without the aid of historical research and analysis.

Likewise, the method of gathering data in historical research is different to that used in quantitative designs. The historian *discovers* data as she moves through the research process, a process which cannot be entirely determined at the beginning, but which is guided by the initial research plan,<sup>25</sup> and modified or not as subsequent discoveries warrant. Neither is the organization of the historically-based dissertation like that of the quantitative model. The material typically is arranged chronologically or, as in this study, topically by chapter.

#### Delimitations of the Study

The main method of obtaining data for this study was an examination of both primary and secondary documents related to (1) the structure and functioning of the conservative policy research institutes as organizations, and (2) the substance of their materials concerning issues in higher education, as compared to those enunciated in selected national education reports. Telephone interviews with certain staff members

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 805.

<sup>24</sup>John R. Thelin, "The History of Higher Education: An Agenda for the Useful Past as a Lively Art" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Chicago, Illinois, March 15-17, 1985), U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 259 615, 1985.

of these think tanks were used in a more minor way to gather supplementary information.

Because the main focus of this investigation is the policy stance toward higher education taken by conservative think tanks, four delimitations of scope were imposed. First, only the published or otherwise publicly-distributed materials of these institutions were considered, on the assumption that efforts to influence public policy and to further the legitimacy of a philosophy through the dissemination of ideas is inherently a public activity. Second, only those conservative think tanks located in the Washington, D.C. area and dealing at least in some part with higher education issues were targeted for examination. Although there are numerous conservative and New Right think tanks across the country, it is logical to assume that those closest to the seat of federal policy-making power have chosen that location for a reason, much as have the national education associations on DuPont Circle. Third, for purposes of comparing these newer, conservative think tanks to those more traditionally conceived research institutions, particularly for comparing their staffing and structures, the Brookings Institution, the RAND Corporation, and – more tangentially – the Sage and Spencer foundations and the Hudson Institute – were chosen simply on the basis of their longevity and/or popular familiarity. (In a manual search of the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* spanning the past twenty years, the RAND Corporation and Brookings Institution were found to be named most often under “research institutes”). Fourth, the determination or measurement of influence exerted by these institutions on public policy, legislative or otherwise, is not considered in this study.

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<sup>25</sup>Borg and Gall, *Educational Research*, p. 801.

### Identification of the Think Tanks

The topic for this dissertation was suggested by an article in which Easterbrook discusses the emergence of the conservative think tanks.<sup>26</sup> Preliminary inquiry was carried out by contacting the Heritage Foundation because it had already been identified in the article as a prominent conservative policy organization. William Smith, an assistant to the Director of Education Policy Studies, confirmed that the Heritage Foundation does some research in the area of higher education, and that three other institutions in the Washington, D.C. vicinity do also: the Ethics and Public Policy Center, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Free Congress Foundation.<sup>27</sup> Douglas Alexander of the Free Congress Foundation was contacted also, and he replied as had Smith, unprompted, naming his own institution and the same three others.<sup>28</sup> These four think tanks were thus identified initially as the focus for this research.

### Data Collection

Literature on conservative policy institutions' views on issues in higher education was consulted, as well as that for information concerning the organization, structure, and functioning of the think tanks as institutions.

With the initial terms and names from the Easterbrook article, an online computer search was made of the education, social sciences, and humanities databases. The terms employed included "think tank," "research institute," "public policy institute," "conservatives and education (higher)," and various combinations of

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<sup>26</sup>Easterbrook, "Ideas Move Nations."

<sup>27</sup>Statement by William Smith, assistant to the Director of Education Policy Studies at the Heritage Foundation, telephone conversation, April 24, 1986.

these words. This search yielded almost nothing. Searches of the ERIC database and InfoTrak, as well as a manual search of the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* covering the past twenty-five years, produced enough citations to proceed with the study. Judicious plundering of the bibliographies in these citations was also helpful, as was the gradual generation of a list of persons attached to, or writing for, the think tanks, e.g., Onalee McGraw, Edwin Delattre, Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., Burton Pines, Christopher DeMuth, Irving Kristol, William Bennett, Gary Bauer, and Paul Weyrich.

In addition to consulting the publication lists of these think tanks, their periodical publications, such as the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review*, were examined for any pertinent articles on higher education topics. The national education reports dealing with higher education were chosen based on an end-of-the-decade listing of landmark studies in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.<sup>29</sup> These articles and publications by the think tanks, and reports both from education study groups and the federal government, were examined to determine which higher education issues were emphasized, as well as the philosophical treatment accorded these issues.

As supplemental information, a limited number of telephone interviews was conducted with various staff members at the conservative research institutes. The names of these contacts were obtained from the annual reports and other informational publications of the think tanks. These interviews were intended solely to gain more detailed information concerning (1) the questions which constitute the Statement of the Problem in Chapter One, and (2) specific knowledge which the

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<sup>28</sup>Statement by Douglas Alexander, staff assistant at the Family Protection Center, Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, telephone conversation, April 24, 1986.

<sup>29</sup>*Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 7, 1989.

individual staff member would be expected to have about his or her own area of responsibility within the organization, e.g., the Director of the Resource Bank at the Heritage Foundation was asked what the criteria are for an individual to be included in the resource bank listing. Similarly, a research staff member was asked how the staff analysts are chosen, how long they typically stay in residence at the institution, and where they typically go upon leaving. (See Appendix A for a list of supplemental questions, in addition to those posed in Chapter One in the Statement of the Problem).

A summary of the points covered with each person interviewed by telephone was sent to the individual for verification of accuracy. (See Appendix B).

#### Changes in Original Research Plan

In the original research proposal the Free Congress Foundation and the Ethics and Public Policy Center were included in the four conservative policy research institutes to be considered in this study. The choice to include them was based primarily on information provided by two individuals, William Smith and Douglas Alexander, of the Heritage Foundation and the Free Congress Foundation, respectively, in the early stages of this research. They were contacted by the author's calling those institutions and asking to speak with someone on the education policy staff. The information provided led partially down a fruitless path, however. In the course of the research it was discovered that neither of these institutions had published any material on higher education. Indeed, the Free Congress Foundation apparently had confined its policy efforts to issues in K-12 education. It is possible that at the time Mr. Smith and Mr. Alexander were speaking, in 1986, they did in fact anticipate that these two institutions would place more emphasis on educational issues than came to be the case. Also, the gentlemen may not have been as familiar

with other think tanks as with their own. Neither individual is with those institutions any longer.

In general, the telephone interview approach did not yield very much information of any substance, and was not particularly useful to the study. For the purposes and scope of this study, the primary and secondary published sources were of most value and importance.

Additionally, it was discovered that the Ethics and Public Policy Center and the Free Congress Foundation are small operations, and in no way are mentioned in the literature to the extent of the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. Therefore, they did not receive the same amount of analytical attention in this study as was intended in the original research proposal.

Finally, the Spencer Foundation is not a think tank, strictly speaking. It has a considerable endowment (\$217.5 million in March, 1991),<sup>30</sup> from which it disburses support for research on all aspects of education, but it does not have resident or adjunct scholars. It operates almost exclusively as a grant-making organization. Therefore, it was not included as an example of traditional think tanks in Chapter Three.

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<sup>30</sup>*Annual Report*, Spencer Foundation, Chicago, Illinois, 1991, p. 4.

### CHAPTER THREE: POLICY EXPERTS AND "THINK TANKS"

The terms “policy,” “policy analysis,” and “policy expert” are so common in contemporary usage that it is easy to forget that they are largely a twentieth-century invention, and that the idea of a “policy research institute” is even more recent. Inherent in the public familiarity with “policy” activities – a president’s advisory council, congressional hearings on financial aid for college students, policy consultants featured on television news programs when there is an international crisis afoot – is the assumption that public policy should be made with the advice, if not the consent, of experts.

Indeed, “policy” is inextricably linked with the notion of expertise. Moreover, it also possesses a connotation of rationality and science. Scruton defines policy as “[The] general principles which guide the making of laws, administration, and executive acts of government in domestic and international affairs,” adding that “policy should be consistent, reasonable, and acceptable to those with power to oppose it.”<sup>31</sup> Landau affirms the implicit rationality of policymaking and policy analysis as applied science, noting that policies are theories, programs are experiments, and policy analysis is used to discover error throughout the process.<sup>32</sup> Dery states that the most important aspect of policy analysis is to develop “policy-mindedness toward problems, simply because the goal of policy analysis is to solve practical problems.”<sup>33</sup> During the last one hundred years the increasing complexity of industrial society in the United States has seen a congruent growth in government

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<sup>31</sup>Roger Scruton, *A Dictionary of Political Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), p. 358.

<sup>32</sup>Martin Landau, "The Proper Domain of Policy Analysis," *American Journal of Political Science*, 21:425, May, 1977.

activity to deal with challenges such as the heightened intensity of world conflict, acute economic expansion and contraction, the rise of labor and other powerful interest groups, and the extension of greater public education opportunities. In addition there has been a changing attitude throughout this century in expectations of government responsibilities: the general public which once largely favored minimal government now accepts a much greater government role at all levels.<sup>34</sup> In a complex society where resources may not satisfy all competing interests, the government must make policy decisions as to which social problems and needs are addressed. In a democracy a rational process of policy analysis which includes evaluation of alternative solutions is preferable, as Nagel asserts, to repeated trial and error.<sup>35</sup>

Emerging from the disciplines of political science and public administration, the area of policy studies as a self-conscious professional field is relatively new, dating from the late 1960s. No doubt it was the social and political upheavals of that period, extending into the early 1970s, which focused attention on the need for greater linkage between the theoretical aspects of political science and the more narrow and pragmatic ones of public administration. The Vietnam War, the civil rights and women's movements, and the greater awareness of other social problems brought to light by Great Society programs resulted in the appearance of a veritable policy industry.<sup>36</sup> While the role of such policy experts in representative government is professional policy studies that an objectivity in keeping with scientific inquiry

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<sup>33</sup>David Dery, *Problem Definition in Policy Analysis* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1984), p. 113.

<sup>34</sup>Stuart S. Nagel, *Contemporary Public Policy Analysis* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1984).  
p. 10.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

questioned by Critchlow,<sup>37</sup> there is a generally recognized sense in the area of is desirable. Nagel stresses that a policy ethic should adhere which prompts analysts to explain how their conclusions are affected by their inputs. "Policy analysts should probably mainly advise and should generally leave the advocacy to others."<sup>38</sup>

However, while the discipline of policy studies may have been recognized only in the last twenty years, the rise of the so-called policy expert occurred much earlier. Morley notes the period just prior to World War II (implying the New Deal era) as a turning point in the federal government's employment of expert advice on a host of issues, and that the country's intellectual magnet shifted from New York City to Washington, D.C. during that time.<sup>39</sup> Guttman and Willner place the shift in reliance on policy experts earlier, during World War I, when many businessmen and academicians played key roles in wartime management, e.g., on the War Industries Board.<sup>40</sup> It is certainly true that Roosevelt had the help of his famous "Brains Trust" in formulating some New Deal policy,<sup>41</sup> and also that Woodrow Wilson took selected scholars with him to the Versailles Peace Conference. In both cases these were individual consulting scholars and economists, many drawn from Harvard, but not associated in any formal sense as a group or a policy research body. It may be noted also that because public attention was focused on the government in those times of

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<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup>Critchlow, *The Brookings Institution*, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup>Nagel, *Contemporary Public Policy Analysis*, p. 130.

<sup>39</sup>Jefferson Morley, "The Washington Intellectual," *New Republic*, August 11 and 18, 1986, p. 11. See also Sally V. Kiester, "New Influence for Stanford's Hoover Institute," *Change*, October, 1981, p. 48.

<sup>40</sup>Daniel Guttman and Barry Willner, *The Shadow Government: The Government's Multi-Billion-Dollar Giveaway of Its Decision-Making Powers to Private Management Consultants, "Experts," and Think Tanks* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), p. 114.

national crisis, the role of policy expert no doubt was enhanced. The precedent had been set for what in the professional lives of many economists, lawyers, and corporate leaders became expected rotations among posts in academe, business, and government.

If the public faith in expertise and specialization had been bolstered by official use of policy advisors during World War I and the Depression, institutional concentrations of brainpower, trained more on specific problems than the “pure” research carried on in universities, could only be better. The RAND Corporation, established at the end of World War II for the purpose of developing highly classified defense projects for the U.S. Air Force, came to be regarded in the popular mind as the prototypical think tank. Although it is not accurate that RAND Corporation was the first, it has perhaps fixed more firmly the stereotype of simultaneous isolation and yet enormous influence on government decision-making.

There are several explanations for the origin of the term “think tank,” all of them equally plausible. Dickson locates its use in the 1940s as a slang term for the brain.<sup>42</sup> Smith states that it came from the World War II term for a secure room in which plans and strategies could be discussed.<sup>43</sup> Pines uses the analogy of “gathering different fish into a tank and concentrating the brainpower.”<sup>44</sup> Whatever its roots, it is the word for a uniquely American phenomenon, the ideal of nonpartisan public policy organizations which operate outside, but are closely related to, the universities and the government.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>The "s" has since been dropped in popular use of this term.

<sup>42</sup>Paul Dickson, *Think Tanks* (New York: Atheneum Press, 1971), p. 26.

<sup>43</sup>James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New York: Free Press/Macmillan, 1991), p. xiii.

<sup>44</sup>Pines, *Back to Basics*, p. 254.

<sup>45</sup>Critchlow, *The Brookings Institution*, p. 6.

The evolution of public policy research institutes and the role of their affiliated scholars and analysts as a “policy elite” has been linked to the emergence of the social sciences (economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science) in the latter nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup> Not coincidentally, the development of these disciplines was also integrally connected to the rise of graduate schools in American universities after the Civil War, and what Page Smith has called “the morality of the wise ‘doer,’ trained in all the new methods for tracking down the truth.”<sup>47</sup>

That abiding strain of reforming zeal in American life, the old Puritan errand into the wilderness, joined the nineteenth-century romance with science to make the Progressive movement. While a detailed digression on Progressivism is not possible in this study, it should be noted that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the United States faced tremendous social problems at least equal to those in the 1960s and 1970s. Severe labor unrest, an influx of immigrants, migration to the cities, renegade industrial enterprises, the reconstruction of the South, and political corruption at all levels of government convinced the Progressives that public policy had to be depoliticized and special interest politics short-circuited. Critchlow attributes their success at reform in civil service, labor law, education, and government to “muckrakers and Max Weber.”<sup>48</sup> Certainly it is true that the exposure of social and political evils and the application of fair and rational solutions based on scientific method were the Progressive articles of faith. Smith believes that in fact a “scientific pragmatism” has always underlain the American approach to public

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<sup>46</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. xiii.

<sup>47</sup>Page Smith, *Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 55. See also pp. 56-57, *passim*.

<sup>48</sup>Critchlow, *The Brookings Institution*, p. 8.

policy.<sup>49</sup>

It was in the Russell Sage Foundation, established in 1907, that the social reforming spirit of the Progressives was exemplified. Founded with a \$10 million donation from Sage's widow, it brought together amateur social investigators and charity volunteers with professional social scientists for the purpose of applying the new research methods in "the permanent improvement of social conditions." There was a particular concern with child labor laws, child and family health issues, and education. The staff of educators, sociologists, and settlement house veterans comprised few academicians, but they compiled statistics and other pertinent information on social problems and abuses. These data were made available to the general public as well as to state and local governments to guide them in practical policy formation. The pamphlet was the most typical publication of the Sage Foundation at that time, and traveling exhibitions which visited county fairs and schools were also sent out.<sup>50</sup> The foundation continued its efforts in practical research and publication through the end of World War II. Since that time its focus has been more on support of research in sociological methodologies. With an endowment of \$90 million, the Sage Foundation disburses approximately \$4 million per year for research and publishes on average five or six books.<sup>51</sup>

While social reform through popular education and data gathering was indeed part of the Progressive mission, an emphasis on "efficiency" also developed, especially in the nascent graduate schools of business and public administration.<sup>52</sup> This was partially in response to the needs of business and industry, and partially an

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<sup>49</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 23.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 39-42.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 46.

extension of the desire to reform government by introducing more rational and cost-efficient budgetary processes which would eliminate opportunities for graft.

Frederick Taylor is, of course, the most familiar exponent of the “scientific management” school of administration, but there were others at the turn of the century who were equally concerned with bringing “economy and efficiency” to government. Allen Bruere, Robert Brookings, and other entrepreneurs who were friends of Taylor, and who had, incidentally, had tours of study at German universities, saw to establishing the New York Bureau of Municipal Research.<sup>53</sup> This was a local body of experts who joined with the governor to reform the “chaotic” budget mess alleged to have been created by legislative power. By 1910 the idea had caught on in Philadelphia and Chicago, and there was mounting discussion of the need for an executive budget process at the national level.<sup>54</sup>

Brookings, who made his millions in the dry goods business in St. Louis, served on the War Industries Board during World War I. He had also served on the board of his newly-created Institute for Government Research (1916) prior to American entry into the war, and thus was convinced of the value of scientifically trained specialists, especially in economic and budgetary matters. Investing his own money, and persuading Carnegie and Rockefeller, through their respective foundations, to invest also he founded the Brookings Institution in Washington in 1927.<sup>55</sup>

Harold G. Moulton, formerly dean of the Columbia University School of Business, was named as the first president of the Brookings Institution and remained in that post until 1952.<sup>56</sup> For the first two decades the professional staff of the institution was small, hovering around fifteen members, but their quality was profound. The scholars included Leo Pasvolsky, Franz Boas, and Charles Beard.<sup>57</sup> The institution's strength and reputation were quickly built on emphasizing

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<sup>53</sup>Critchlow, *The Brookings Institution*, p. 26.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>Guttman and Willner, *The Shadow Government*, p. 112.

<sup>56</sup>Critchlow, *The Brookings Institution*, p. 108.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

managerial expertise in business and government, and, despite its being labeled in the 1970s as a "liberal" think tank, the affiliated scholars and analysts were so nonpartisan and so in favor of a minimalist federal government that they strongly opposed many of Roosevelt's New Deal economic schemes. The Brookings bylaws, in fact, forbid any trustee interference in its research and conclusions.<sup>58</sup>

Through most of the first fifty years of its existence, the Brookings Institution did significant work for the federal government, including the creation of the modern executive budget system, the reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs under Hoover, the drafting of the National Industrial Recovery Act early in the New Deal, and organization of the administration for the Marshall Plan after World War II.<sup>59</sup> Brookings also played an important role in Kennedy's presidential transition in 1961 (after World War II the think tank had made a custom of presenting each incoming president with a list of issues facing him).<sup>60</sup>

Today the Brookings Institution is housed in a large building of gray stone, with an annex and a conference center, near DuPont Circle in Washington. It has an annual operating budget of approximately \$9 million, derived mostly from grants, private foundations, and some government contracts, and is organized into the areas of Economic Studies, Government Studies, and Foreign Policy Studies. The resident staff is 160 people, with an additional eighty-five scholars located in leading universities across the country. There is a doctoral degree-granting graduate fellowship program.<sup>61</sup>

The Brookings Institution's reputation for being a liberal think tank has

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<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup>Dickson, *Think Tanks*, p. 301. Perhaps this is where the Heritage Foundation found inspiration to produce *A Mandate for Leadership* to guide the Reagan transition.

<sup>61</sup>Critchlow, *The Brookings Institution*, p. 5. Bruce MacLaury is the current president of Brookings, having followed Kermit Gordon, an advisor to John F. Kennedy. It was the successor to Moulton, Robert Calkins, who established the graduate program.

stemmed in part from the considerable research carried out there in support of social programs undertaken by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. At the fiftieth anniversary of the organization in 1966, Lyndon Johnson said, "You are a national institution, so important to, at least, the Executive branch -- that if you did not exist we would have to ask someone to create you."<sup>62</sup> It was under the Nixon administration that Brookings was increasingly seen, and referred to, as a liberal bastion (Charles Colson, Special Counsel to Nixon, is said to have suggested at one point that it be firebombed), perhaps because it had welcomed to its ranks Democrats as well as Republicans.<sup>63</sup> In the 1960s, William Baroody, Sr., head of the American Enterprise Institute, also sought to portray Brookings as "liberal" in order to draw corporate support to his own institution.<sup>64</sup> At any rate, the Brookings Institution still sets the standard for a think tank operating from a public welfare point of view, even for its ideological opponents. In the 1970s the American Enterprise Institute boasted that it was the "conservative Brookings."<sup>65</sup>

While the Brookings Institution takes on government research only on the condition that it be publishable and unclassified,<sup>66</sup> that other widely-known think tank, the RAND Corporation, had its inception in highly classified postwar arrangements between the Air Force and Douglas Aircraft Corporation. RAND -- an acronym for "research and development" -- was the continuation of operations research on radar, long-range rockets, and other military technology which had been carried out during the war. Groups of physicists, mathematicians, and engineers had been joined in research groups in Santa Monica, California, to gather facts on

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<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup>Guttman and Willner, *The Shadow Government*, p. 117.

<sup>64</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>65</sup>Alan Brinkley, "Peering into Think Tanks," rev. of Donald T. Critchlow, *The Brookings Institutions, 1916-1952* (Northern Illinois University Press), *New Republic*, September 16 and 23, 1985, p. 42.

<sup>66</sup>Dickson, *Think Tanks*, p. 300.

military operations, which they then used to concoct theories and make predictions.<sup>67</sup> In the Cold War atmosphere immediately after the war, the Air Force high command, notably General Henry "Hap" Arnold, deemed it prudent to continue this research and to focus it on problems in thermodynamics and jet propulsion, i.e., knowledge useful for nuclear weapons development.<sup>68</sup> There were difficulties, however, in employing civilian scientists who were still basically on loan from their respective universities. It was felt that the university setting was not an informationally secure enough location for this work. In 1948 the RAND Corporation was created as a independent non-profit corporate entity whose sole client was the United States military, with the mission "To further and promote scientific, educational and charitable purposes, all for the public welfare and security of the United States of America."<sup>69</sup> The key words, of course, were *scientific* and *security*.

The appearance of the RAND Corporation among think tanks marks a departure from the previous policy research institutions which were concerned with reform and efficiency in government. "Research and development" -- R & D -- was largely based in mathematics and technology, with practical, and inherently deadly, ends in mind: fighting and surviving nuclear war. The "hard science" technologists and aerodynamic engineers at RAND were soon joined by other scholars from the social sciences, as the "thinking about the unthinkable" of nuclear holocaust required wider considerations of such things as after-effects on civilian populations and the psychological aspects of nuclear warfare.<sup>70</sup>

With virtually unlimited resources provided by the government, the scholars of RAND Corporation had a great deal of latitude to pursue research which might or might not turn up something of interest to national security. Located in the middle of some of the Santa Monica/Hollywood film landmarks, in fact across the street from

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<sup>67</sup>Fred Kaplan, "Scientists at War: The Birth of the RAND Corporation," *American Heritage*, June/July, 1983, p. 51.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>69</sup>Dickson, *Think Tanks*, p. 24.

<sup>70</sup>Kaplan, "Scientists at War," p. 56.

Mary Pickford's beach house,<sup>71</sup> there was a certain irony in a place where academicians during the peak of the Cold War "did little but sit, think, talk, write, pass around memos, and dream up new ideas about nuclear war."<sup>72</sup>

Another irony of the RAND Corporation's operation is that out of all the top secret doomsday strategy came what are now very familiar administrative and planning tools, e.g., the concepts of systems theory, game theory, and the Planning, Programming, and Budget System (PPBS).<sup>73</sup> John Von Neumann, a mathematician, was the creator of game theory, a "mathematically precise method of determining rational strategies in face of critical uncertainties." According to Kaplan, this basically became the undergirding rationale for Cold War planning: "figure your opponent's best strategy and act accordingly."<sup>74</sup>

The failures in the Vietnam War, however, and the publication of the so-called Pentagon Papers called into serious question the value of such freewheeling, yet isolated, research. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, one of the chief architects of the war strategy in Vietnam, drew some of his top aides from the RAND Corporation. RAND was also the primary provider of research and policy recommendations on Vietnam. Revelations of how widely data and reports about the progress of the war were skewed deliberately at RAND<sup>75</sup> and the loss of the war itself did much to raise public doubt about the role of "expert,"<sup>76</sup> particularly when the RAND group worked in such secrecy. There was also some doubt as to how important and applicable was the research carried out in an atmosphere so heavily funded and freewheeling.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Anthony Russo, "Inside the RAND Corporation and Out: My Story," *Ramparts*, April, 1972, p. 49.

<sup>72</sup>Kaplan, "Scientists at War," p. 50.

<sup>73</sup>Alvin M. Weinberg, "The Think Tank and the University," *Stress and Campus Response* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1968), p. 139.

<sup>74</sup>Kaplan, "Scientists at War," p. 55.

<sup>75</sup>Russo, "Inside the RAND Corporation," pp. 51-52.

<sup>76</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 136-137.

<sup>77</sup>Russo, "Inside the RAND Corporation," p. 49. It is not widely known that RAND did a study of President Kennedy's assassination, and its security rating, as of

Whether due to the public embarrassments or to ambivalence on the part of its resident scholars, the RAND Corporation has turned more in recent years to research in non-military areas.<sup>78</sup> The federal government is still its major contractor, and it enjoys annual revenues of around \$94 million, with an endowment of \$42 million. It also receives grants from such philanthropic foundations as the Rockefeller, Ford, and Pew.<sup>79</sup> Organized into divisions and along academic departmental lines, the RAND Corporation remains almost the equivalent of an academic institution, but without the distractions of students, tenure requirements, or limited space.<sup>80</sup>

A smaller and less important think tank which developed in 1961 along the lines of the RAND Corporation, is the Hudson Institute. It was founded by the late Herman Kahn, and its similarity to RAND is explained by the fact that Kahn himself was a RAND physicist. It was he, in fact, who wrote *On Thermonuclear War*, in which he coined the phrase "thinking about the unthinkable."<sup>81</sup> Originally established in order to do military research, the Hudson Institute later changed its motto to "Policy Research in the Public Interest."<sup>82</sup> This was a reflection of Kahn's own growing doubts about the usefulness and integrity of most think tanks, and he even suggested that the policy research industry was very much a part of what Eisenhower had warned against in his remarks about the "military-industrial complex."<sup>83</sup>

The Hudson Institute has been described as very much a recreation of Kahn's own personality,<sup>84</sup> and its style of research "bold and impressionistic."<sup>85</sup> After Kahn's death in 1983, the imminent break-up of the organization was avoided by an

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1972, was even higher than "top secret." It was called Project Star and only a handful of the RAND staff themselves knew of the report's existence.

<sup>78</sup>Kaplan, "Scientists at War," p. 64.

<sup>79</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 289.

<sup>80</sup>Dickson, *Think Tanks*, p. 72.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>84</sup>"The Hudson Moves West," *Maclean's*, November 5, 1984, p. 10.

<sup>85</sup>Dickson, *Think Tanks*, p. 91.

invitation from the state of Indiana and the Lilly Endowment to relocate operations to Indianapolis, for which monies were provided. It is likely that competition from the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute was also a reason for the move, although a member of the Reagan administration indicated that Hudson was not "ideologically reliable,"<sup>86</sup> at least from a New Right perspective. It may be surmised that the restless, skeptical personality of Kahn influenced the choice of staff members, a group never larger than forty, and their research interests and viewpoints were thus wide-ranging. It is certainly true that since moving to Indianapolis, the Hudson Institute, with a smaller senior staff of eighteen scholars (not all resident there), has pursued a very broad agenda of research, including issues on global nutrition, immigration, workforce education, and AIDS.<sup>87</sup>

These brief examples of think tanks do not cover the entire variety of such organizations, but they are intended to describe the most typical model -- a gathering and funding of persons with expert knowledge who seek to apply that knowledge in public service. J. Smith estimates that there are more than 1,000 think tanks in the United States, with approximately 100 of them in and around Washington, D.C., and while they give themselves grand titles, "most are tiny and ephemeral in a warren of rented offices."<sup>88</sup> He also notes that the greatest proliferation of think tanks has occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, but the increase in their numbers actually may have reduced their overall impact in the policy process. They vary greatly in their sources of income, the breadth of issues addressed, the credentials and compositions of their staffs, and how explicitly partisan they are.<sup>89</sup> Most of them are highly dependent on philanthropic donations from foundations and corporations, while a smaller group are more dependent on government contracts.<sup>90</sup>

American public policy institutes have been molded both by the vision of the

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<sup>86</sup>"The Hudson Moves West," pp. 10-12.

<sup>87</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, pp. 281-82.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup>Dickson, *Think Tanks*, p. 261.

experts who formed them and by government which has needed and used them at various points. In their evolution they have been as diverse as Brookings and RAND, embodying Progressive reformist idealism and later the technocratic faith in quantitative and systems analysis. However, both periods in the history of think tanks are reflective of the pragmatic tradition in American politics, that an understanding of the world may be arrived at rationally and that reasonable minds can reach consensus on practical courses of action. It is the heritage of the Enlightenment, the root of liberal political thought. Page Smith calls it the Secular Democratic Consciousness -- the belief in human reason to effect progress in the social condition -- to distinguish it from the Classical Christian Consciousness, which embraces the concepts of original sin, the ultimate imperfection of human nature, and the inability of human reason alone to overcome the "fallen" condition of creation.<sup>91</sup>

In the early 1970s a new type of think tank appeared, the "advocacy" policy institute, with an explicitly partisan viewpoint which would redefine policy debate in conservative terms.

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<sup>91</sup>P. Smith, *Killing the Spirit*, pp. 30-31.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: AMERICAN CONSERVATISM AND CONSERVATIVE THINK TANKS

The idea of a genuine conservatism in America -- conservatism in the classic European sense -- is problematic. With no monarchy, no hereditary nobility, no feudal history, and no established church the social and political soil of the United States has not been particularly fertile for sustaining whatever seeds of Toryism survived after the American Revolution. Traditional conservatism emphasizes class, hierarchy, authority, and the sanctity of tradition, all of which are antithetical to the liberal political heritage of the American republic. Some have argued quite cogently that what has passed for American conservatism is merely an adulterated version of classic *laissez-faire* liberalism.<sup>92</sup>

Classic conservatism is rooted in the notion of state and society as organic entities, where order is based on shared religious beliefs, and traditions and custom promote civility. Institutions which have evolved through time are trusted to maintain stability, and, since wide-sweeping change is always viewed as potentially uncontrollable, any reform must be incremental. Indeed, because institutions and society are so intricately connected in a whole, tampering is regarded with extreme caution.<sup>93</sup> There is an absolute moral order and absolute truths, which can be comprehended by human reason; however, there is also full recognition that human beings are fallible and human reason has definite limitations in dealing with human problems. The skeptical attitude of conservatism toward human nature makes "Utopian" solutions particularly suspect. Politically, conservatism prescribes that

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<sup>92</sup>Lewis A. Coser and Irving Howe, eds., *The New Conservatives: A Critique From the Left* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), p. 3. *Laissez-faire* liberalism is the original nineteenth-century liberalism, emphasizing individual liberty, private property rights, and, above all, limited government intervention in a free-market economy. The later evolution of the "liberal welfare state" took more into consideration the need to ameliorate the worst abuses by *laissez-faire* capitalism.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 244. "Change nothing, and when in doubt, ask your grandmother."

only the best in society should govern, trusting to an independent judiciary to curb mob rule on one hand and an overweening executive on the other. Localism and decentralization are emphasized in the political structure.<sup>94</sup> Finally, underlying much of conservative thought is a reaction against, and hostility to, modernity -- industrialization, the decline of community, the concentration of power in nation states, the rationalization and secularization of modern life, and the rise of bourgeois culture.<sup>95</sup>

So it would seem that attempts to maintain any form of "pure" conservatism in America are fraught with a number of paradoxes: personal freedom vs. moral restraint; democracy vs. the fear of mob rule and confidence in government by elites; mass, popular culture vs. the high culture inherited from Europe; capitalism vs. hatred for bourgeois civilization; abhorrence of industrialization vs. the fact that many American conservatives have sprung from families enriched by that same industrial economy. With a political legacy in the United States built upon the Enlightenment ideals of democracy, reason, and the belief in human progress, American conservatives have been forced to adapt. Blumenthal wryly notes that because American conservatives do not fit the European model -- no peers of the realm here -- theirs is a story of "discontinuity and self-invention." They wish to restore a past in America which was never kind to them, never gave them a real foothold; indeed, the past they wish to restore probably never existed at all.<sup>96</sup>

In fact, Lukacs has pointed out that an American conservative movement as such, and identification of certain politicians as "conservatives," did not appear much before 1950. He credits the Cold War, the civil rights movement, and the growth of welfare and other social programs with heightening a conservative consciousness in the United States. The founding of William F. Buckley's conservative magazine

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<sup>94</sup>William R. Harbour, *The Foundations of Conservative Thought: An Anglo-American Tradition in Perspective* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), pp. 4-7.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>96</sup>Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, p. 13.

*National Review* in 1955 gave conservatives a rallying point,<sup>97</sup> -- anti-communists, libertarians, and free-market believers of every stripe -- and perhaps an awareness of possibilities. Certainly there was enough of a conservative consciousness by 1964 to make possible the founding of the American Conservative Union (ACU) and Barry Goldwater's presidential bid based on an explicitly conservative philosophy. The American Conservative Union and the *National Review* have remained bastions of the traditional conservatives.<sup>98</sup>

Buckley has been one of the most visible and consistent exemplars in this country of what could be called the Old Right, the conservatives who adhere most closely to classic conservatism. He has stressed cultural cohesiveness and national community, although he is also a proponent of individual liberty to the point of libertarianism in his advocacy of private homosexuality and prostitution.<sup>99</sup> In his 1951 *God and Man at Yale*, Buckley criticized his alma mater's seeming abandonment of what he considered to be "the great truths." He concluded, after presenting his evidence from Yale lectures and textbooks, that academicians were in revolt against the political and religious ideals of the rest of the country.<sup>100</sup> His erudite style, his vocabulary, his pose of "to-the-manor-born" have rendered him a familiar public figure, and he has been called an "all-purpose conservative."<sup>101</sup>

George Will, the well-known journalist who characterizes himself as a "Tory conservative" in the lineage of Edmund Burke and John Henry Newman, is another example of the Old Right. He cultivates a profound respect for antiquity and skepticism about human nature. Will's skepticism also extends to capitalism, which he blames for undermining local government, family farms, a sense of enduring

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<sup>97</sup>John Lukacs, "The American Conservatives," *Harper's*, January, 1984, pp. 46-47.

<sup>98</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 8.

<sup>99</sup>J. David Hoeveler, Jr., *Watch on the Right: Conservative Intellectuals in the Reagan Era* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 24.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

values, and everything else classic conservatives hold dear.<sup>102</sup>

Ironically, while Buckley has always struck the attitude of a New England aristocrat, his family fortune is only as old as his father, who made millions in the Texas oil fields. His Irish Catholic roots are otherwise those of so many others who immigrated in steerage. Will comes of a family of Lutheran ministers from Champaign, Illinois.<sup>103</sup> He is truly an intellectual Jay Gatsby.

Perhaps more than anything else, the Old Right -- new, or non-existent, though its money may be -- has held in common three tenets: a strong anti-communism, a suspicion of the enfranchised masses, and a veneration for the transplanted remnants of high culture from Europe. It is this last which Richard Weaver propounded in *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948), a book still cited by American conservatives. In it he rejects any cultural or political system which denies the metaphysical, including empiricism, relativism, radical egalitarianism, materialism, progressive education, and "degenerate" art and music.<sup>104</sup> It is also this emphasis on *ideas*, on the intrinsic value and truth of certain ideals of metaphysical, Platonic transcendence, which constitutes the dichotomy Smith means by "pragmatism vs. ideology,"<sup>105</sup> that some social and political positions cannot be altered simply to achieve practical ends.

Remarking on the traditional, Old Right conservatives, Hoeveller states:

Conservatism has best served democracy by its effort to locate and encourage within it aristocratic qualities -- by urging self-improvement and by inspiring higher standards of conduct and taste, by endeavoring to elevate the middling habits of its citizens by invoking the selective

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<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 55, 71.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 24, 53.

<sup>104</sup>Floyd E. Merritt, "Richard M. Weaver: Proponent of a Conservative Rhetoric" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Speech Communication Association, Richmond, Virginia, April, 1974), U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 098 623.

<sup>105</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 23.

achievements and wisdom of the past.<sup>106</sup>

Yet if the Old Right is representative to some extent of the European ideal of *noblesse oblige*, the guardians of high culture and the critics of rampant modernization, the neoconservatives have made a somewhat different accommodation with the American experience.

### The Neoconservatives

The so-called neoconservatives largely share the phenomenon of previously having been liberals or even communists in their intellectual and political predilections. Daniel P. Moynihan, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer, James Q. Wilson, Norman Podheretz, Daniel Bell, Robert Nisbet, and Ben Wattenberg are names frequently called in any discussion of the neoconservatives. They are, naturally, highly prized by other conservatives because of the conversion experience, and they constitute a minority within the minority of American conservatives.<sup>107</sup> They tend to practice what Steinfels calls "the higher journalism" of the essay form, and they cluster around such periodicals as *Commentary*, *The Public Interest*, *Foreign Policy*, and, in very recent years, *The American Scholar*.<sup>108</sup> Several of them, such as Wattenberg, Nisbet, Kirkpatrick, and Wilson have close ties to the American Enterprise Institute, serving either as resident scholars, or on its councils and boards, or both.

The neoconservatives have been described as "liberals with a sense of tragedy,"<sup>109</sup> and Kristol has called himself "a liberal who has been mugged by

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<sup>106</sup>Hoeveler, *Watch on the Right*, p. 275.

<sup>107</sup>Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, p. 123.

<sup>108</sup>Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), pp. 8, 70.

<sup>109</sup>Ruth Levitas, *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1986), p. 64.

reality."<sup>110</sup> Some of them, like Moynihan, began questioning, as liberals, the failures of Vietnam and the Great Society. Many of the others were in fact Trotskyites and radical socialists, with left-wing affiliations well back into their college days in the 1930s. They are, in a very real sense, profoundly disappointed people, having once placed youthful faith in the communist god that failed and determined never to be disappointed again. They were further horrified by what they interpret as the anarchic, massive revolt against authority in the 1960s. There is a certain robustness to their dismissal of liberals as starry-eyed dreamers; the neoconservatives like to see themselves as "adults" who are able to face the limitations of reality.<sup>111</sup> Blumenthal has characterized these repentant ex-Marxists as having changed from "true believers into true believers."<sup>112</sup>

The neoconservative credo coalesces around a deep antipathy for communism and the U.S.S.R., and consequently support for a strong American defense posture and a suspicion of détente. There is also strong support for the state of Israel, understandable because most of the neoconservatives are themselves Jewish. For much the same reason, many of them are against any form of affirmative action which would operate as a quota system. The neoconservatives are zealous, of course, in their defense of capitalism, almost as a moral alternative to Marxist communism. However, it should be noted that they are more at ease with technological innovation than many of the Old Right, and they are more critical of the Great Society social programs *per se* than with the idea of a welfare state.<sup>113</sup> They are less comfortable with social inequality than more traditional conservatives tend to be. The working-class backgrounds of most of the neoconservatives, and their earlier allegiance to communist and socialist economic solutions, are evident in their concern for the northern urban, ethnic, blue-collar workers who generally are liberal on

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<sup>110</sup>Quoted in Hoeverler, *Watch on the Right*, p. 85.

<sup>111</sup>Levitas, *The Ideology of the New Right*, p. 69.

<sup>112</sup>Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, p. 15.

<sup>113</sup>Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives*, p. 51.

economic issues and conservative on social ones.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, the neoconservatives believe there is a crisis of values and morality in the United States, and that the government undermined its own authority by attempting too much in the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>115</sup> They believe, as do the more traditional conservatives, that the role of religion in society is more one of general good will and shared moral values than the prescriptive religiosity of the so-called "religious right."<sup>116</sup> They are harsh critics of the women's movement, educational innovation, environmentalism, and anything else which they perceive to be connected to the old counterculture of the 1960s.<sup>117</sup>

Interestingly, the neoconservatives have launched attacks at what they term the "New Class," a label often used against liberal intellectuals. Daniel Bell warned of its advent in his 1973 book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, in which he foresaw the increase in the service sector of the economy and predicted that the university would be "the primary institution of post-industrial society."<sup>118</sup> Like the Old Right, the neoconservatives see a certain cultural hegemony of the "liberal elite" which controls the press, the entertainment media, and the universities, but they themselves are products of university education, work as publicists and journalists, and have enjoyed access to power in the last three presidential administrations. They are also part of the "New Class."<sup>119</sup>

Neoconservatives, particularly Kristol, have been sharply critical of academe as being too full of theorists and radical ideologues. This is reflective in part of the usual conservative distrust of theory and social engineering, but it has a special acuteness for the neoconservatives. Blumenthal has stressed the Jewish ethnicity of most of them, and he sees this as creating a certain sense of alienation. He suggests

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<sup>114</sup>Isidore Silver, "Neoconservatism vs. Conservatism?" *Commonweal*, July 31, 1981, p. 430.

<sup>115</sup>Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives*, p. 51.

<sup>116</sup>Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 25.

<sup>117</sup>Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives*, p. 26.

<sup>118</sup>Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 265-268.

<sup>119</sup>Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives*, p. 8.

that for Kristol, Glazer, Podheretz, and others who earlier in life felt caught between the immigrant culture of their parents and the new culture of America, they resolved this tension by escaping into a "cosmopolitan intellectualism," seeing themselves as heirs to the European intelligentsia.<sup>120</sup> However disillusioned they may have been with seeing the great Marxist experiment in the Soviet Union degenerate into totalitarianism, they still have retained an investment in the intellectual and cultural values of the West. They abhorred what appeared to be anarchy in the 1960s, especially on the campuses. Blumenthal notes, "They sought order and acceptance in the world of ideas, and when their ideas were challenged they felt the challenge was to civilization itself."<sup>121</sup>

### The Libertarians

While there has always been a strong value in traditional conservatism for personal liberty, the libertarians among conservatives extend that definition of personal freedom considerably. Libertarianism has been called a "populism on the Right," with greatest emphasis on complete individual freedom in thought, culture, and morality (absolute freedom in private behavior between consenting adults), and total economic freedom in the marketplace.<sup>122</sup> They would expand this economic freedom without government regulation whatsoever, trusting in the "invisible hand" of Adam Smith to guide a self-regulating market, and naturally they oppose taxes of any kind. Libertarians consistently have been anti-Cold War and basically neo-isolationist, seeing international disengagement by the United States as a necessary corollary to their belief that the Central Intelligence Agency should be abolished. They also favor the dissolution of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Social Security system,

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<sup>120</sup>Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>122</sup>Hoeverler, *Watch on the Right*, p. 276.

the Postal Service, and numerous other regulatory and administrative government agencies. Individual liberty and private morality would include the right to abortion, the right to commit suicide, and the legalization of all drugs.<sup>123</sup>

Nearly every other school of conservative thought -- Old Right, New Right, and neoconservative -- would have difficulty accommodating such a broad philosophy of personal freedom, for libertarians leave no room for restraint based on a shared traditional culture. However, deregulation of the marketplace and reduction in the size of government strike a common chord of response in most conservatives, particularly those of the New Right. "Pure" libertarianism would be impossible to implement without complete upheaval in American society, and one might guess what Old Right and neoconservatives would have to say about such a sweeping scheme for social and economic change. It is included in this discussion primarily to illustrate a thread of conservative thought which has become increasingly attractive to some younger conservatives.<sup>124</sup>

### The New Right

The New Right christened itself "new" in order to distinguish it from the older conservatives like Buckley who are -- to the New Right -- associated with the Eastern Establishment. Crawford has pointed out the pronounced lower-middle class composition of the New Right supporters, notably people from the South, Midwest, and West. It is a group, he says, which "feeds on discontent, anger, insecurity, and resentment, and flourishes on backlash politics."<sup>125</sup> Part of their distaste for Buckley and other traditional conservatives stems from a view of the East as an outpost of Europe, associated with banking and internationalism. Crawford denies, in fact, that the New Right are genuine conservatives because they have no respect for historical

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<sup>123</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 98.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>125</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, pp. 3-5.

continuity.<sup>126</sup>

Indeed, the populist label would seem to fit many New Rightists more than "conservative." The title of Richard Viguerie's 1983 book *The Establishment vs. the People* is indicative of this attitude. In it he makes the democratic masses the victims of intellectuals and experts, depicts "the people" as the guardians of all that is wholesome in America, and generally attacks the media, the universities, and "bureaucracies."<sup>127</sup> While they share with conservatives and neoconservatives a rigid anti-communism and an attachment to "truth" as an absolute, they seek to appeal to the masses in ways which the Old Right would never consider. In some ways their views are much more in the lineage of Father Coughlin<sup>128</sup> and Joseph McCarthy.<sup>129</sup> Paul Weyrich's statement that "We are different from previous generations of conservatives. We are no longer working to preserve the status quo. We are radicals, working to overturn the present power structure of this country"<sup>130</sup> would make traditional conservatives shudder.

The New Right has claimed possession of numerous traditional and accepted values: "family," "religion," "law and order," "patriotism." Under such umbrella groups as Young Americans for Freedom, the Conservative Caucus, and Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum they have mounted in the past two decades an aggressive attack on what they feel is wrong in American society, including abortion, the gay

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<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>127</sup>Hoeverler, *Watch on the Right*, p. 8.

<sup>128</sup>Rev. Charles E. Coughlin was a Catholic priest whose fiery oratory drew large radio audiences during the Depression. His views were strongly right-wing, attacking Jews, communists, and Roosevelt as an atheist. See Robert Bendiner, *Just Around the Corner: A Highly Selective History of the Thirties* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1967, 1987), pp. 116-123.

<sup>129</sup>McCarthy was Republican Senator from Wisconsin who chaired the "Un-American Activities Committee" in 1950 in which he alleged the government was full of communists. He also attacked universities and intellectuals. See Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1970* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 215-245.

<sup>130</sup>Quoted in Bertram Gross, *Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America* (New York: M. Evans and Company, 1980), p. 199.

rights and women's movements, rampant Marxism in the universities, and "secular humanism," which they believe to be the worship of human reason set up as an idol by the "anti-religious" education establishment. They often use the term "pro-family" for those groups and individuals opposing busing, abortion, and the Equal Rights Amendment, and they place special emphasis on the patriarchal family. (Ironically, while the New Right largely favors a traditional role for women, they see nothing wrong with female activism when it pertains to "hearth and home" issues such as school prayer and abortion. Males of the New Right, however, tend to pursue the manly issues of gun ownership, national defense, and law and order).<sup>131</sup>

There is a very strong religious element -- predominantly Protestant, but including some Catholics and a tiny sprinkling of Jews -- in the New Right viewpoint. While the Old Right and neoconservatives regard the practice of religion in general as good and unifying for society, the New Right has a more specific, Christian meaning. Many of them assert that the United States was founded as a "Christian country," or at the least should be grounded in a Christian morality. Weyrich, the first president of the Heritage Foundation, has said of the New Right agenda, "We are talking about Christianizing America. We are talking about simply spreading the Gospel in a political context."<sup>132</sup> The Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority is only one of several Protestant evangelical followings linked to the New Right. It could be said, in fact, that only in the light of this Judeo-Christian fundamentalism can the New Right be understood fully, for it is out of this tradition which comes the high value placed on conventional gender roles, condemnation of "unnatural" acts, suspicion of intellectualism, and absolute definitions of good and evil.

It is also the religious underpinning in much New Right thought which imparts such conviction that they are right, and further, that they are on a mission

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<sup>131</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 144.

<sup>132</sup>Quoted in Perry D. Young, *God's Bullies: Power Politics and Religious Tyranny* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), p. 129.

from God. The New Right message tends to be expressed in polarities: good vs. evil, the people vs. the Liberal Establishment, capitalism vs. socialism, abortion vs. life, creationism vs. secular humanism.<sup>133</sup> Lipset and Raab have called this type of thinking "simplism," a preference for simple, sure answers on complex matters, which they cite as a hallmark of "extremist right-wing thought."<sup>134</sup> Indeed, the rigid positions taken by the New Right, and the seeming inability to compromise -- at least in their rhetoric --, render them much less able to compete in the political arena where coalition building is essential.<sup>135</sup> This inability denotes the suspicion of rational argument and the overriding emphasis placed on correct ideology in conservative resistance movements as antithetical to long-term political success.<sup>136</sup> This is manifest in the New Right's hostility to the existing party structure -- although many continue to affiliate with the right wing of the Republican Party -- and the belief that politics ultimately corrupts everyone who becomes involved with it.<sup>137</sup>

Although it may often appear to the observing public that "conservatives" are homogeneous, the Old Right has some misgivings about the New Right. Speaking before Congress in 1981, Barry Goldwater proclaimed:

In the past couple years [sic] I have seen many news items that referred to the moral majority, pro-life and other religious groups as "the new right" and the "new conservatism." Well, I have spent quite a number of years carrying the flag of the "old conservatism." And I can say with conviction that the religious issues of these groups have little or nothing to

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<sup>133</sup>"To [the New Right] secular humanism is the official religion of the schools, a religion recognized and welcomed while theirs is not." Michael S. Cain, "Crazies at the Gate: The Religious Right and the Schools," *The Humanist*, July/August, 1983, p. 19.

<sup>134</sup>Lipset and Raab, *The Politics of Unreason*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>136</sup>Barbara Warnick, "The Rhetoric of Conservative Resistance," *Southern Speech Communication Journal*, Spring, 1977, pp. 257, 259.

<sup>137</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 113.

to do with conservative or liberal politics.<sup>138</sup>

When the right-wing Family Protection Act (largely the creation of the Free Congress Foundation) was introduced in 1978, and again in 1980, the staunchly conservative James J. Kilpatrick remarked:

What in the world, we may gently inquire, has become of the conservative's traditional dedication to states' rights? What of the wall that conservatives insist should be maintained between church and state?... The bill is hopeless. It attempts to cover everything under moon or sun, from legal services to abortions to sex education to trust funds to private schools to food stamps for college students. In one way or another, the bill violates just about every precept of a conservative political philosophy.<sup>139</sup>

The New Right, then, is quite different from the traditional conservatives, although they do find common cause on such issues as free market economics and criticism of the perceived liberal, elite hegemonic hold on American culture. They are different in what Peele has termed their "aggressive mood of determination," their hostility to existing political and institutional structures and precedents, and their deep antipathy for the Eastern Establishment.<sup>140</sup>

Some have viewed the rise of the New Right with frank alarm. Crawford emphasizes the implicit class antagonism in the New Right's politics, noting their anti-elitism and their fear that their most cherished values are under attack: "It is the ideology of the insecure who want to salve those insecurities by a leveling process. Their intent is the fomenting of class warfare."<sup>141</sup> Gross has called them "friendly

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<sup>138</sup>Quoted in Young, *God's Bullies*, p. 326.

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>140</sup>Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 53.

<sup>141</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 180.

fascists."<sup>142</sup> In that same vein, Young writes:

What these people are proposing is a radical change not just in our tradition of law, but in the very form of government itself. Although their approach is from a different direction, it would be just as radical a change as communism because it would require the same kind of totalitarian, police-state control.<sup>143</sup>

While these concerns may or may not be unfounded, it is true that the New Right in the early 1970s began building a network of think tanks and political action groups aimed at making their conservative views as widely known and influential as they believed liberal ones had been.

### The Heritage Foundation

Part of the phenomenon of the appearance of the Heritage Foundation in 1973, and the galvanizing or establishment of other such conservative think tanks around the same time, can be attributed to two factors: (1) corporations and foundations finally had an organized entity with pronounced conservative views into which to pour money, and (2) direct-mail fundraising came into its own. Fundraisers like Richard Viguerie built databases containing hundreds of thousands of names of persons who contributed to, or were affiliated with, right-wing causes. An ultra-conservative himself, Viguerie became *the* fundraiser for the Heritage Foundation, the Moral Majority, the Eagle Forum, and various other New Right organizations.<sup>144</sup>

The Heritage Foundation was originally the brainchild of Paul Weyrich,

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<sup>142</sup>Gross, *Friendly Fascism*.

<sup>143</sup>Young, *God's Bullies*, p. 15.

<sup>144</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 5. See also Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, pp. 2-8.

sometime senatorial aide and journalist, and Joseph Coors of the Coors Brewing Company (Coors is still on the board of trustees at the Heritage Foundation). Coors, long a supporter of the extremist John Birch Society,<sup>145</sup> was interested in funneling money to right-wing organizations. Weyrich formed the Heritage Foundation in 1973 with \$250,000 donated by Coors and additional money from the Scaife Foundation.<sup>146</sup> The organization was incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt institution, forbidden under the Internal Revenue Code from carrying on lobbying operations or seeking to influence legislation, but some commentators have been very skeptical about Weyrich's original intent, in light of the organization's subsequent activities.<sup>147</sup> Weyrich was installed as the Heritage Foundation's first president, but lacking a college degree, and desiring more latitude for political action, he left in 1974 to found the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, again with Coors money.<sup>148</sup>

While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to digress in much detail about Weyrich, it should be noted that his role in forging a New Right network in the 1970s was considerable. He takes credit for bringing together "the country club set" and grass-roots conservatives, and also for bringing New Right political organizations to the attention of "religious right" leaders such as Jerry Falwell. In fact, Weyrich claims to have suggested the "Moral Majority" idea to Falwell.<sup>149</sup> Weyrich went on to form the Free Congress Foundation of which he is now president.

The Heritage Foundation was not widely known until the publication of its

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<sup>145</sup>Young, *God's Bullies*, p. 126. See also Lipset and Raab, *The Politics of Unreason*, pp. 248-253. The John Birch Society, founded in 1958, is fanatically anti-communist, and subscribes to the belief that 60-80% of the United States is already under communist control, including both political parties, labor unions, and the universities.

<sup>146</sup>Dom Bonafede, "Issue-Oriented Heritage Foundation Hitches Its Wagon to Reagan's Star," *National Journal*, March 30, 1982, p. 502.

<sup>147</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 11, and Landers, "Think Tanks," p. 462. See Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, p. 26, for an interesting side note concerning the Scaife family's rupture over the heavy funding of conservative causes.

<sup>148</sup>Young, *God's Bullies*, p. 127.

<sup>149</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 131.

*Mandate for Leadership*, which it presented to the newly-elected Ronald Reagan in 1981. Numbering 1,093 pages, *Mandate for Leadership* was to be the blueprint for the Reagan presidency, at least so the Heritage Foundation said. It was an exhaustive study of every federal agency and department, with specific recommendations for what should be done in each. Parts of the document had been rushed to key Reagan appointees before it was completed, and it remained on the *Washington Post's* bestseller list for weeks.<sup>150</sup> Spokesmen for the Heritage Foundation made no secret of their close ties to the new administration, and résumés were circulated along with the *Mandate*. Allegedly, seventy-five people were placed in the Reagan administration on the Heritage Foundation's recommendation, but only thirty-nine names were confirmed.<sup>151</sup> Some of those who did contribute to *Mandate for Leadership*, however, did gain appointments: Normal B. Ture as an undersecretary in the Treasury Department, James Watt as Secretary of the Interior, and William Bennett as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities and then Secretary of Education.<sup>152</sup>

The Reagan administration's connection to the Heritage Foundation was not as new as it may have seemed, however. Frank J. Walton, who was president of the institution immediately prior to Edwin Feulner, Jr., the current president, had worked for Reagan when he was governor of California.<sup>153</sup>

The Heritage Foundation has been characterized as predominantly New Right in viewpoint, and when Soviet President Gorbachev accused the think tank of being headquarters for the American "extreme right wing," Feulner reportedly said, "That's just where we want to be."<sup>154</sup> At other times Feulner has demurred, saying that the Heritage Foundation is a "melting pot" for various conservative strains of thought,

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<sup>150</sup>Bonafede, "Issue-Oriented Heritage Foundation," p. 502.

<sup>151</sup>James Rosenthal, "Heritage Hype," *New Republic*, September 2, 1985, p. 15.

<sup>152</sup>Bonafede, "Issue-Oriented Heritage Foundation," p. 506.

<sup>153</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 503.

<sup>154</sup>Ann Reilly, "Heritage Ascendant," p. 132.

including such traditional conservatives as Russell Kirk and William Simon, and neoconservatives like Norman Podheretz. However, one observer in a more traditional think tank was quoted as remarking, "Anything to the right of the Heritage is the fringe."<sup>155</sup> It is generally accepted among staff members themselves at the conservative policy institutes that the Heritage Foundation is New Right, while the American Enterprise Institute is more neoconservative, takes the longer view, and is "more philosophical."<sup>156</sup>

The primary function of the Heritage Foundation, which its senior staff have reiterated many times, is to present the conservative policy alternatives on a host of issues as forcefully as possible in the forums where they will be heeded. Burton Pines, vice-president for research, has stated, "Our role is to provide conservative public policymakers with arguments to bolster our side,"<sup>157</sup> and on another occasion, "If we have any charter, it is to influence the public policy process."<sup>158</sup> Feulner explains that "Having an idea in an ivory tower think tank or a college campus is not enough. If they don't have impact on the public policy process, why go to the effort?"<sup>159</sup> Robert Huberty, director of the Heritage Resource Bank, says, "Heritage's mission has always been to deal with Congress, the executive branch, and national news media. We're interested in what they're interested in."<sup>160</sup> The constraints of the Internal Revenue Code for maintaining tax-exempt status would seem to limit the organization's activities in this regard, and few miss the irony of their stated purposes and the tax-exempt classification. "Trying to influence -- if not lobby -- Congress and others in government is obviously a principal Heritage activity;

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<sup>155</sup>Quoted in Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, p. 14.

<sup>156</sup>Statement by Michael Schwartz, Director of the Center for Social Policy, Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, telephone interview, September 26, 1991.

<sup>157</sup>Easterbrook, "Ideas Move Nations," p. 72.

<sup>158</sup>Bonafede, "Issue-Oriented Heritage Foundation," p. 505.

<sup>159</sup>Pines, *Back to Basics*, p. 260.

<sup>160</sup>Statement by Robert Huberty, Director of the Resource Bank, Heritage Foundation, telephone interview, September 25, 1991.

but from the figures the foundation releases, nobody can say *how* [italics theirs] principal. In the 1988 annual report, 'marketing' and 'research' are the two catch-all categories, with government representation, or some such, not even mentioned." The institution denies, however, that they are lobbying because they do not actually tell legislators how to vote.<sup>161</sup>

The Heritage Foundation has never been interested in attracting academic luminaries because they are not needed for its real mission: to deliver research to policymakers and legislators in timely, uncomplicated form. "Heritage neither buys nor recruits stature and credibility -- it creates these qualities," says Pines.<sup>162</sup> The average age of the staff is thirty-two, or perhaps even younger, comprising new Ph.D.'s or people holding master's degrees, on only their first or second job, and most of them have little or no experience in government.<sup>163</sup> Out of a resident research staff of fifty-three, only six hold the doctorate. Of the eighteen senior managers, only four hold a doctorate, including Feulner, who completed his in 1981, four years after becoming president of the foundation. The strength in academic credentials for the Heritage Foundation lies almost entirely in its Distinguished Scholars (numbering four: F.A. von Hayek, economist; Russell Kirk, conservative author; Ernest van den Haag, philosopher; and Walter Williams, economist), none of whom are resident, and a list of adjunct scholars, numbering fifty-three, most of whom are in academic institutions across the country. Fifteen of these adjuncts, however, are affiliated with a variety of other organizations ranging from the Hoover Institution to Citizens Against Government Waste.<sup>164</sup> There is also a group of Heritage Fellows which includes former Reagan assistant Richard V. Allen and former Attorney General Edwin Meese. Most of these are former government employees from the Reagan

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<sup>161</sup>"Capital Clout," *Foundation News*, p. 17.

<sup>162</sup>Quoted in *Annual Report* (Heritage Foundation: Washington, D.C., 1990), p. 6.

<sup>163</sup>Wilentz, "On the Intellectual Ramparts," p. 23.

<sup>164</sup>*Annual Report* (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 1990), pp. 34, 36.

administration or formerly of other conservative activist groups.

According to Pines, the Heritage Foundation is most attentive to economic, defense, and foreign affairs issues, but education and family issues are also addressed.<sup>165</sup> The research operation is organized around Domestic and Economic Policy Studies, Foreign Policy and Defense Studies, and the Asian Studies Center. The area of Academic and Government Relations was split in 1987 because it was felt that academic issues needed more attention.<sup>166</sup>

One area of particular interest is the Resource Bank. This is a listing of some 1,900 scholars and research institutions in the United States and abroad upon which the Heritage Foundation can call to produce timely articles, to speak at conferences, or to testify before congressional hearings. They also make these names available in the *Annual Guide to Public Policy Experts* for use by state and local governments. The foundation pays travel expenses for those who must come to Washington.<sup>167</sup>

Typically the research records and interests of these scholars are brought to the attention of the Heritage Foundation by their colleagues or by themselves. Huberty says that he applies no specific academic criteria for choosing members of the Resource Bank; there is simply an agreement with the parties "to work together when possible." The Heritage Foundation is "most interested in finding individuals interested in public policy."<sup>168</sup> Pines mentions that people in the Resource Bank have "conservative credentials."<sup>169</sup> It may be surmised that an informal personal and professional network operates in the staffing and academic contacts of most of the conservative think tanks. Another example of this was the application process for the new Salvatori Center for Academic Leadership, a program designed to bring young faculty and graduate students to the Heritage Foundation for special colloquia on

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<sup>165</sup>Pines, *Back to Basics*, pp. 260-261.

<sup>166</sup>Statement by Huberty, September 25, 1991.

<sup>167</sup>"What is the Heritage Foundation?" unsigned, unnumbered pamphlet, Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, [n.d.].

<sup>168</sup>Statement by Huberty, September 25, 1991.

<sup>169</sup>Pines, *Back to Basics*, p. 262.

American political institutions. Huberty states that applications were solicited from the National Association of Scholars, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, and "like-minded groups."<sup>170</sup>

The self-conscious building of a cadre of future conservative scholars, journalists, and policy activists is very much a part of the Heritage Foundation strategy. Their Third Generation program is a bimonthly lecture series for young conservatives and congressional staff aides, and there are also plenty of free luncheons and breakfasts.<sup>171</sup> The Federalist Society is yet another such organization for conservative law students.<sup>172</sup>

In 1985, the Heritage Foundation spent \$2.3 million on marketing its programs and publications, more than it spent on researching them.<sup>173</sup> Their outreach activities include everything from press updates on current topics to international affairs conferences featuring high-level government officials and diplomats. A writer in the *National Review* noted in 1984 that the Heritage Foundation had something scheduled nearly every day.<sup>174</sup> Feulner's philosophy is: "The congressional staffers have to get their ideas from someplace. Getting it to the right staff guy is as important as getting it to the congressman." Accordingly, in the Heritage Foundation database are the names of all congressional staff members, plus 3,500 journalists by speciality so that every study, bulletin, press release, and backgrounder gets to the appropriate audience.<sup>175</sup> Every new report issued by the Heritage Foundation is hand-delivered to every member of Congress and key

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<sup>170</sup>Statement by Huberty, September 25, 1991.

<sup>171</sup>Easterbrook, "Ideas Move Nations," p. 72. See also Felicia E. Halpert, "Who is Behind the Right-Wing Press on Campus?" *Ms.*, October, 1984, for a discussion of the conservative student newspaper network funded by Irving Kristol's Institute for Educational Affairs.

<sup>172</sup>Benjamin Hart, "Abbie Hoffman's Nightmare: The New Generation of Conservative Activists," *Policy Review*, 13:73, Fall, 1987.

<sup>173</sup>Landers, "Think Tanks," p. 268.

<sup>174</sup>"Where It's Happening," *National Review*, September 7, 1984, p. 17.

<sup>175</sup>Constance Holden, "Heritage Foundation: Court Philosophers," *Science*, March 6, 1981, p. 1020.

government officials (college students are employed as messengers), and copies of any Heritage Foundation publications mentioned in the report are sent along, too.<sup>176</sup> Any journalists or officials who need information on a topic addressed by the foundation have but to call and it will be delivered the same day.<sup>177</sup> In addition, the Heritage Foundation releases a continuous stream of reports and opinion pieces to small newspapers across the country for use in their political and editorial pages; when such stories appear, the foundation arranges to have clippings sent to that congressman. The media connection is understandable; Pines was formerly an associate editor at *Time* magazine.

Although the Heritage Foundation publishes *Policy Review*, its quarterly journal (paid circulation of approximately 15,000<sup>178</sup>), the bulk of its publications are in the form of newsletters, bulletins, backgrounders, and short reports. The typical piece of Heritage research is 5,000-10,000 words, and is designed to be read in twenty minutes or less.<sup>179</sup> Phillip Truluck, executive vice-president at the Heritage Foundation, has said of this approach, "It's like selling Palmolive soap."<sup>180</sup>

The emphasis on timeliness and brevity, however, and the endless courting of the media, have raised questions not only about the quality of the policy product but also about how influential the Heritage Foundation is in reality. Short pieces are churned out at the rate of four to five a week,<sup>181</sup> largely by a junior research staff who may or may not have much grounding in their subject matter beyond knowing the right people in conservative circles. (There is a library at the Heritage Foundation, but it contains mostly newspapers, the *Congressional Record*, and representative magazines of the popular press. Primary reliance is on the Library of

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<sup>176</sup>Rosenthal, "Heritage Hype," p. 15.

<sup>177</sup>Easterbrook, "Ideas Move Nations," p. 73.

<sup>178</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 280.

<sup>179</sup>Morton Kondracke, "The Heritage Model," *New Republic*, December 20, 1980, p. 10.

<sup>180</sup>Quoted in Rosenthal, "Heritage Hype," p. 15.

<sup>181</sup>"Capital Clout," p. 16.

Congress).<sup>182</sup> Smith questions whether many people other than members of conservative congressional staffs pay much attention to these reports, noting that the average congressman only reads for eleven minutes per day. He suggests that the Heritage Foundation takes advantage of the media's penchant for prediction by "fostering the perception that it was [sic] close to the center of influence."<sup>183</sup> Rosenthal asserts that the Heritage Foundation's impact on the media may have been greater than its impact on policy, and that its true genius has been "to combine research, a PR firm, a special interest lobby, and an employment agency" all in one tax-exempt organization.<sup>184</sup>

The Heritage Foundation is able to produce such an impressive array of publications, conferences, and briefings because it is so well funded. Indeed, the foundation's advancement program is as sophisticated as that of many universities, with differing levels of donor ability carefully classified and appeals calibrated accordingly. The President's Club, for instance, reminiscent of so many similar collegiate donor categories, is for contributors of \$1,000-10,000, and local chapters of these contributors are being established nationwide, almost like an alumni association. There is also the Windsor Society for supporters who have made deferred gifts. The Heritage Foundation routinely arranges social events for the most generous where they are introduced to conservative celebrities such as Margaret Thatcher.<sup>185</sup>

From its earliest days the Heritage Foundation relied on direct-mail fundraising, and individual gifts still constitute the largest source of income (52%), with many of those being small contributors in the five-to-twenty-dollar range. The remainder of the foundation's income is as follows: foundation grants, 26%; corporate

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<sup>182</sup>Statement by Huberty, September 25, 1991.

<sup>183</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, pp. 194, 201.

<sup>184</sup>Rosenthal, "Heritage Hype," p. 15.

<sup>185</sup>*Heritage Today*, Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 1991, p. 9. It makes one wonder if the New Right is not well on the way to building an infrastructure for its own political party.

gifts, 10%; investment income, 6%; and publication sales, 6%. The heaviest expenses in 1990 were in research (44%) and marketing (35%). Income in 1990 was \$18.1 million, up from \$7.1 million in 1981.<sup>186</sup>

It is interesting to note that Richard M. Scaife is on the board of trustees for the Heritage Foundation, and that the Scaife Foundation continues to be one of the largest foundational contributors (it is a large donor to most of the conservative and New Right enterprises). Coors, also on the board, gives at least \$350,000 per year to the Heritage Foundation, and Scaife even more. The John M. Olin Foundation is also very generous to this and other conservative think tanks. Corporate donors include Chase Manhattan Bank, Mobil Oil, Smithkline, Fluor, Readers Digest, Gulf Oil, and G.D. Searle.<sup>187</sup> Other philanthropic foundations which contribute are the Pew Freedom Trust, the Bradley and Hearst foundations, and the Ford Motor Company Fund.<sup>188</sup>

#### The American Enterprise Institute

Pines of the Heritage Foundation has said, "AEI is like the big gun on an offshore battleship. We are the landing party."<sup>189</sup> Whether or not the martial metaphor is appropriate, it is true that the American Enterprise Institute is an older policy institution than the Heritage Foundation, and does have somewhat different emphases, notably those of economic and regulatory issues. It also boasts a scholarly staff with stronger academic credentials than any of the other conservative think tanks in Washington. Neither is it as overtly partisan in tone as some others. Christopher DeMuth, president of the American Enterprise Institute, has described its policy

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<sup>186</sup>*Annual Report*, Heritage Foundation, 1990, p. 27.

<sup>187</sup>Bonafede, "Issue-Oriented Heritage Foundation," p. 507.

<sup>188</sup>"Capital Clout," p. 19.

<sup>189</sup>Quoted in Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, p. 14.

contributions as "factual and civil rather than polemical or ideological."<sup>190</sup>

The stated mission of the institute is:

The American Enterprise Institute is a private research organization dedicated to preserving and improving the institutions of a free society -- open and competitive private enterprise, limited and public-spirited government, strong and well-managed defense and foreign policies, and vital cultural and political values.<sup>191</sup>

Enlarging upon this mission statement, DeMuth has written:

It is the purpose of the American Enterprise Institute to do battle, in scholarship and intellectual debate, on behalf of the free economic and political order... AEI is not a partisan or lobbying organization. Although our scholars are often in the thick of immediate policy debates and in demand by government officials and the media, the Institute itself takes no positions on policy issues. We try to craft our research not to the day's headlines but to the long view of the most important problems affecting America's prosperity and security.<sup>192</sup>

Business and free enterprise were at the heart of the American Enterprise Institute when it was established in 1943, and it was called the American Enterprise Association. Lewis H. Brown, the chairman of Johns-Manville Corporation, was disturbed by the radicalism embraced by labor in the Great Depression, and was also concerned with "restoring" free-market economics after the New Deal. Brown believed that one cause of labor's turn to the left was the failure of business to communicate with workers. His aims were two: (1) to educate the public more fully

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<sup>190</sup>Christopher C. DeMuth, "The American Enterprise Institute: A Brief Introduction," (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1990), p. 4.

<sup>191</sup>*Annual Report* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1990), p. 1.

<sup>192</sup>DeMuth, "The American Enterprise Institute," p. 3.

about America business, and (2) to supply Congress with analyses of pending legislation which would affect business.<sup>193</sup> The organization had no research scholars and no particular reputation other than that of a "high-level luncheon club," until 1953. William J. Baroody, then with the United States Chamber of Commerce, took over the association when Brown died.<sup>194</sup> Baroody, a "policy entrepreneur," changed the name to American Enterprise Institute and began bringing in such scholars as Milton Friedman, Paul McCracken, and Gottfried Haberler (who is still in residence).<sup>195</sup>

Blumenthal credits the American Enterprise Institute as being a brain trust for Goldwater in 1964,<sup>196</sup> and when this affiliation was construed as political activity by the Internal Revenue Service, it convinced Baroody to open up the institution to more divergent views and to attract a variety of scholars -- indeed, he came to believe that academic respectability was vital to the long-term survival of the organization. In his efforts to draw more corporate support, Baroody sought to portray the American Enterprise Institute as a conservative counterweight to the Brookings Institution.<sup>197</sup>

With Baroody's aggressive fundraising as a basis, the American Enterprise Institute was poised by the early 1970s for significant growth. When it was able to attract as fellows former President Gerald Ford and others of his administration, its reputation was assured. Some of the neoconservatives like Irving Kristol and Ben Wattenberg were also induced to become resident scholars.<sup>198</sup> The institution began publishing more serious works, including books, as well as sponsoring conferences and seminars. By the end of the 1970s, the Olin Foundation, Smith Richardson, and the Pew Freedom Trust were supporting the American Enterprise Institute.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>193</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 174; Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, p. 32.

<sup>194</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>195</sup>Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, p. 39.

<sup>196</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 177.

<sup>198</sup>Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, p. 42.

<sup>199</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 182.

Baroody's son assumed leadership of the American Enterprise Institute upon his father's death in 1980. William Baroody, Jr., however, did not have his father's genius for management. In addition to having lost its philosophical momentum, it is very likely that the American Enterprise Institute was experiencing increasing competition from the Heritage Foundation, which had begun attracting more and more right-wing money because the American Enterprise Institute was seen as more centrist.<sup>200</sup> From a budget of only \$1 million and a staff of 18 in 1970, by the early 1980s the institution had grown to a staff of 150 (fifty to sixty scholars in residence) and a budget of \$13 million.<sup>201</sup> In 1986 the American Enterprise Institute's budget was cut from \$13.9 million to \$10 million, and at least a dozen of the fellows were told they would have to raise their own funding. The situation was blamed on financial mismanagement and the withdrawal of support by conservative foundations such as Readers Digest and the Olin Foundation.<sup>202</sup>

Christopher C. DeMuth, a young lawyer previously in the Office of Management and Budget, was brought in to head the American Enterprise Institute in late 1986. His mandate was to straighten out the organization's finances and to restore its intellectual focus.<sup>203</sup> Since then he has moved to turn the American Enterprise Institute into a "pay-as-you-go" institution and has begun building an endowment.<sup>204</sup>

The institute is organized around three main research areas: Economic Policy Studies, headed by Marvin H. Kosters; Foreign and Defense Policy Studies, headed by Jeane J. Kirkpatrick; and Social and Political Studies, headed by Michael Novak. There are 42 research staff members listed, including the three resident directors, but

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<sup>200</sup>Todd Lencz, "The Baroody Bunch," *National Review*, September 12, 1986, p. 32.

<sup>201</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 179.

<sup>202</sup>Sidney Blumenthal, "Hard Times at the Think Tank," *Washington Post*, June 26, 1986, pp. D-1, D-6.

<sup>203</sup>Kate Ballen, "People to Watch: Christopher C. DeMuth," *Fortune*, May 11, 1987, p. 112.

<sup>204</sup>*Annual Report, 1989-1990*, American Enterprise Institute, p. 5.

eight of these are either on adjunct or visiting status, and four of these positions are endowed by the Olin Foundation or DeWitt Wallace.<sup>205</sup> The majority of the resident scholars were formerly employed under the Reagan administration, and they comprise several neoconservatives: along with Kirkpatrick there are Richard Perle, Irving Kristol, Michael Novak, Norman Ornstein, and Ben Wattenberg. Other conservative notables include Robert Bork, Herbert Stein, and Charles Murray. There are dozens of adjunct scholars at universities and other research institutions.<sup>206</sup> It should be noted that Dinesh D'Souza, author of the controversial *Illiberal Education*, is listed as the resident specialist on higher education.

The American Enterprise Institute is credited with strategies to carry its message to the public before the Heritage Foundation began doing likewise, and it was the first major think tank to make use of the electronic media.<sup>207</sup> The development of cable television networks such as C-SPAN has also increased opportunities for exposure. The American Enterprise Institute sponsors a weekly radio talk show and a monthly television program, "Public Policy Forum." Blumenthal states that ghost writers on the staff produce articles under the scholars' names for distribution to over 100 cooperating newspapers.<sup>208</sup> In addition to the regularly-scheduled radio and television programs, fellows of the American Enterprise Institute are always available on short notice for press briefings and commentary on fast-breaking news stories. The Bradley Lecture Series each month is aimed at bringing conservative speakers together with Washington policymakers.

The primary research product of the institution is books. The AEI Press is in partnership with the University Press of America, and their catalog contains the statement:

Many AEI books address policy issues

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<sup>205</sup>*Catalog* (Lanham, Maryland: AEI Press, 1990), inside back cover.

<sup>206</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 271.

<sup>207</sup>Easterbrook, "Ideas Move Nations," p. 70.

<sup>208</sup>Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, p. 44.

currently being debated in Congress and the administration. While AEI takes no stand on these issues, we publish the work of authors who do -- always insisting, however, that they present enough of the opposing arguments for readers to make up their own minds.<sup>209</sup>

Their catalog currently has 229 listings of books and monographs. The institution also publishes a bimonthly magazine, *The American Enterprise*, which replaces the previous *Public Opinion and Regulation*.<sup>210</sup>

In keeping with its reformed fiscal style, the American Enterprise Institute in 1989 took in \$10,119,000 in revenue, and spent \$9,018,000. Forty-eight per cent of its income came from corporate gifts, 36% from foundations, 7% from individuals, and 9% from conferences and sales. In contrast to the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute spends only 10% of its revenues on marketing. On research it spends 62% of revenues. As might be expected, major corporations of the Fortune 500 are heavily represented on the twenty-six-member board of trustees, including Chase Manhattan Bank, Dow Chemical Company, Motorola, Exxon, Amoco, Pfizer, General Motors, and Citicorp.<sup>211</sup>

The major foundational supporters are Olin, Smith Richardson, Scaife, and the Pew Freedom Trust. In some cases these foundations directly fund a scholar or a particular project at the American Enterprise Institute. For instance, Robert Bork is the John M. Olin Scholar in Legal Studies. Dinesh D'Souza wrote *Illiberal Education* under a grant from the Olin Foundation.<sup>212</sup>

#### The Free Congress Foundation

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<sup>209</sup>*Catalog*, AEI Press, inside front cover.

<sup>210</sup>*Annual Report, 1989-1990*, American Enterprise Institute, p. 27.

<sup>211</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>212</sup>Jon Wiener, "What Happened at Harvard," *The Nation*, September 30, 1991, p. 388.

The Free Congress Foundation was founded in 1974 by Paul Weyrich, as mentioned above, when he departed from the Heritage Foundation. The organization began its life with Coors money (Jeffrey Coors is the chairman of the board of directors) and as the tax-exempt arm of the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress.<sup>213</sup>

The Free Congress Foundation has always been a relatively small operation, and has concentrated on the production of short monographs and weekly and monthly newsletters. The weekly *Political Report*, begun in 1978, follows congressional districts and candidates. In 1980 a monthly newsletter was undertaken, the *Initiative and Referendum Report*, to provide updated information on state and local issues of interest to conservatives. At the same time, another monthly newsletter, *Family Protection Report*, appeared under the editorship of Connought Marshner. Its role was to follow developments "of importance to the traditional family and its values."<sup>214</sup>

In the early 1980s, the Free Congress Foundation was actively involved in what are referred to as "pro-family" and "family protection issues." One of the major projects to emerge was a collection of essays entitled *A Blueprint for Education Reform* (1984), edited by Marshner, who headed what was then the Child and Family Protection Institute. Basically, it simply reiterated many New Right criticisms of the public education system, assailing "value-neutral" education and secular humanism.

The Free Congress Foundation also lent moral and philosophical support to the Family Protection Act (1978, 1980), sponsored by Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada (Michelle Laxalt was among the officers of the foundation at that time). Based on predictable New Right values, the legislation called for, among other things, the withholding of federal education funds from any state which used textbooks that did not make clear traditional sex differences and roles. It also called for the elimination

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<sup>213</sup>Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, p. 48.

<sup>214</sup>*Ibid.*

of government social services such as daycare, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamp programs, school lunches, housing assistance, and legal aid.<sup>215</sup> For the most part, however, the organization had a low profile throughout the 1980s, and placed most of its energy in funneling policy to government officials with right-wing conservative views. It was quite small organizationally during that time, with a handful of working staff and a budget of less than \$2 million, relying on "consultants" who were often no more than private citizens with New Right beliefs, e.g., a newspaper columnist in Phoenix and a member of the P.T.A.<sup>216</sup>

By 1989 the Free Congress Foundation underwent a rethinking of its mission, and two conclusions were reached: (1) the conservative movement has lost ground since 1980, and (2) the Free Congress Foundation is "uniquely qualified" to rebuild that movement.<sup>217</sup> It seems a curious thing that conservatives could reach such a conclusion after nearly ten years of a conservative Republican administration. However, what Weyrich meant, writing in the 1989 *Annual Report*, was that he believed conservatives had focused too much attention on Washington and had lost whatever local "grass roots" momentum they had enjoyed in the 1970s. His agenda for rebuilding that grass-roots conservative support is based on what he calls "cultural conservatism": traditional Western, Judeo-Christian values made functional through democratic action.<sup>218</sup> Weyrich articulates the full mission of the foundation as: (1) working with conservative leaders in Washington, (2) training state-level activists to influence policy, and (3) teaching fundamentals of democracy to leaders in Eastern Europe and elsewhere.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>215</sup>Richard V. Pierard and Robert G. Clouse, "What's New About the New Right?" *Contemporary Education*, 54:195, Spring, 1983.

<sup>216</sup>Connought Marshner, ed., *A Blueprint for Education Reform* (Washington, D.C.: Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, Child and Family Protection Institute, 1984), pp. 300-301.

<sup>217</sup>*Annual Report, 1989* (Washington, D.C.: Free Congress Foundation, 1989), p. 8.

<sup>218</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 2, 8.

<sup>219</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

To those ends, the institution is now organized around eight centers for: Conservative Governance, State Policy, Government and Politics, Cultural Conservatism, Social Policy, Law and Democracy, Fiscal Responsibility, and Foreign Policy. Most of these centers have only two or three staff members, and three comprise only one person. There is only one person on the entire staff of thirty-five who holds a doctorate. The work environment has been described as "transient," with most of the staff in their mid-twenties.<sup>220</sup> There are no government or academic celebrities attached to the organization, other than former Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds.<sup>221</sup> Indeed, given the goals of the Free Congress Foundation, formal academic credentials are probably not very important in staff members. The foundation is more interested in providing organizing and action strategies for state and local conservative groups, and in spreading the New Right conservative philosophy to the average citizen. Senior staff also have discussions with government officials in the Free Congress Capitol Hill Forums, but those are off-the-record conversations and typically include mostly individuals who are sympathetic to their views, such as Elizabeth Dole, John Sununu, and Vice-President Dan Quayle.<sup>222</sup>

One activity of which Weyrich is very proud is the series of democracy training seminars which the foundation has offered in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Estonia. In these seminars Weyrich and his staff present free enterprise as integrally linked to political liberty.<sup>223</sup>

In 1989 the *Family Protection Report* and the *Initiative and Referendum Report* were collapsed into another newsletter, *Family, Law and Democracy Report*. A new newsletter, *Empowerment*, was launched with the objective of educating

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<sup>220</sup>Statement by John Carlisle, policy analyst, Free Congress Foundation, telephone conversation, September 24, 1991. Mr. Carlisle, an analyst specializing in education issues, had never heard of the ERIC system.

<sup>221</sup>*Annual Report, 1989*, Free Congress Foundation, p. 17.

<sup>222</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>223</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.

"grass-roots conservatives to become more effective in influencing policy, winning elections, and governing their communities according to conservative principles."<sup>224</sup> *The Political Report* continues to be published. Yet another newsletter, *Policy Insights*, highlights suggested conservative solutions to state problems. Among the very few books published in the past five years are *Ninth Justice: The Fight for Bork*; *Heavy Metal, Rap, and America's Youth: Issues and Alternatives*; and *Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda*.

It is quite possible that the perception of having lost ground on the part of the New Right conservatives has resulted from declining financial support for the foundation. This latter possibility might be surmised from language in the *Annual Report* such as "unprecedented efforts to provide financial stewardship," "consolidation of programs," and "streamlin[ing] our management."<sup>225</sup> The Free Congress Foundation has never had a very large budget; its record income was \$3.5 million in 1989. Of the revenues, 50% comes from foundation gifts, 20% comes from individuals, 15% comes from corporations, and 15% from other enterprises. In expenditures, 60% went for "research and education," 15% went for development, and the rest of the expenses were for administration, publications, and operations. The Scaife Foundation has been a consistently heavy contributor to the Free Congress Foundation,<sup>226</sup> and although the *Annual Report* does not mention foundational donors by name, some of them may be assumed from the board of directors. These include Jeffrey Coors, John Beckett (R.W. Beckett Corporation), Clifford Heinz (Heinz Foundation), and Marion Magruder, Jr. (McDonald's Restaurants).<sup>227</sup> It should be noted also that Robert Kriebel, Thomas Roe, and Jeffrey Coors's father sit on the board of the Heritage Foundation.

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<sup>224</sup>*Empowerment* (Washington, D.C.: Free Congress Foundation), March, 1991, p. 8.

<sup>225</sup>*Annual Report, 1989*, Free Congress Foundation, pp. 22, 5.

<sup>226</sup>Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, p. 28.

<sup>227</sup>*Annual Report, 1989*, Free Congress Foundation, pp. 24-26.

### The Ethics and Public Policy Center

The Ethics and Public Policy Center is a very small organization, devoted mainly to publishing books and monographs. It was established in 1976 by Ernest Lefever, a graduate of the Yale Divinity School and formerly of the Foreign Policy Studies program at the Brookings Institution.<sup>228</sup> Michael Horowitz explains, "It was essential to create a moral and intellectual basis for conservative beliefs which had its own vision and wasn't just a reaction against liberalism."<sup>229</sup> Lefever, convinced that the neoconservatives have best articulated the core values of the Western moral consensus, spoke of his mission as "to clarify and reinforce the bond between the Judeo-Christian moral tradition and domestic and foreign policy issues." An additional mission is to address "areas where the positions of strident single-issue groups have received inordinate attention in the media and in the academy."<sup>230</sup> Working with monies raised from various foundations -- and incidentally, with help from Irving Kristol's Institute for Educational Affairs, which advises corporate and foundational donors on where to place their contributions to conservative causes<sup>231</sup> -- Lefever led the organization for thirteen years. In 1989 he turned it over to George Weigel, formerly of the James Madison Foundation.<sup>232</sup>

The Ethics and Public Policy Center is primarily concerned with ethical aspects of actions of the World Council of Churches, the nuclear freeze movement, peace activists, groups calling for corporate responsibility, and pastoral letters of the United States Catholic Bishops, all of which it has criticized. Typically, the center's viewpoint is from the robustly "realistic" attitude of the neoconservatives, that

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<sup>228</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 278.

<sup>229</sup>Quoted in Easterbrook, "Ideas Move Nations," p. 68.

<sup>230</sup>"Ethics and Public Policy Center," unsigned pamphlet, Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>231</sup>Peter H. Stone, "The IEA -- Teaching the 'Right' Stuff," *The Nation*, September 19, 1981, p. 232.

<sup>232</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 179.

conservative necessity is more practical than idealistic liberalism. Lefever has said, "We fight back. I regard myself as in a daily struggle for truth, justice, and righteousness."<sup>233</sup>

Currently the Ethics and Public Policy Center has a staff of only thirteen, and a budget slightly over \$1 million. While it does occasionally sponsor conferences, its main activity is in publishing, and Robert Royal, vice-president for research, compares it to a much smaller version of the American Enterprise Institute. There is a moderately-sized group of affiliated scholars not in residence (twenty-eight are listed) -- true of all the conservative think tanks -- and Royal describes them as mostly "old friends."<sup>234</sup> Jeane Kirkpatrick is on the board of directors, along with Shelby Cullom Davis and retired admiral Elmo Zumwalt.<sup>235</sup> Several of them, such as Gertrude Himmelfarb, Nathan Glazer, and Irving Kristol, are scholars at the American Enterprise Institute and other conservative think tanks. Again, this is typical of the informal network among these policy institutions, where so many of the same scholars and names do double and triple duty on letterheads. Royal, himself a Dante scholar, was previously affiliated with a conservative Princeton alumni magazine, and does not have any particular speciality in philosophy or ethics. The center publishes five to ten books per year -- many of them compilations of essays, and some of which -- according to Royal -- are adopted as college textbooks.<sup>236</sup> Its foundational funding comes from "the usual ones -- Scaife, Olin, Pew."<sup>237</sup>

The New Right and neoconservative elements of American conservatism have become increasingly convinced that the moral and intellectual fabric of twentieth-century life is giving way. They blame this primarily on what they believe to be

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<sup>233</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>234</sup>Statement by Robert Royal, vice-president for research, Ethics and Public Policy Center, telephone conversation, October 4, 1991.

<sup>235</sup>"Ethics and Public Policy Center," p. 9.

<sup>236</sup>One might presume that the connection to the conservative faculty group, the National Association of Scholars, has something to do with the choosing of these books as texts.

<sup>237</sup>Statement by Robert Royal, October 4, 1991.

decades of political and cultural domination by a monolithic leftist-Liberal Establishment, and thus the right-wing has sought to create their own establishment: a philosophical establishment to counter perceived hegemonic liberalism, and a structural establishment, through the conservative think tanks, to propagate that philosophy, not only in public policy forums at the federal level, but also in the mass media and in the universities. Indeed, by the late 1980s, the "war of ideas" was joined not only in K-12 public education, but in higher education as well.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NATIONAL REPORTS, CONSERVATIVE  
IDEOLOGY, AND ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

There was considerable consternation in the education community, particularly among leaders of the national education associations, upon the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Not only had the education budget-slashing intentions of the right-wing of the Republican Party become apparent, but there were clear ideological signals given by the President-elect. By the end of the primary campaign in 1980, Kincheloe notes, Reagan had allied himself with the pro-family religious right in his promises to support curricula devoted to the Genesis account of creation, to fight ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), to combat secular humanism in the schools, to push for tuition tax credits for private schooling, and to promote parental rights in education.<sup>238</sup> There had been calls on the right to abolish the fledgling Department of Education altogether, and one source in the department's Office of Civil Rights said that colleagues were so unsure of whether they would remain in business under the new administration that they had not ordered their own stationery.<sup>239</sup> Apparently there was substantial fear on the right that the Department of Education symbolized a more entrenched education bureaucracy which would take local control from the schools.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>238</sup>Joe L. Kincheloe, *Understanding the New Right and Its Impact on Education*. Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 236 082, 1983, p. 8.

<sup>239</sup>Stanley N. Wellborn, "Waiting for the Ax to Fall at Department of Education," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 20, 1981, p. 33.

<sup>240</sup>*Ibid.*

There was also apprehension among higher education administrators and supporters that the Reagan administration would implement most of the education program called for in the Heritage Foundation's *Mandate for Leadership* report. Apprehension was heightened by the perception that so many members of the new administration had participated in producing the report, especially those serving on Reagan's transition team. These recommendations could be summed up in two points: less federal money for education at all levels, and less federal regulation of campus operations and reporting requirements. The only positive thing which some in higher education could find in the situation was that it might stimulate philosophical discussion about which regulations were truly important and needed.<sup>241</sup> Even though the Department of Education was not in fact dismantled, concern continued in higher education circles for some time during the Reagan first term. There was the expectation of budget cuts in student financial aid, decline in the support for basic research, and little hope that affirmative action policies would be enforced vigorously -- although some observers at the time pointed out such bright spots as the fact that the federal government supplies only fifteen percent of all campus expenditures, and that even if drastic federal cutbacks were undertaken, they would be phased in over a period of years. Not only that, but if the economy revived as the Republicans had promised, continued federal support for higher education would be necessary.<sup>242</sup>

### The Department of Education

Interestingly, if the right-wing among Reagan adherents wished to dismantle the Department of Education, they made incorrect assumptions in their advice to the

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<sup>241</sup>Sheldon Steinback, *et al.*, "Three Perspectives on the Report on Post-Secondary Education by the Heritage Foundation," *Change*, March, 1981, pp. 30-31.

<sup>242</sup>Patrick M. Morgan, "Higher Education in a Conservative Era," *Educational Record*, 97:11-12, Winter, 1983.

President to appoint Terrel H. Bell as Secretary of Education. A Mormon and a lifelong Republican, Bell, it was presumed, would move quickly to abolish the necessity for his own position. What was not presumed was that Bell was privately alarmed at the "unyielding doctrinaire opposition of the 'movement conservatives,'" of whom he commented, "These people looked on the election of Ronald Reagan in November 1980 as the beginning of a revolution....Many Republicans are frightened by the uncompromising viciousness of this movement."<sup>243</sup>

It is revealing of Bell's intentions, which he later described as his wish to champion education from within the administration,<sup>244</sup> that he had decided, after being approached by Attorney General Edwin Meese III, a close Reagan advisor, that he would not become Secretary of Education if Meese's views indeed reflected Reagan's. Bell recalls being astonished in early conversations at Meese's disdain, even hatred, for public schools and the universities, and his remark that the Department of Education was a "great bureaucratic joke."<sup>245</sup> Meese wished to eliminate *all* federal funding for education. When Bell pointed out the importance of research done by the National Institute of Education (NIE), and that Richard Nixon had created it, not the Democrats, Martin Anderson (Reagan's new Director of the Office of Policy Development) retorted, "I always knew they impeached him for the wrong reason."<sup>246</sup> However, when Bell talked with Reagan, he was impressed by the President's benign remarks, and came away believing, "The president [sic] didn't sound like an enemy of the schools."<sup>247</sup>

It was the "movement conservatives" he was forced to take into the Department of Education, however, who worked from within against him, Bell states.

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<sup>243</sup>Terrel H. Bell, "Education Policy Development in the Reagan Administration," *Phi Delta Kappan*, March, 1986, p. 490.

<sup>244</sup>Terrel H. Bell, *The Thirteenth Man: A Reagan Cabinet Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 1988), p. 1.

<sup>245</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>246</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

His own escape from poverty through public educational opportunities created in the New Deal was very real to him, and he cherished education. He reports fighting constant battles with the New Right ideologues over appointments to his senior staff, and he took care to place "responsible moderates" in any positions dealing with grant monies and student financial assistance.<sup>248</sup> There were others, however, over whom he had little control, and in some ways, he says, they functioned like a secret society, viewing George Bush, James Baker, and Bell himself as "pragmatists"<sup>249</sup> -- a black word in the New Right lexicon almost as bad as "communist." Bell comments, "...a certain lack of intellectual maturity on the part of many leaders in the movement smacks of something akin to McCarthyism."<sup>250</sup>

Meese, with close ties to Weyrich, Viguerie, and Howard Phillips (of the Conservative Caucus), was in Bell's opinion the primary coordinator of the movement conservatives within the administration. Bell was often appalled at the "ludicrous" advice given to him by the transition team assigned to the Department of Education. He asserts that for such ultra-patriots, many of them had no real understanding of the federal government, e.g., that a cabinet secretary simply could not dismiss career civil servants, nor that agencies and offices established by Congress could not be abolished on the whim of a cabinet secretary.<sup>251</sup>

This naiveté of the right-wing representatives in the Department of Education is cited also by Schieffer and Gates as a reason for why movement conservatives were never as successful within the government as they hoped to be, or even imagined themselves to be. They note that while the Heritage Foundation was touting the *Mandate for Leadership* as Reagan's blueprint for administration, there were many other competing voices in the hugely expensive and unwieldy 1980 transition. According to these authors, movement conservatives were, in fact, given

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<sup>248</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>249</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>250</sup>Bell, "Education Policy Development," p. 491.

<sup>251</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.

the illusion that they would be closely involved in policy formation, while the reality was that the small group of California millionaires and industrialists who had controlled Reagan's political career since his governorship in 1966 were actually in control of appointments.<sup>252</sup> The ultra-conservatives' numbers were too small, and their ideological rigidity and their ignorance of the federal government too great, to allow them much genuine influence. Too, neither Meese nor Budget Director David Stockman had enough real interest in education to sustain a radical drive against it.<sup>253</sup> Smith had written as early as 1980 that anyone expecting Ronald Reagan to lead a revolution against higher education should remember his basic passivity and disinterest in higher education, except for sporting news, while governor of California.<sup>254</sup>

Yet it is true that Bell experienced considerable pressure to adopt the conservative agenda in education. The regional offices of the department were largely given over to movement conservatives who had much less knowledge of education than they had zeal for spreading propaganda.<sup>255</sup> In 1982 the Heritage Foundation issued a mid-term report calling for Reagan to fire Bell. It was then that the secretary decided to form a commission to study the state of American education, and to make education a priority in the public mind. He believed that this was the only way to save the department.<sup>256</sup> The result was *A Nation at Risk*, which in essence forced Reagan at least to give lip service to education matters in the 1984 campaign because it stirred such public interest. Bell resigned in disillusionment,

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<sup>252</sup>Robert Schieffer and Gary Paul Gates, *The Acting President: Ronald Reagan and the Supporting Players Who Helped Him Create the Illusion That Held America Spellbound* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), pp. 18-20.

<sup>253</sup>David L. Clark and Terry A. Astuto, "The Accidental Secretary: Education Policy and the Reagan Years," rev. of Terrel H. Bell, *The Thirteenth Man: A Reagan Cabinet Memoir* (Free Press), *Change*, September/October, 1988, p. 51.

<sup>254</sup>Martin Smith, "Lessons From the California Experience," *Change*, September, 1980, p. 33.

<sup>255</sup>John Hanrahan and Julie Kosterlitz, "How the New Right Affects the U.S. Department of Education," *Education Digest*, March, 1984, p. 29.

<sup>256</sup>Bell, *The Thirteenth Man*, pp. 100, 114.

however, after the election, when he realized that Reagan had, in Bell's view, only responded favorably to the report as a political strategy for re-election. Basically, says Bell, the President and the movement conservatives were unchanged in their desire to slash education spending and abolish the Department of Education.<sup>257</sup>

Eileen Gardner, then an education policy consultant at the Heritage Foundation, noted that, "A lot of conservatives were unhappy with Secretary Bell. We would like to see an end to a lot of special-interest programs that eat up billions of dollars."<sup>258</sup> With Bell's departure, the New Right was eager to replace him with someone more congenial to their viewpoints, and this occurred with the appointment of William Bennett, a neoconservative philosopher who had been Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities in the Reagan first term, and who had maintained very close relations with the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute.<sup>259</sup>

The New Right elements within the Department of Education continued to exert influence under Bennett's administration. Bennett himself appeared on Rev. Pat Robertson's "700 Club," an evangelical television talk show, to urge parents to complain about school curricula if they felt the proper values were not being taught. Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, an organization devoted to the preservation of the nuclear family and "family values," attacked a school text designed to teach about the Holocaust; their objections were based on its being "depressing and negative."<sup>260</sup> An official of the Education Department's Denver regional office sent out a mailing on government stationery in December, 1984 which argued in favor of fundamentalist private schools and referred to America as a "Christian nation." Bennett's staff

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<sup>257</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 160-161.

<sup>258</sup>"Bell's Departure Stirs Up the Right," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 19, 1984, p. 16.

<sup>259</sup>Bennett went to the Heritage Foundation as a Senior Fellow in 1990, and is also a senior editor of *National Review*. See Stephen Burd, "Bennett: 'I Mean, It's a Disaster,'" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 23, 1991.

<sup>260</sup>Christopher Hitchens, "Minority Report," *The Nation*, June 8, 1985, p. 694.

reportedly saw nothing wrong with this. Hitchens, writing in *The Nation*, was moved to say, "Under the aegis of William Bennett...the Schlaflyites have moved from the sick, deluded fringe to the center of educational policy-making."<sup>261</sup>

### Dominant Themes in the New Right Critique

While that may have been an exaggeration of the case, by the mid-1980s writers on education were drawn more and more to comment on the growing conservative criticisms of public education. The general educational philosophy of the New Right as it pertains to elementary and secondary education has an integral relationship with the conservative critique of higher education. Whether it is a textbook controversy in a rural school district or criticism that a university professor is casting doubt upon the capitalist economic system, whether it is an apprehension that traditional sex roles are being demolished in kindergarten or that feminists in the college classroom are questioning the structure of Western civilization, the conservative fear is the same, that a "liberal Establishment" not of their making, not of the majority of the American people, is imposing its values on them.

There was apparently an emerging sense of the common themes underlying New Right unhappiness with the schools, particularly the religious right's dismay at what they consider to be "un-American values." Brodinsky notes their desire to imbue public education with Protestant Christian religion, to introduce biblical material into the curriculum, and to emphasize "Victorian morality, free enterprise, and militarism." He asserts that the New Right would rather dismantle the public education system entirely if they cannot remake it to their liking.<sup>262</sup> Giroux points out the very strong family emphasis in the right's philosophy, enumerating the "enemies" to family they see as feminists, drugs, homosexuality, black music,

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<sup>261</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup>Ben Brodinsky, "The New Right and Its Impact on Education," *Education Digest*, February, 1983, pp. 9, 6.

abortion, and liberal educators. They also believe that state and federal bureaucracies interfere with mechanisms which promote the traditional American value on hard work and self-sufficiency.<sup>263</sup> Pierard and Clouse also comment on the notion of "enemies of the family" held by the New Right, who regard sex education and values education as manifestations of secular humanism,<sup>264</sup> and Head Start programs as merely an early stage of humanist indoctrination. "If the rightists have their way," say these authors, "school children will no longer have lunches (unless they can pay for them) but at least they will be able to pray."<sup>265</sup>

For some reason, the ultra-conservatives are peculiarly hostile to the NIE, possibly because research from that agency does find its way into school texts, and they thus regard it as a fountainhead of secular humanism. Even more, it is possible that they resent the special needs research -- for the handicapped and for bilingual education -- which emanates from the NIE.<sup>266</sup> Lambro has complained, "The research portfolio at NIE bulges with waste and bias," and he goes on to attack most of the research having anything to do with black, bilingual, or feminist issues.<sup>267</sup> Uzzell attacks the "liberal agenda" of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (of which NIE is the largest component), characterizing as "foregone conclusions" their research on desegregation, educational technology, and bilingual education in the schools.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>263</sup>Henry A. Giroux, "Crisis and Possibilities in Public Education," *Education Digest*, March, 1985, p. 3.

<sup>264</sup>Cain, "Crazies at the Gate," pp. 18-19. "Secular humanism is a code word that has almost replaced communism in the right's vocabulary. What it means precisely is hard to determine; we could say that it refers to anything of which the right disapproves...."

<sup>265</sup>Pierard and Clouse, "What's New About the New Right," pp. 196-197.

<sup>266</sup>Hanrahan and Kosterlitz, "How the New Right Affects the U.S. Department of Education," p. 27.

<sup>267</sup>Donald Lambro, "The Unsinkable National Institute of Education," *National Review*, April 11, 1986, p. 40.

<sup>268</sup>Lawrence Uzzell, "Education's Mad Science," *National Review*, April 11, 1986, pp. 39-40.

While professional educators, particularly in the K-12 sector, began to pay more attention to evidence of conservative discontent in the mid-1980s, Kincheloe locates the real beginning of New Right reaction in 1974 with the Kanawha County, West Virginia, textbook controversy. This was a rallying point for fundamentalists and conservatives, and he notes that the American Library Association reported an upsurge in the number of textbook controversies after that date.<sup>269</sup> (The Heritage Foundation sent a lawyer to assist the plaintiff parents in this case).<sup>270</sup> The criticisms leveled against the disputed texts were the usual objections to sex education -- which, Kincheloe points out, is taken by the New Right as a promoter of sexual activity in adolescents and a factor in undermining the family. He states that at their most extreme, these critics see a vast conspiracy of abortionists, secular humanists, Planned Parenthood, and sex education to teach genocide to young people. He also notes that the siege mentality of the New Right is "consistent with right-wing historical patterns": feelings of persecution united with the belief in a vast conspiracy to undermine political and moral values.<sup>271</sup>

These historical patterns, at least in terms of educational criticism from the right, are in fact not new in the United States. Historian Carl Kaestle asserts that objections to school reform in the 1850s and again in the 1890s were based on the identical fears of the current New Right, i.e., too much state involvement (loss of local control), too much standardization of curriculum, and increased taxation. A monopoly of power over education at the state and federal levels was viewed as undemocratic. Interestingly, school critics in the 1870s were accusing education reformers of having failed to inculcate moral values. And while a "back-to-basics" approach in curriculum is another frequently-cited item in the New Right agenda for

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<sup>269</sup>Kincheloe, *Understanding the New Right*, p. 7.

<sup>270</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 157.

<sup>271</sup>Kincheloe, *Understanding the New Right*, pp. 13-14.

educational reform, the same objections to unnecessary "life adjustment" and lackluster curricula were voiced in the 1950s.<sup>272</sup>

It is not within the scope of this study to pursue in depth the socio-economic and cultural factors which have been associated with populist and right-wing movements in the United States, but the foregoing examples of hardline conservative concerns on education are reflective of a general model. Shapiro asserts that what conservatives -- especially those of the New Right -- desire is to redistribute "social" expenditures, e.g., monies spent on welfare, education, and aid to the underprivileged and handicapped, which they feel has been captured and misappropriated by narrow "special interests." Along with this impulse is the desire to anchor education firmly in the petit bourgeois values of the Protestant Ethic. What all this means, he says, is simply that the middle and lower-middle classes are reacting to what they perceive as an erosion of their place in American society.<sup>273</sup> Crawford refers to it as "the politics of resentment" -- the sense of some common people, especially in the Far West and the South, that they are being overwhelmed increasingly by large social and political institutions with whose values they do not identify.<sup>274</sup> This probably explains why New Right school critics can be so hostile to the "education bureaucracy," even though the Department of Education has nothing to do with hiring teachers, setting curricula, selecting textbooks, or making decisions about school prayer.<sup>275</sup> It is a recognizable entity upon which to place blame.

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<sup>272</sup>Carl F. Kaestle, "The Public Schools and the Public Mood," *American Heritage*, February, 1990, pp. 70-72, 76. For an interesting preview of contemporary conservative critiques of public education, see also Franklin Parker, "Roots of the New Right: School Critic Max Rafferty (1917-82)," U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 257 728, 1985.

<sup>273</sup>H. Zvi Shapiro, "The Making of Conservative Educational Policy: Middle-Class Anxieties and Corporate Profitability in the 1980's," *Urban Education*, July, 1982, pp. 238, 242.

<sup>274</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, pp. 290-293.

<sup>275</sup>Hanrahan and Kosterlitz, "How the New Right Affects the U.S. Department of Education," p. 27.

One other very important point to consider about the right wing -- and to some extent the neoconservatives and traditional conservatives -- is their conviction that a conspiracy exists to undermine and eradicate their values and their philosophy. Whether it is the "liberal Establishment," "left-wing ideologues in the universities," the United Nations, or secular humanists, there is typically some conscious force aligned against them. "Convinced that their views are the views of the vast unrepresented majority of Americans," writes Crawford, "yet with an ideology outside the political mainstream, [the New Right] must find conspiracies to explain their failure to gain control of their government."<sup>276</sup> As recently as 1991, after eleven years of conservative Republican administration in Washington, Feulner of the Heritage Foundation complained, "Despite a president who campaigned as a conservative, the public policy agenda is again being dictated by the Washington establishment...it's a pleasure in the Washington of pragmatism and consensus to be considered outsiders again..."<sup>277</sup>

While the "outsider" voices in the Reagan years seemed to be raised primarily over issues in K-12 education, there was also a mounting conservative critique in higher education. It developed more quietly and less in the public eye, and perhaps more slowly, but it has now grown into a central set of controversies in postsecondary education over such issues as affirmative action, free speech, feminist and minority studies, admissions standards, and the meaning of Western civilization. It began initially as criticism of higher education funding, and only later became a more sharply-focused conservative philosophical attack on academe.

#### The Conservative Think Tanks and Higher Education

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<sup>276</sup>Crawford, *Thunder on the Right*, p. 308.

<sup>277</sup>Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., "Washington Out of Sync," *Heritage Today*, Spring, 1991, p. 7.

Before further discussion proceeds, it should be noted that in speaking of the conservative public policy institutions' views on a given subject, what is meant is that certain authors either resident or affiliated with these think tanks have expressed particular viewpoints. All of these think tanks have disclaimers in their publications to the effect that the author does not necessarily reflect the views of the institution. Huberty of the Heritage Foundation explains that this is done merely to encourage free thought and expression among fellows and adjunct scholars,<sup>278</sup> but it may well have more to do with efforts to maintain the organizations' tax-exempt status. At any rate, there is a very high degree of conformity and agreement in viewpoints published and uttered under the aegis of these institutions, so it is in that sense that the conservative think tanks "hold" and publish opinions as organizations.

Somewhat surprisingly, none of the four conservative think tanks included in this research devoted much attention to higher education throughout most of the 1980s. When they addressed education at all, it was at the K-12 level, in the Free Congress Foundation's *Blueprint for Education Reform*, and in the Heritage Foundation's *Mandate for Leadership* and "The Education Crisis: Washington Shares the Blame."<sup>279</sup> Michael Schwartz of the Free Congress Foundation explains this neglect as conservatives' seeing higher education as "a morass, and not accessible."<sup>280</sup> Free Congress policy analyst John Carlisle says that the late-blooming conservative interest in postsecondary institutions was sparked primarily by two events: the 1988 controversy at Stanford University over the introduction of a multicultural general education curriculum, and the proliferation of speech codes at several universities such as Michigan and Wisconsin.<sup>281</sup> Robert Huberty of the

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<sup>278</sup>Statement by Robert Huberty, telephone conversation, September 26, 1991.

<sup>279</sup>Eileen Gardner, "The Education Crisis: Washington Shares the Blame," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder, No. 351. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 260 540, 1984.

<sup>280</sup>Statement by Michael Schwartz, telephone conversation, September 26, 1991.

<sup>281</sup>Statement by John Carlisle, telephone conversation, September 25, 1991.

Heritage Foundation states that the higher education topic "has simply become more of a public issue," and the foundation's interest in it now is in keeping with their tendency to focus on what is in the headlines.<sup>282</sup> The real reason may be that higher education institutions are simply larger, more complex organizations than local school boards, and their governance structures are much less amenable to influence by the same tactics which have been employed by the New Right in other education forums. In fact, one conservative writer urged his readers to concentrate on K-12 issues for this very reason.<sup>283</sup>

In the conservative insistence on cutting education budgets under the Reagan administration, of course, there had always been the intention to reduce postsecondary education funding as well. O'Keefe notes the apparent lack of interest in higher education in the 1980 presidential campaign, other than proposed reductions in student financial aid and the obligatory conservative calls for government bureaucracies to stop harrasing universities with regulations -- particularly those connected with affirmative action and the handicapped -- which presumably serve only to drive up tuition and expenses.<sup>284</sup> Throughout the 1980s, however, the rationales for these economic positions were articulated more clearly, and came to rest principally around the issues of "fairness" or "reverse discrimination" (affirmative action policies, minority admissions standards), "hate speech" codes (aimed at reducing racial, ethnic, and gender tensions on campuses), and the perceived diminution of the importance of Western culture and values in the college

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<sup>282</sup>Statement by Robert Huberty, telephone conversation, September 26, 1991.

<sup>283</sup>Lawrence A. Uzzell, "The Next Ten Years: Conservatives and Education," *National Review*, August 5, 1983, p. 932.

<sup>284</sup>Michael O'Keefe, "What Will the 1984 Election Mean for Higher Education?" *Change*, October, 1984, p. 16. Conservatives seem peculiarly critical of expenditures for handicapped and special needs education. See Gardner, "The Education Crisis," in which she stresses that too much attention to special needs students has damaged "normal" students (pp. 2-3). Gardner also created a furor early in the Reagan administration by suggesting that handicapping conditions might in fact be a divine judgment on the individual, and not a responsibility to be addressed by the larger society.

curriculum (allegedly replaced by feminist and multicultural approaches). These conditions, most conservatives believe, have been the result of the "radical left-wing" professoriat and administrators who control higher education and who have made these institutions bastions of the left-liberal agenda.

There has always been in American society a certain anti-intellectual suspicion of the higher learning, and certainly since the 1930s and the Cold War era an even stronger assumption that most college professors are liberals or socialists. Contemporary conservatives often assert that the student radicals of the 1960s are now entrenched in the universities. This, of course, assumes that the professoriat holds a monolithic philosophy, committed mainly to rationalism, materialism, empiricism, and relativism -- if not nihilism -- and that they seek at every turn to indoctrinate students with political liberalism. This concern is neither new nor original. Abcarian pointed out in 1969 that this conservative stereotype of academicians must assume students as helpless pawns at the mercy of brainwashing professors, and also that, for whatever reason the conservatives believe, universities are *ipso facto* dedicated enemies of the current social system.<sup>285</sup>

These perspectives on American higher education have been enunciated consistently in publications of the Heritage Foundation, notably in the quarterly *Policy Review*. The conservative economic prescription for higher education has been succinct and unvarying: drastically reduce federal funding. Robinson asserts that the United States has over-invested in higher education, with the result that too many are receiving degrees and finding themselves unable to find satisfying jobs. Thus, worker productivity suffers. He blames the federal government for making so many loans and grants available and for "propagandizing" the value of college education. His recommendation is to reduce government subsidies in order to force higher education institutions to charge full price for their services. They will

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<sup>285</sup>Gilbert Abcarian, "Ideology and Alienation: Conservative Images of the Liberal Academic Establishment," *Educational Theory*, 29:112, 123, Spring, 1969.

therefore deliver a better product, to fewer numbers, in this free-market atmosphere. If any student aid is made available, he would have it awarded on the basis of academic merit to only the neediest.<sup>286</sup>

Carnes, citing faculty as "unproductive," believes that universities have no incentives to hold down tuition costs. He agrees with Robinson that by reducing student aid significantly, the federal government would make these institutions more responsive to market pricing.<sup>287</sup> Baldwin argues that colleges and universities can cut administrative costs easily, mostly by eliminating "unnecessary" programs. Comparing many campuses to Club Mediterranean, he specifies student entertainment, recreational facilities, and campus health care as among such programs, and also calls for greater faculty productivity.<sup>288</sup>

In none of these articles, however, is there any assumption of other social good than the preparation of a workforce. The analysis is based purely on a loose cost-benefit model.

The bulk of opinion on higher education issues expressed through the conservative think tanks has been concerned with the perceived left-radical nature of the academic establishment, what the true mission of higher education should be, and how the first systematically subverts the second. Indeed, it is the belief that Western civilization itself is under attack in the universities which most disquiets conservatives. As Smith notes, "The conservatives [are] not afraid of invoking large ideals and of setting them in sweeping historical contexts in which grand ideas clashed and struggled"<sup>289</sup> -- intellectual error, therefore, is seen as particularly heinous to most conservatives.

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<sup>286</sup>Warren C. Robinson, "Educational Divestment: Who Benefits from Subsidies? Does Anyone?" *Policy Review*, 9:59-61,63, Spring, 1983.

<sup>287</sup>Bruce M. Carnes, "The Campus Cost Explosion," *Policy Review*, 13:69-70, Spring, 1987.

<sup>288</sup>Christopher Baldwin, "Club Med With Books!" *Policy Review*, 14:72-76, Fall, 1988.

<sup>289</sup>J. Smith, *The Idea Brokers*, p. 170.

Guenter, in a *Policy Review* article of 1982, states that "most college courses, especially in the social sciences," question the "operative values of American society." He describes professors as "radicals" intent upon using the classroom for political indoctrination, and calls for colleges and universities to impose codes of ethics which would insure impartiality and "due regard for truth." Worst of all, these professors create "self-doubt" in their students and in democratic institutions.<sup>290</sup> Clearly the assumption is that (1) there is an objective truth which can be known and should be regarded, and (2) most professors in academe are deliberately nay-saying that truth.

Pines declares in *Back to Basics* that in the late 1960s, academic standards were "abolished wholesale in a spasm reminiscent of the Red Guards' destructive rampage through China's classical cultural institutions."<sup>291</sup> The dilution of academic standards is nearly always linked in conservative rhetoric with the generalized description of academicians as "leftists" and "radicals."

Abraham Miller, a political scientist at the University of Cincinnati who participated in one of the Heritage Foundation fellowship programs, gives a typical summary of the situation as seen from the right in "Radicalism in Power: The Kafkaesque World of American Higher Education." The decline in American higher education has occurred, he says, mainly in the humanities and social sciences, and mainly because administrators "have abandoned their sacred responsibilities." These responsibilities are chiefly "to preserve the best we have produced as a civilization and faithfully to transmit it to the next generation."<sup>292</sup> Miller uses phrases like "left elements" and "left-wing orthodoxy" to describe the current professoriat, and he gives

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<sup>290</sup>Lewy Guenter, "Academic Ethics and the Radical Left," *Policy Review*, 8:30-42, Winter, 1982. One is reminded of Spiro Agnew's "nattering nabobs of negativism."

<sup>291</sup>Pines, *Back to Basics*, p. 124.

<sup>292</sup>Abraham H. Miller, "Radicalism in Power: The Kafkaesque World of American Higher Education," Heritage Lecture Series (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 1990), p. 1.

the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964 as an example of how radicals began using campus resources for off-campus political action.

What could not be won in the streets with violence could be won within the university itself by subverting the minds of captive audiences of college students. Those baptized by the confrontations of the 1960s and early 1970s are now in power. The society has provided them with tenured sinecures and pays them to think up new methods to destroy Western culture and civilization in the name of race, class, and gender...<sup>293</sup>

Further, he believes that the entrenched radicals are guilty of "McCarthyite intimidation" of their students, especially of those who dare to challenge the "destruction" of the traditional curriculum by "militant feminists" and "militant blacks." Having described the students as a captive audience in thrall to the left elements, Miller then states, "Since most students can see unvarnished idiocy and faddism for what they are, the new faddism is not going to gain many converts." This faddism is, in Miller's view, a pervasive relativism: "The Left teaches that all knowledge is relative and truth is nothing more than the shared perceptions and convictions of a community of speakers..."<sup>294</sup> He singles out preferential hiring and admissions policies for women and minorities, and "Orwellian definitions of racism," as part of this problem. He also gives a canonical account of how Stephen Thernstrom of Harvard was unjustly accused by militant black students of making racist remarks in class.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>293</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>294</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>295</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 6. Thernstrom is commonly cited by conservatives as a martyr to the intolerance of the left for free speech on campus. Thernstrom claims he was only quoting from a textbook racist remarks which were misinterpreted by students. He voluntarily chose not to offer the course again. See also Wiener, "What Happened at Harvard."

Declaring that no one within academe listens to the few lone voices raised in protest of these outrages, Miller urges, "We must make the curriculum...a public issue during gubernatorial and legislative campaigns...We must call upon such organizations as the National Association of Scholars, the Madison Center, and the public media to investigate and expose the most egregious of violations of academic integrity."<sup>296</sup>

Leslie Lenkowsky, formerly president of the Institute for Educational Affairs and now president of the Hudson Institute, participated in the same Heritage Foundation fellowship program as Miller. Wondering if grant-making foundations would be as generous to higher education if they fully understood what is occurring, Lenkowsky says:

Especially in the humanities and social sciences, the two areas most relevant to the work of philanthropy, ideology has gone a long way toward replacing scholarship, and the consequences can be felt from the classroom to the learned societies... In all the disciplines, left-wing paradigms flourish and are often powerful enough to impose silence or conformity...<sup>297</sup>

He gives the Institute for Educational Affairs credit for helping direct grantmakers to "worthy" projects, including the establishment of conservative student newspapers on campuses nationwide, the funding of research to help young conservative scholars gain tenure, and support for Allan Bloom to write his controversial book, *The Closing of the American Mind*.

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<sup>296</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14. The National Association of Scholars, an organization of conservative faculty and administrators which began in 1987, opposes what it believes to be dogmatism in the college curriculum and infringements on academic freedom.

<sup>297</sup>Leslie Lenkowsky, "How Philanthropy Can Improve the Quality of Higher Education," Heritage Lecture Series (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 1990), p. 2.

In "The Suicide of Liberal Education," Bruce Edwards, a member of the English faculty at Bowling Green State University, and also a Heritage Foundation adjunct scholar, gives one of the more comprehensive accounts of the conservative grievance. Warning that "liberal education is in its death throes," he finds the cause in the destruction of any sense of objective reality in language, brought about by "deconstructionist" literary critics. He posits that the Western tradition has always been "logocentric," i.e., its epistemology "aligns itself with the conviction that human language can bear faithful reference to a world outside the mind of the language user."<sup>298</sup> However, when that assumption of objective, knowable truth is negated, language and texts become fluid, unfixed, and having no core of meaning or discernible intention.

He praises the Western tradition as affirming "the outlines of the knowledge most worth having, that which a person needs to live a free, happy, peaceful, and fruitful life, [knowledge having] already been identified by his forebears and need not be sought from scratch in every generation."<sup>299</sup> Edwards sees the destruction of this tradition in nearly all the new scholarship:

Deconstruction is the umbrella term by which I will refer to this multifaceted adversary of the Western tradition... Among deconstructors one will find radical feminists, Marxists, Freudians, and all manner of disaffected and disenfranchised dissenters -- all refugees from the alleged imperialism of the patriarchal Western tradition... Deconstruction is the embodiment of a ghostly presence that has haunted the academy since the early sixties and the Free Speech Movement. It is the final revenge of aging activists and radicals who could not achieve their social program through the political process and have

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<sup>298</sup>Bruce L. Edwards, "The Suicide of Liberal Education: Deconstruction in Academia," Heritage Lecture Series (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 1990), p. 2.

<sup>299</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

taken refuge on campus within the sinecures of those disciplines that have few objective standards for evaluating their work or teaching -- typically the humanities and social sciences...<sup>300</sup>

In one paragraph, Edwards strikes the recurring themes of the conservative critique: primacy of the Western cultural tradition, the assumption of objective truth, rejection of feminism and innovative scholarship, and control of higher education by radicals from the 1960s. He accuses these "deconstructors" of "relativizing [sic] curricula and dismantling the canon of Western works for it provides the ground cover they need for the intellectual looting of students' minds."<sup>301</sup> Edwards is convinced that there has always been sufficient space within the Western tradition for debate, but that the debate should not be about the tradition itself. Otherwise, "All of life becomes one grand class-action suit against Western culture on behalf of the oppressed."<sup>302</sup>

Or, as conservative journalist Robert Novak expressed it, those critical of Western culture are "multicultural nuts who bemoan the fact that Europeans brought civilization to North America."<sup>303</sup> The implication is that "civilization" is unique to the Western European peoples of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The Heritage Foundation has become so concerned, in fact, over the whole state of higher education that it has established the Salvatori Center for Academic Leadership. Founded with a grant from the Henry Salvatori Foundation, the rationale given is:

Far from being transmitters of a common political culture, universities have become the staging ground for a guerrilla war against the principles that gave birth to our

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<sup>300</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>302</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>303</sup>Robert Novak, "Capital Gang," weekly television program of news commentary, Cable News Network, October 19, 1991.

liberties and purpose to our constitutional order. The Salvatori Center for Academic Leadership will work directly with individual scholars and leaders in American education to provide a principled alternative to the wholesale abandonment of our Western heritage... Unlike the disruptions of the 1960s, the attack on standards today comes from within, from the "tenured radicals" on the faculty.<sup>304</sup>

Under this program, twenty-five scholars from the social sciences and humanities will be chosen each year to attend special seminars at the foundation in order to "deepen their understanding of the principles of American liberty."<sup>305</sup> The first conference, held in 1991, concentrated on educational standards, the decline of scholarship, and free speech on campus.

Conservatives have made much of the issue of campus free speech, most notably in the last three years, complaining that the "left-liberal orthodoxy" stifles any dissenting opinion, but the topic emerged much earlier in the 1980s with the appearance of several conservative student newspapers. Much publicity was generated by the *Dartmouth Review's* broadsides against minorities, feminists, affirmative action, and the so-called liberal bias in the faculty and administration.<sup>306</sup> Even more publicity resulted when members of the paper's editorial staff illegally destroyed some shanties built on the campus common to protest apartheid in South Africa. Buckley's *National Review* held a fundraiser for the student editors after they were expelled.<sup>307</sup> Dinesh D'Souza, a naturalized citizen from India who was one of

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<sup>304</sup>"Salvatori Center for Academic Leadership," unsigned, unnumbered pamphlet, Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, [n.d.]

<sup>305</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>306</sup>William A. Henry, "Conservative Rebels on Campus," *Time*, November 8, 1982, p. 80. See also Peter H. Stone, "The IEA -- Teaching the 'Right' Stuff," *The Nation*, September 19, 1981.

<sup>307</sup>William F. Buckley, "The Second Dartmouth College Case," *National Review*, April 11, 1986, p. 20. See also William Henry, "Conservative Rebels on Campus," *Time*, November 8, 1982.

these editors, immediately cast the situation as one in which the conservative students had been made the victims of censorship and harassment by left-wing faculty and students.<sup>308</sup>

Suddenly free speech for conservative students, or anyone expressing even mild disagreement with the alleged liberal agenda of the higher education establishment, became a cause. Feulner of the Heritage Foundation recently remarked, "While many on the left have made successful careers accusing conservatives of censorship and other cultural transgressions, you do not hear conservatives on college campuses and in the arts community demanding rigid conformity; such attempts at thought control emanate solely from the left."<sup>309</sup>

D'Souza, having gone on to work as a White House policy analyst in the Reagan administration, is now the resident authority on higher education at the American Enterprise Institute. His recent book, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, has created a sensation among conservative critics of higher education.

Stating as his thesis that there is a "revolution of minority victims" on the nation's campuses which is radically altering American higher education, D'Souza examines "who is admitted, what is studied, and life on campus."<sup>310</sup> The author chose to look at six institutions: the University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University, Howard University, the University of Michigan, Duke University, and Harvard University. He justifies this selection of largely elite research institutions by saying that most other universities emulate these. As for his own credentials in higher education, he cites his undergraduate degree in literature from Dartmouth, his two-year position on the staff of Princeton's alternative (conservative) alumni magazine, and the fact that he had begun some graduate work on Dante before joining

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<sup>308</sup>Dinesh D'Souza, "Shanty Raids at Dartmouth: How a College Prank Became an Ideological War," *Policy Review*, 12: 29-30, Spring, 1986.

<sup>309</sup>Feulner, "Washington Out of Sync," p. 7.

*Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991), p. 20.

the American Enterprise Institute. "I believe that my close contact with the university over the past decade has given me a valuable eyewitness position to observe the sweeping changes going on around me."<sup>311</sup>

D'Souza locates these sweeping changes in the areas of preferential treatment of blacks and Hispanics in admissions standards, multiculturalism, decline of academic standards, and censorship of students and faculty who question "politically correct" tenets of the university establishment. He gathered his information primarily from informal talks with students, selected faculty, and the staffs of the resident conservative student newspapers of these campuses.

He castigates Berkeley for discriminating against highly-qualified Asian and white students in admissions, while adjusting standards to admit "unqualified" blacks and Hispanics -- who, he says, only become discouraged and drop out anyway, or seek refuge in separatist cultural enclaves on campus. D'Souza is peculiarly incensed over this perceived slight to Asians, invoking their presence on campus as a pleasant contrast to the 1960s: "the Asian American demeanor is a challenge to the ethos of the 1960s" because they are "impeccably groomed, conservative in dress, moderate in manner."<sup>312</sup> Enlarging upon the theme of discrimination in preferential admissions, he declares that white students know the "dirty little secret" and resent it bitterly; indeed, "white hostility to preferential treatment and minority separatism is a major force behind many of the ugly racial incidents that have scarred the American campus."<sup>313</sup> White students, he implies, have been driven to negative behavior by such policies of reverse discrimination, and even are "censored" by accusations of racism if they complain. Claiming that white students are in fact sympathetic to racial minorities, D'Souza says, "The new bigotry is not derived from ignorance, but from experience. It is harbored not by ignoramuses, but by students who have direct and first-hand experience with minorities in the close proximity of university

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<sup>311</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>312</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>313</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 49.

settings."<sup>314</sup> D'Souza's greatest concern, however, is for the erosion of the traditional curriculum, which he says is under assault in the name of "multiculturalism" and "pluralism." What he is usually referring to by these terms are feminist and ethnic studies courses, and attempts to have more non-Western interpretations represented in the curriculum. He says frankly that "great" examples of women and minorities are simply missing from history: "They might blame imperialism, or racism, or sexism for the lesser accomplishments of minorities and women, but the fact of lesser accomplishment would remain."<sup>315</sup>

As for the subverting of academic standards, D'Souza cites deconstructionist literary theory and "*au courant*" scholarship as the culprits. In his view, works by Old West novelist Louis L'Amour and the study of American popular movies have pushed the classics -- such as Milton and Shakespeare -- completely out of the curriculum.<sup>316</sup> Efforts to make the curriculum, and co-curricular campus life, more multicultural have simply "balkenized" American campuses into special-interest groups who do not communicate. "In short, instead of liberal education, what American students are getting is its diametrical opposite, an education in close-mindedness and intolerance, which is to say, illiberal education."<sup>317</sup>

Outside conservative journalistic circles, *Illiberal Education* has received less than unqualified praise. Menand notes that the book is mostly a compilation of material and ideas which have appeared elsewhere in print, and that D'Souza's only other literary effort has been "an admiring biography of the evangelist Jerry Falwell."<sup>318</sup> Neither does it escape Menand's attention that D'Souza was himself an editor of the *Dartmouth Review* during the period of some of its most offensive and

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<sup>314</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>315</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>316</sup>*Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>317</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>318</sup>Louis Menand, "Illiberalisms," rev. of Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Sex and Race on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991), *New Yorker*, May 20, 1991, p. 101.

tasteless attacks on women, blacks, and homosexuals. "It is not pleasant," the reviewer writes, "to see a man who did so much to poison the wells now turning up dressed as the water commissioner, and it will be apparent to most people who read 'Illiberal Education' that the book's promise of balance is a false one."<sup>319</sup> As further evidence of this lack of balance, Menand notes that D'Souza assails a faculty member at the City College of New York for teaching that blacks are racially superior to whites, but neglects to mention the white professor at the same institution who has argued that whites are intellectually superior to blacks.<sup>320</sup> The political environment which has formed D'Souza is also legitimate grounds for questioning the good faith of his arguments. Cockburn alleges that he was present in 1982 when D'Souza boasted to some luncheon companions that a list of homosexual students at Dartmouth, subsequently published in the *Review*, had been obtained by the newspaper "through a covert operation."<sup>321</sup>

This book has enjoyed a great deal of media attention, serving to heighten the debate on these matters, and is thus far the most complete *summa* of recent conservative discontents with higher education. While admitting that "sometimes Dinesh's arguments outrun his data," Robert Royal of the Ethics and Public Policy Center asserts that a considerable "recalibration" of philosophy is taking place in higher education because the left-wing agenda has run its course.<sup>322</sup> Schwartz of the Free Congress Foundation echoes that sentiment. He states that while it is the mission of higher education to "pursue truth and scholarly seriousness," thinking about the greater truths in the universities "should be in continuity with popular

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<sup>319</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>320</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>321</sup>Alexander Cockburn, "D'Souza's Disclosures," *The Nation*, May 13, 1991, p. 620.

<sup>322</sup>Statement by Robert Royal, telephone conversation, October 4, 1991.

culture, not in conflict with it,"<sup>323</sup> i.e., he believes that colleges and universities are out of step with the rest of American society.

### The National Higher Education Reports

If a significant recalibration were going on throughout the 1980s in regard to higher education, the language and issues of the conservatives could scarcely have been more different from those of the national education study groups and foundations publishing reports in that period. In one area alone -- that of strengthening the liberal arts curriculum -- was there common ground, but the diagnoses of why this curriculum has weakened, and why it is important, are in disagreement.

In 1980 the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education released *Three Thousand Futures*, a report on the general state of higher education in the United States, taking its title from the more than 3,000 postsecondary institutions in the country. While acknowledging coming challenges, e.g., the expected demographic changes which would decrease college enrollments, the report is cautiously optimistic that increased access for previously-underrepresented populations would help offset decreases in numbers of traditional students. It notes the growth of more cosmopolitan campuses: "The diversity of American higher education used to be found between and among institutions, with conformity within them; now it is more often found within institutions..."<sup>324</sup> In projecting future trends, the report places great emphasis on the themes of diversity and access for the 1990s and beyond, noting that more "majority women," minorities, part-time students, and

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<sup>323</sup>Statement by Michael Schwartz, telephone conversation, September 26, 1991.

<sup>324</sup>*Three Thousand Futures: The Next Twenty Years for Higher Education*, final report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 183 076, 1980, p. 22.

international students will join campus populations. Therefore, institutions should be prepared to deal with them through enhancement of recruitment and retention strategies, and enrichment of the "internal life of the campus."<sup>325</sup> The report reflects pride that institutions of higher learning in America have become places of "social rebirth" for minorities. Finally, it recommends that the federal government spend more in the areas of financial aid, the maintenance of the research capacity in higher education, and the strengthening of research libraries.<sup>326</sup>

With the appearance of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, the optimism of the earlier Carnegie report was gone, replaced with the sober warnings about education with which Secretary Terrel Bell hoped to get American attention. While much of the document deals with K-12 education, there was some material pertaining to higher education. The specially-appointed commission which did the research gathered their data from education experts, public hearings, panels, symposia of scholars, and existing analyses of education problems.<sup>327</sup> The recommendations for higher education included strong emphasis on "more rigorous and measurable standards, and high expectations," and the raising of admissions standards, with clear communication to the secondary schools as to articulation requirements.<sup>328</sup> Like nearly all the national education reports, this one places responsibility on the federal government to provide funding and leadership: "The Federal Government has *the primary responsibility* to identify the national interest in education. It should also help fund and support efforts to protect and promote that interest."<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>325</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>326</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>327</sup>Gardner, David P., *et al.*, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. An Open Letter to the American People. A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education. National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education), U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 226 006, 1983.

<sup>328</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>329</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

Although *A Nation at Risk* was not primarily a higher education report, it was followed closely in 1984 by *Involvement in Learning*, which was intended to be the postsecondary equivalent of the earlier report. Manual Ortiz, Director of the National Institute of Education, appointed a study group which examined reports, archives, and background material of "various recent commissions on American education," including *A Nation at Risk*, and some studies and papers were solicited additionally.<sup>330</sup> This study group included, among others, Alexander Astin of the University of California-Los Angeles, Howard Bowen of the Claremont Graduate School, and Kenneth Mortimer of Pennsylvania State University.

In announcing their shared values for the report, the group notes particularly: an informed, creative citizenry, access to higher education for as many populations as possible ("True equity requires that *all* Americans have access to *quality* higher education"), and clearly-enunciated high standards which can be measured as outcomes. "Since excellence can be attained in diverse educational contexts, diversity in the missions of our colleges, in the specific means by which quality education is achieved, and in the composition of student, faculty, and administrative bodies should be preserved."<sup>331</sup>

The report takes note that "the college curriculum has become excessively vocational in its orientation, and the bachelor's degree has lost its potential to foster the shared values and knowledge that bind us together as a society."<sup>332</sup> The stress is thus on making higher education an environment which fosters interaction and engagement of the student, both in and out of the classroom. Recommendations for how this might be achieved include publicly-announced criteria for what the

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<sup>330</sup>*Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education*. Final Report of the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education), U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 246 833, 1984, p. v.

<sup>331</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>332</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.

institutions expect as outcomes for their students, ongoing assessment and feedback for both students and faculty, two full years of a liberal arts core with emphasis on interdisciplinary and critical thinking, and more interaction of faculty, administrators (including student affairs personnel), and students.<sup>333</sup> Other outcomes desired for students by the study group are self-confidence, leadership ability, qualities of empathy, social responsibility, and understanding of cultural differences.<sup>334</sup>

Another report appearing in 1984, from the National Endowment for the Humanities, also expresses concern with the liberal arts/humanities curriculum, but, because William Bennett was then chairman of that agency, this analysis has a more conservative tone than the other reports. Bennett himself wrote the document.

"To Reclaim a Legacy" is the result of a panel of thirty-one scholars, administrators, and educators from various higher education institutions, and the group comprised several conservatives, e.g., Diane Ravitch of Columbia, Chester Finn, Jr. of Vanderbilt, and John Silber of Boston University. They held three public meetings on the condition of the humanities, and also examined humanities course requirements at fifteen institutions.<sup>335</sup>

Concluding that history, literature, and philosophy are being neglected in the college curriculum, Bennett writes, "What we have on many of our campuses is an unclaimed legacy, a course of studies in which the humanities have been siphoned off, diluted, or so adulterated that students graduate knowing little of their heritage."<sup>336</sup> Bennett notes that there is no clear vision or philosophy of education at many higher education institutions, and that Western civilization has lost its central place in the curriculum. Predictably, he adds:

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<sup>333</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 15-26.

<sup>334</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>335</sup>Bennett, William J., "To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education" (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities), U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 247 880, 1984, p. i.

<sup>336</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1.

Sometimes the humanities are used as if they were the handmaiden of ideology, subordinated to particular projects and valued or rejected on the basis of their relation to a certain social stance. At the other extreme, the humanities are declared to have no inherent meaning because all meaning is subjective and relative to one's own perspective.<sup>337</sup>

He also mentions the 1960s and 1970s as a time when students were allowed to have too much influence on the curriculum.

While the other national reports and studies do not find the languishing of the liberal arts in the upheavals of the 1960s or in a too-zealous pluralism, they continued to reflect concern for the curriculum. In 1985 *Integrity in the College Curriculum* was issued by the Association of American Colleges, reiterating many of the same points made previously about the decline of coherence in the general education and liberal arts curricula.<sup>338</sup> This study group comprised faculty and administrators from several postsecondary institutions, including such scholars as Ernest Boyer, Frederick Rudolph, and Arthur Levine. The baccalaureate curricula of eleven institutions were examined, those from: Carnegie-Mellon University, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Washington University, the City University of New York-Brooklyn, Rhode Island College, Tuskegee Institute, Grinnell College, Hampshire College, St. Mary's College-Indiana, Maricopa County Community College, and Empire State College.<sup>339</sup> The report opens by saying, "Our report addresses the crisis in American

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<sup>337</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>338</sup>*Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community. The Findings and Recommendations of the Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges), U.S., Educational Resource Information Center, ERIC Document ED 251 059, 1985.

<sup>339</sup>*Ibid.*, p. ii.

education as it is revealed in the decay in the college course of study and in the role of college faculties in creating and nurturing that decay."<sup>340</sup>

The problems are identified as a neglect of writing, grade inflation (even while ACT and SAT scores decline), incompetence in foreign language use or study, no comprehension of science, a breakdown in articulation between colleges and the secondary schools, and the absence of rationale for most college majors as they are currently structured.<sup>341</sup> The report also notes that a sense of mission is sadly lacking at the institutional level in nearly all of higher education:

There is so much confusion as to the mission of the American college and university that it is no longer possible to be sure why a student should take a particular program of courses...collapse of structure and control in the course of study has invited the intrusion of programs of ephemeral knowledge developed without concern for the criteria of self-discovery, critical thinking, and exploration of values... It is as if no one cared, so long as the store stays open.<sup>342</sup>

The roots of this decline, according to the study group, lie partly in the way in which American higher education has evolved as a combination of the English college, the German university, and the particularly American "ideal of the university as a tool for public service." The specialization and emphasis on research now required for the doctoral degree, curricular control vested in the departmental structure, and ever-increasing demands from the wider society for technical degrees are also listed as contributing factors. The pressures of the marketplace not only affect student attitudes, but they in turn affect curricular decisions within institutions.

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<sup>340</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>341</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>342</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

As an antidote, the report recommends especially for faculty that they take more interest in the curriculum as a whole, and that administration should provide incentives for this interest, including suitable recognition for good teaching, and professional development opportunities which concentrate on enhancing teaching. Additionally, the recommendations delineate for the curriculum itself: more interdisciplinary exposure for students, emphasis on active inquiry and critical analysis in thinking, literacy (reading, writing, and speaking), historical consciousness, science, numerical understanding, an exploration of social and personal values, and "international and multicultural experiences."<sup>343</sup> Pointedly, the report asserts:

At this moment in history colleges are not being asked to produce village squires but citizens of a shrinking world and a changing America. Colleges must create a curriculum in which the insights and understandings, the lives and aspirations of the distant and foreign, the different and the neglected, are more widely apprehended...<sup>344</sup>

The report also states, "No curriculum can assert itself as a fixed definition of truth. It must be responsive to the challenging needs and expectations of society and to intellectual social changes that alter our definitions of reality."<sup>345</sup>

Another report of 1985, *Equality and Excellence*, issuing from the College Entrance Examination Board, was a study of how American blacks had been faring to that point in higher education.<sup>346</sup> With a heavy compendium of statistics, the report concludes that there is still a "serious underrepresentation" of black professional and graduate students, and inequality in how and what blacks are taught in college.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>343</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 6-15.

<sup>344</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>345</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>346</sup>Linda Darling-Hammond, *Equality and Excellence: The Educational Status of Black Americans* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1985).

<sup>347</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. vii-1.

Black students are still primarily found in two-year institutions, and when those institutions are historically black colleges, they typically get much less exposure in the curriculum to quantitative, technical, and computer education. The report notes evidence that minority students are twice as likely to persist in four-year institutions if there is financial aid available. The problem is stated as largely due to cuts in education funding under the Reagan administration, which hurt black students along every sector of education, including preparation for college, as well as access, particularly in elimination of programs to desegregate large urban school districts and in programs for disadvantaged students.<sup>348</sup>

Boyer's book, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, appeared in 1987 as another general assessment of higher education.<sup>349</sup> Having visited with students and faculty, interviewed administrators and examined curricula, and perused enrollment and placement statistics at various institutions, he presents in this work many observations and conclusions drawn by earlier studies, except that he emphasizes as his organizing principle the concept of *community*. From the discontinuity between K-12 education and higher education to confusion over goals and the passivity of students in class, he finds fragmentation both socially and intellectually in colleges and universities. He asserts that the whole higher education enterprise must reform itself so that all its parts relate and it gives a sense of wholeness.<sup>350</sup>

In order to accomplish this, Boyer stresses the need to create a true learning community of purpose and understanding in all its members. This would involve not only stronger efforts to instill a sense of belonging in freshman classes and finding a balance between fulltime and part-time faculty, but a sense of coherence in the curriculum through an integrated core and the involvement of the best teachers.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>348</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>349</sup>Ernest L. Boyer, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987).

<sup>350</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>351</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 91.

He is enthusiastic about new scholarship and new knowledge: "New disciplines are emerging at the point where old ones are converging. Literary critics use structuralist and psychological techniques; historians use anthropology and demography; linguists use semiotics..."<sup>352</sup> His view of these innovations is favorable, as long as they become part of an integrated curriculum.

Unlike the other reports, this book does mention concern about a certain cynicism among students. Boyer is also concerned that so many students work, and that they work such large amounts of time, to earn extra money. Also unlike the previous reports, this is the only one to take any account of a conservative viewpoint among students, which he notes is somewhat greater than in the past, and he does mention -- only in passing -- the existence of conservative student newspapers.<sup>353</sup> He finds a "shocking parochialism" among students about the wider world, and, again arguing for the nurturing of community, he states, "Sexism, racism, and religious bigotry are offenses to the dignity of other human beings. They violate everything a college stands for. They are wrong."<sup>354</sup>

The American Council on Education in 1988 issued a report similar to *Equality and Excellence* which spoke in even stronger terms of the state of minority participation in education. Entitled *One-Third of a Nation*, the report takes its title from Roosevelt's famous Great Depression quotation concerning the poor in America; in the case of this report, it refers to the fact that very soon minorities will indeed be one-third of the population.<sup>355</sup> Describing its study group as "broadly bipartisan," including former Presidents Ford and Carter, representatives of business, minority groups (Coretta Scott King), higher education, and state and local government, the

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<sup>352</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>353</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>354</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>355</sup>*One-Third of a Nation: A Report of the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education), U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 297 057, 1988.

report finds little cause for rejoicing. "America is moving backward -- not forward -- in its efforts to achieve the full participation of minority citizens in the life and prosperity of the nation."<sup>356</sup> The data were gathered from extensive demographic and economic indicators such as those produced by the United States Bureau of the Census, and from previous research and consultation with policy experts.<sup>357</sup>

As *Equality and Excellence* had pointed out, this report also concludes that fewer minorities complete college or obtain graduate training, and that when this type of education has so much become part of the American dream, there is reason for "deep concern" because so much is lost in the nation's human resources.<sup>358</sup> This is of special importance, the report notes, when by the year 2000, nearly forty-two percent of all public school students will be minority group members or otherwise disadvantaged, and that they should have access to a college education.<sup>359</sup>

Their recommendations are general, but focus on (1) more minority recruitment and retention in higher education, including greater efforts to foster diversity on campus; (2) a new dedication to affirmative action; and (3) cooperation among educators at all levels of the educational enterprise.<sup>360</sup>

Two final reports considered here both emanated from the National Endowment for the Humanities, both written by Chairman Lynne V. Cheney, and both under the congressional mandate that the chairman give periodic reports on the state of the humanities in America. In "Fifty Hours" (1989),<sup>361</sup> Cheney revisits the persistent problems of lack of emphasis on good teaching in higher education, and the attendant lack of presidential leadership in the curricular life of the institutions. She

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<sup>356</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>357</sup>*Ibid.*, p. ix.

<sup>358</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>359</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>360</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 21-28.

<sup>361</sup>Lynne V. Cheney, "Fifty Hours: A Core Curriculum for College Students" (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities), U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 308 804, 1989.

also stresses, as does Boyer, the need for community, and she believes this results from a common core of learning.<sup>362</sup>

Contrary from what might be expected of her philosophy, given her tenure in a conservative administration and her links with William Bennett and other conservatives, her suggested liberal arts core curriculum takes rather broad account of non-Western cultures.<sup>363</sup> In eighteen hours of "civilization" courses, she recommends only approximately half as Western and American; the others may be Islamic, Asian, or African. These would be packaged as coherent groupings, with reading emphasis on primary texts representative of the cultures. Also recommended are twelve hours in foreign (or classical) language, six hours in mathematical concepts (beyond remedial math), eight hours of natural science, and six hours of social sciences, with particular attention paid to how these have been applied in the last 200 years.<sup>364</sup> Briefly addressing the topics of diversity and pluralism, Cheney notes that awareness of these issues comes in studying the way in which the West and American civilization have evolved, and she does include suggested primary texts by women and minorities.<sup>365</sup>

In the second report, *Tyrannical Machines* (1990), however, Cheney returns more to views recognizable by the conservatives.<sup>366</sup> She takes her title reference from a quotation by Matthew Arnold, to the effect that even good ideas become counterproductive when they become too large. Cheney believes the educational system in the United States has become too large and bureaucratic to function as it should. Citing teacher education programs, and K-12 textbooks, as weak, she lauds alternative ways around the "tyrannical machine," arguing strongly for parental

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<sup>362</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>363</sup>A point upon which Bruce Edwards takes her to task in his Heritage Foundation lecture.

<sup>364</sup>Cheney, "Fifty Hours," pp. 17-22.

<sup>365</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>366</sup>Lynne V. Cheney, *Tyrannical Machines: A Report on Educational Practices Gone Wrong and Our Best Hopes for Setting Them Right* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1990).

choice in schooling. This would result, she says, in healthy competition among schools.<sup>367</sup>

In higher education, Cheney criticizes the preoccupation with faculty research at the expense of effective teaching, particularly when it entails the hiring of "faculty superstars" who do not teach at all. She also warns that too much of the teaching burden is resting on adjunct faculty and teaching assistants. Linked to this is the publish-or-perish frenzy, which in Cheney's view leads to mediocre scholarship and "innovative interpretations."<sup>368</sup> Finally, in keeping with her theme of alternatives, she recommends development of pathways for faculty recognition and tenure which do not hinge so completely on research.

Cheney's two reports are both somewhat compromises with the more rigid conservative views on curriculum and on the educational system. While arguing for a strong liberal arts core, she still would include some multicultural and minority material, and acknowledges that this inclusion is important. In the second report, rather than advocating radical changes in educational institutions, she argues for creative pathways *around* the "tyrannical machines."

### Change Magazine

One other source of opinion on higher education issues, *Change* magazine, reveals that most of its writers throughout the decade of the 1980s were concerned with the same matters of the national reports -- indeed, were writing about these reports -- or with other topics. There is surprisingly little evidence that anyone was paying attention, either, to specific conservative criticisms. Between 1980-89, there were twenty-four articles in *Change* on the topics of general education and liberal arts, twenty-five on the nature of good teaching and ways to promote it, eighteen on

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<sup>367</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>368</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 31.

some aspect of minorities (including a special edition on Asian-American students), nine on curriculum and standards (with a special edition on women's studies), and five on the vocationalism prevalent in higher education. Other topics ranged over the usual spectrum of problems and practices in postsecondary education, such as finance, presidential searches, philanthropy, articulation, graduate education, community colleges, and -- in a handful of articles -- speculations about the Reagan budget agenda. Only in four instances is there even oblique engagement with some of the conservative charges leveled against academicians and institutional policies.

Hall and Kevles, in writing about how college curriculum changes, note that, "Changes in the undergraduate curriculum are not generated by the academic profession, but by significant social, political, and cultural forces at work throughout society."<sup>369</sup> Among these forces they number demographic changes, economic conditions, changes in technology and the nature of work, and how education is viewed generally in the culture. After eighteen or more years of acculturation, college students, they believe, arrive on campus fully imbued with values imparted by American society: "College is not the place to instill a sense of community. By the time students arrive at college, they have already shared in a homogeneous culture through their exposure to television."<sup>370</sup> This is not explicit, enough, however, to be construed as a refutation of the argument that a radical professoriat controls the curriculum.

Willie, in discussing admissions standards and the subject of "excellence" in higher education, does not address the conservative viewpoint directly, either. His thesis is that colleges and society in general are better off educating as many people as possible, and quality will follow from that.<sup>371</sup> He does not, however, make reference to any conservative arguments to the contrary.

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<sup>369</sup>James W. Hall and Barbara Kevles, "Democratizing the Curriculum," *Change*, January, 1980, p. 39.

<sup>370</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>371</sup>Charles V. Willie, "Educating Students Who Are Good Enough: Is Excellence an Excuse to Exclude?" *Change*, March, 1982, p. 20.

In 1983 an article by Bloom appeared in *Change*, which is basically a summary of all he said in *The Closing of the American Mind*.<sup>372</sup> Stating that students "no longer believe in anything," Bloom regrets that they do not go off to college with a sense of intellectual adventure. Admitting that popular American culture is as much to blame as the universities, he cites too much television, rock music, and the confusion he sees occurring in traditional sex roles as part of the problem. He includes the obligatory lament for the passing of Western civilization from the curriculum. Surprisingly, there were no answering articles in subsequent months.

Booth, in an article composed as an open letter to E.D. Hirsch, Jr., does take up the values underlying some of the latter's pronouncements on what constitutes cultural literacy.<sup>373</sup> He criticizes Hirsch's apparent preoccupation with "surface" facts rather than with in-depth learning, and accuses him of wishing to educate "functionaries, not free men and women."<sup>374</sup> Booth also corrects Hirsch's erroneous assumptions about what the general level and condition of education has been for most of the nation's history, particularly on Hirsch's point that in earlier times Americans could all converse together because they all knew and understood the same things.<sup>375</sup> In short, Booth tells Hirsch that his diagnosis is as simplistic as his prescription. He does not, however, connect Hirsch's viewpoint with a wider conservative one.

Perhaps it has been because so much attention was focused in the earlier 1980s on K-12 education, both in the media and in the conservative policy institutions themselves, that so little notice was taken of the conservative critique in these national reports and in publications such as *Change*. Certainly there is a disparity in viewpoint between the professional higher education community and its conservative and New Right critics, to the extent that they scarcely seem to be

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<sup>372</sup>Allan Bloom, "Our Listless Universities," *Change*, April, 1983.

<sup>373</sup>Wayne C. Booth, "Cultural Literacy and Liberal Learning: An Open Letter to E.D. Hirsch, Jr.," *Change*, July/August, 1988.

<sup>374</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>375</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.

speaking the same language. More surprisingly, they were not speaking to each other until the publicity in the popular media created by D'Souza's book in 1991, which has spawned televised debates and led D'Souza to take a lecture/debate tour with one of his ideological opponents, Stanley Fish of the Duke University English faculty.<sup>376</sup>

Clearly, the national higher education reports during the 1980s, except for those issued by the Reagan administration itself, were focusing on very different matters than those which concerned conservatives. The language of the reports deals with "access," "diversity," "opportunity," "recruitment and retention," "social rebirth," "equity," "social responsibility," and "empathy." The conservatives use language of political import: "left-wing," "liberal agenda," "special interests," "quotas," "militant," "censorship." In another context, Clark and Astuto have also noticed the difference in terminology -- in the conservative education platform "equity" has been replaced by "excellence" and "standards of performance," "needs" and "access" have been replaced by "ability" and "selectivity," and social and welfare concerns have been replaced by economic and productivity concerns.<sup>377</sup>

Certainly there is agreement that the liberal arts curriculum in most higher education institutions needs careful attention, but the views espoused by the conservative think tanks on why this has come to pass are substantially different from the interpretation of the problem given by professional educators.<sup>378</sup> The causes for the decline of the strength and popularity of the liberal arts and humanities are, in the national reports, complex and widely-distributed, having to do with shifts in the economy, the composition of the American population, and changing ideas of the higher education mission, all factors which have been at work over many decades. They also take into account the variegated history of the types of institutions in the American postsecondary mosaic. On the other hand, the conservatives concentrate

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<sup>376</sup>Statement by Robert Royal, telephone conversation, October 4, 1991.

<sup>377</sup>Clark and Astuto, "The Accidental Secretary," p. 52.

<sup>378</sup>For a third perspective, critical both of the conservative position and that of the national reports, see Daniel W. Rossides, "Knee-Jerk Formalism: The Higher Education Reports," *Journal of Higher Education*, 58:404-429, July/August, 1987.

almost exclusively on the decade of the 1960s and early 1970s as *when* the changes happened, and that leftist radicals caused these changes. Conservative writings and rhetoric repeatedly stress this. Not only do they believe that left-wing elements have control of higher education, but they are convinced that these leftists are consciously seeking to destroy the moral and intellectual fabric of American society.

## CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

If there were a formal hypothesis in this research at the beginning, it would have been that the conservative public policy research institutions chosen for this study are probably quite similar to the more established ones like the Brookings Institution and the RAND Corporation. These similarities would include a resident staff of experts holding appropriate academic credentials and experience in their respective areas of policy interest. An additional expectation of similarity to more traditional think tanks would be an emphasis on new research for policy applications, a striving for balance in breadth and depth of viewpoint among the affiliated analysts, and the generation of fresh ideas. There would have been the assumption that, being “think tanks,” and the close ties with academia which that has always implied, their staffs and publications would reflect a scholarly, albeit conservative, composition. Corollary to that, based on the same assumption of connections to the academic community, there would have been the assumption that the conservative think tanks

are interested in higher education. This research suggests that none of these informal hypotheses are sustained.

First of all, the Heritage Foundation and the Free Congress Foundation are avowedly politically partisan. If institutions like Brookings, RAND, and the Spencer Foundation are, they do not declare it. They do not describe themselves in their institutional materials in terms of “conservative” or “liberal.” The American Enterprise Institute is almost equally frank in proclaiming its mission as rooted unequivocally in fostering the free enterprise system, and all values they believe stem from it, including that of political liberty. The Ethics and Public Policy Center clearly states that its mission is based on Judeo-Christian moral values. Even more plainly, examples have been given in this study that leaders at these organizations, such as Edwin Feulner, Paul Weyrich, and Burton Pines, have publicly stated their intentions to influence policy and legislation – statements so public that it is a question as to how these think tanks maintain their tax-exempt status.

Second, this research indicates that the staffs in most of these institutions are quite lacking in scholarly strength, and indeed, in most cases, scholarly credentials. For instance, only one person at the Free Congress Foundation holds a doctorate, and other than having been involved in conservative political activities, most of the rest of the policy staff have no appropriate credentials in fields or disciplines with which they are concerned. Even at the larger and better-funded Heritage Foundation, there is more regard for “conservative credentials” than for scholarly ones. Less than 20% of the research staff there hold a doctorate.

The Heritage Foundation, of course, openly admits that its interest is in producing studies and policy positions in an immediate way so that they will have greater impact on whatever issues are imminent. Most of the work is done by young, academically inexperienced staff, perhaps under the direction of a senior fellow. Even among the ranks of senior residents and fellows, there is a very high proportion of ex-government officials and politicians who have no academic

credentials. Conservative publicists and journalists also are as likely as not to be numbered among the resident staff.

The American Enterprise Institute, while displaying a more impressive list of affiliated and resident conservative scholars on its masthead, still maintains Dinesh D'Souza as its authority on higher education, a young man with a bachelor's degree and no formal experience in academia other than having been a student. The organization also employs numbers of ghost writers for the more prominent fellows. The Free Congress Foundation has practically no one of academic distinction or even attainment on its staff, in terms of terminal degrees, and produces no material approaching scholarly quality. The majority of the foundation's publications are newsletters targeted at the general public. The Ethics and Public Policy Center would have little to publish if not for associated scholars such as Gertrude Himmelfarb and others who are largely emeriti at their respective institutions.

The materials pertaining to higher education produced by these think tanks are by no means scholarly in nature. The half-dozen articles and lectures are aimed presumably at an audience of conservative readers, for they consist largely of personal opinion and unsubstantiated generalizations which would not withstand scrutiny in a professional journal. Miller, for instance, in citations used for his lecture, draws almost solely upon quotations from his own works, those appearing in the NAS journal *Academic Questions*, and from those of such conservatives as Thomas Sowell, George Will, Chester Finn, and Roger Kimball. He never defines "left elements" nor gives any historical evidence for how and why these "elements" allegedly have taken control of higher education. The acknowledgement and presentation of contrary facts, or even the setting of a context for persuasive argument, is absent from them.

The articles published in the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review* dealing with the economics of higher education subsidies give no arguments based on factual data and display practically no understanding of how such complex organizations

operate. Vague phrases like “faculty productivity” are never defined, nor is there any evidence that the authors understand economics in the wider sense.

Those authors dealing with the alleged radicalism of university professors attempt to give no explanation for why they are characterizing academicians as “leftists,” or any reason why these leftists – other than that they are leftists – are intent on destroying American society, or even how they are joined nationwide in this crusade. Not one shred of evidence or research is introduced to suggest that student activists of the Sixties necessarily ended up in academic careers, nor are any data presented on the current political opinions and affiliations of university faculty.

Edwards does give a moving and articulate description of the best of Western civilization’s ideals, but then he falls prey to the same unfounded utterance as his conservative colleagues in his fulminations against feminists and deconstructionists. Miller characterizes higher education as “Kafkaesque,” but does not pursue the analogy coherently. There is no sense of the complexity of the subjects under consideration, no recognition that colleges and universities as institutions change through time for many interrelated and complicated reasons. These conservative writers are simply right; their opponents, the “leftists,” are not only wrong, but evil.

D’Souza’s *Illiberal Education* is replete with careless generalization, historical inaccuracies, and reckless disregard for any type of sound or articulated research methodology. He opines that “there is a desperate shortage of black students who, by any measure of academic promise, can meet the demanding work requirements and competition of the nation’s best universities,”<sup>379</sup> but he offers no explanation for, nor even evinces curiosity about, the social and historical conditions which have created this situation. If this lack of minority ability to compete academically does not have roots in society and history, the reader is left wondering if D’Souza thus implies inherent inferiority in black students. (Neither does he explore the possibility that the vast majority of white students do not have proper

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<sup>379</sup>D’Souza, *Illiberal Education*, p. 40.

academic preparation for “the best universities” – or, indeed, the possibility that *nowhere* in American higher education is the curriculum as demanding as he seems to assume). He also manages to imply that “the old racism” is a thing of the past – “it is truly powerful only in small pockets of society...”<sup>380</sup>

Having chatted with a few selected individuals at only six institutions (with no particular criteria for why he chose those six), and having read secondary and derivative source materials which consisted mostly of articles in student newspapers and a few pieces by like-minded conservatives, he makes sweeping statements about what is going on in American higher education that are even greater than the sweeping changes he claims to have found. His evidence, when he offers any, is anecdotal. His arguments often contain internal contradictions. D’Souza criticizes a women’s literature class discussion as “vulgar” because of frank sexual references made by the professor and female students, leaving one to wonder what he would have to say about some of Chaucer’s tales and Shakespeare’s more ribald allusions if explored in those same class settings.

What he has written reflects little understanding of the history of postsecondary education in the United States, and he manages to imply that until thirty years ago, American college students must all have been reading Plato in the original Greek, as a matter of course, before the Sixties. His foray into the finer points of literary criticism, and the alleged political agenda behind deconstructionism, convince of little except that D’Souza has no background or expertise whatsoever in this area. The editors of *The Journal of Higher Education* declined to review the book because they did not consider it of a quality to be taken seriously in a scholarly journal.<sup>381</sup>

The national education reports, by contrast, are for the most part demonstrably researched pieces. While they do speak predominantly in generalities, there is some

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<sup>380</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>381</sup>Statement by Robert J. Silverman, editor, *The Journal of Higher Education*, telephone conversation, May 13, 1991.

attempt to marshal proof for their pronouncements. If there is a political or ideological agenda, at least evidence is offered, sometimes in the form of empirical data, as that presented on minority persistence in four-year institutions. Information is solicited through hearings, panels, previously published research, and from persons who have documented experience or expert knowledge as researchers in a given subject.

In sum, the national higher education reports place emphasis on social opportunity found in college education; this in turn means that diversity has, and will, increase on college and university campuses, and that is why the reports also stress the importance of recognizing and fostering a sense of pluralism in the campus community. A corollary is the emphasis placed on financial aid for students, so that those previously excluded from these opportunities may participate. It follows, logically, that the federal government should have a significant role to play in supporting higher education. Finally, these reports acknowledge the multicultural nature of a shrinking world.

By contrast, the conservative writings on higher education are almost diametrically opposed to the views expressed in the national reports. While agreeing that the liberal arts core must be strengthened, they see it as a vehicle for transmitting received truth, not one for exploring new interpretations of values in a changing world. They do not believe that women and minorities have been oppressed substantially by the traditional structures of Western civilization, and therefore do not believe that special affirmative action efforts should be made for them in higher education, nor that the curriculum should be altered purposely to reflect their concerns and influence. The corollary is that admissions standards should not be altered to make up for past or present social and educational inequities. Finally, the conservatives are convinced that left-wing radicals and Marxists control higher education in America, and that they are engaged in bending the curriculum to further their aims of undermining traditional American values. Unlike the national higher

education reports, however, the conservatives fall far short of offering persuasive evidence or data for any of these conclusions.

There is peculiar irony in the quality of argument and research introduced by conservative partisans of an “unadulterated” Western civilization curriculum. For those to whom history is such an important discipline, anchoring as it does the tradition and custom upon which they believe all social order hangs, they display at times a disturbing ignorance and lack of appreciation for the complexity which history teaches. They show no knowledge of the very longstanding debates in American higher education, those which have gone on for at least 150 years, over what the college curriculum should contain – how much of the practical and how much of the liberal – and that the liberal arts have been in a weakened state of popularity for far longer than the 1960s. They believe the end of Western civilization is near, and yet do not recognize that philosophical upheaval and intellectual assimilation invariably have been part of that tradition. The incorporation of Greek mystic philosophy, notably Platonism, into early Christianity, the Roman empire’s compromise with Christianity as an institution, the European feudal order’s eventual accommodations with democracy – all of these seemed cataclysmic events in their age, and all have been woven into the tapestry of Western history and culture.

For lovers of the Western literary tradition, they seem to have taken from their reading little grasp of the complexity of human life and reason, nor understanding of human motivation. The quality of logic advanced in their arguments does not reflect the rigorous training they prescribe for college students. For example, if *Illiberal Education* is the best fruit of D’Souza’s education in the liberal arts at Dartmouth, then the conservative faith in this type of education is ill-founded.

Perhaps it is as Easterbrook has suggested, that the conservatives attracted to these think tanks are only a small group of like-minded people who reinforce each other’s opinions:

The regularity with which the same

thinkers' names appear on think-tank rosters is as remarkable as the regularity with which Scaife and Olin are listed as donors...The recurrence of the same names makes it fair to ask if what appears to be a conservative intellectual groundswell is really just multiple manifestations of one phenomenon.<sup>382</sup>

Certainly it is true that a cross-matching of boards of directors and adjunct scholars for the think tanks would reveal redundant names, chief among them Irving Kristol, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Nathan Glazer, Walter Berns, Robert Bork, and Gertrude Himmelfarb (Kristol's wife).

Whether there is in fact a "groundswell" of conservative thought in the United States, there is the *perception* of such influence. Measuring that influence in any meaningful way is beyond the boundaries of this dissertation, but the following questions and suggestions for further research are offered.

The conservative think tanks themselves proclaimed that they would have considerable policy influence in the Reagan and Bush administrations, the Presidents promised that they would have, and the news media in the early 1980s believed that they would – but have they? The Department of Education is still intact and Congress did not enact all the education budget reductions requested over the decade. Without the financial support of certain philanthropic foundations, would these conservative publicists and scholars have had the exposure they have enjoyed? A study designed to measure how influential the policy advice of these think tanks has been, for instance, on legislators generally and on specific pieces of legislation, would be helpful. Additionally, it would be interesting to know if the corporate and foundational donors of the millions poured into these think tanks for nearly twenty years consider the money well spent. Have the results been as expected?

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<sup>382</sup>Easterbrook, "Ideas Move Nations," p. 77.

Another area of research for those interested in higher education would be an investigation of the conservative student newspapers and the Institute for Educational Affairs which has funded them, under Irving Kristol's guidance, as part of the whole movement to cultivate a conservative consciousness in college students. There is a series of interlocking organizations and publications, fellowships, internships, and scholarship programs to prepare young conservatives for careers in journalism and politics. Research on the influence of these newspapers and student groups, and perhaps attention to how they have affected campus climate – including the emergence of White Student Unions on some campuses --, would be timely. Attention should be paid to such groups as Accuracy in Academia, which for a time in the mid-1980s was encouraging students to monitor their professors' lectures for evidence of Marxist and anti-American bias.

The implications for student affairs practice as well as for the curriculum are pertinent also in much of the other conservative critique concerning multiculturalism and affirmative action. The sponsorship of various student groups, programming for diversity, and other issues touching campus community and co-curricular life are largely in the hands of student affairs administrators who must take into account the possible impact of these conservative criticisms on the professional assumptions which have guided student affairs for decades.

Research which would put this most recent conservative dissatisfaction with higher education in perspective, both in the history of higher education and in the conservative philosophical tradition, would be useful. More intriguing is the romanticized version of American higher education implied by so many of the neoconservatives and New Rightists. They conjure an intellectual Eden prior to the 1960s and 1970s in which the literary and historical canons were set, truth was pure, the campuses and students were well-groomed, and everyone thirsted for the liberal arts. An exploration of how these views might have been formed in light of the Catholic and Jewish ethnic background of the neoconservatives and New Right would

be appropriate. Investigation of which books and intellectual experiences have formed their thinking would prove likewise fascinating.

The implications for the conservative higher education agenda, if implemented, would alter the face of colleges and universities drastically. The reduction of student financial aid and the “leveling” of admissions standards would automatically exclude a great many minority students – and a great many middle- and lower-middle-class white students, also. Slashing away student services and auxiliary services on campuses ignores the realities that (1) these postsecondary institutions are communities in and of themselves, most with residential populations which require these services, and (2) many of the auxiliary services are established in such a way that they pay for themselves anyway. Without student programming and services on campuses, local communities would have tremendously increased burdens, not the least of which would be problems with entertaining student populations left to their own devices. Trying to eliminate feminist and ethnic studies programs would be disastrous, if not impossible. Should the conservatives be successful in doing so, the price in alienation and strife within disciplines and on campuses would be incalculable. Already there is dissension building within departments at some institutions, and in some of the national professional associations such as the Modern Language Association, which will probably become more bitter than it is at present. Curriculum debates over the general education and liberal arts cores are never easy in the best of times, and continued conservative activism in this area, as through the National Association of Scholars, will serve only to exacerbate the situation. Battle lines are being drawn among faculty and administrators.

The fact remains that whatever the quality of their arguments concerning issues in higher education, these conservative think tanks have to some extent set the terms of debate. They have made the topics of campus “hate speech” codes, feminist studies, and affirmative action on campus more widely known in circles far beyond readers of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

More than that, through carefully-planned funding of younger tenure-track faculty, the establishment of such organizations as the National Association of Scholars, and the creation of a national network of adjunct scholars, conservatives have built an infrastructure scarcely noticed by most of the higher education community, which has been notably slow in responding to the conservative critique. It may not be premature to conclude that the issues raised along these philosophical lines – free speech, academic freedom, admissions standards, and the content of the curriculum – will remain sources of controversy in higher education for some time into the future. Indeed, they have the power to become bitter and long-lasting controversies.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Over the period of fifteen to twenty years in which nearly all the conservative public policy research institutes were established and have evolved, there has remained a comparatively small body of literature dealing with the subject. Not only is this body of literature on the conservative think tanks very small, but so is that on the more generic topic of think tanks.

The most recent and comprehensive work on the evolution of public policy institutes is James A. Smith's *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1991). Paul Dickson's *Think Tanks* (New York: Atheneum, 1971) is very dated, but still offers some interesting insights into the popular conception of the think tank in America. He furnishes particularly good information on some of the lesser-known and more defense-oriented contractors. Daniel Guttman and Barry Willner explore the broader arena of federal policymaking in *The Shadow Government: The Government's Multi-Billion-Dollar Giveaway of Its Decision-Making Powers to Private Management Consultants, "Experts," and Think Tanks* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976). Donald T. Critchlow has produced a partial, but very sound, history of the Brookings Institution in *The Brookings Institution, 1916-1952: Expertise and the Public Interest in a Democratic Society* (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985). A readable history of the RAND Corporation is Fred Kaplan, "Scientists at War: The Birth of the RAND Corporation" (*American Heritage*, June/July, 1983, pp. 49-64).

There are still very few books or monographs concerned specifically with the conservative think tanks. Alan Crawford's *Thunder on the Right: The "New Right" and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) touches upon the founding of the Heritage Foundation, and it is also an excellent source of information

about the political and philosophical roots of the New Right. In *Ominous Politics: The New Conservative Labyrinth* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), John S. Saloma provides somewhat sketchy information on the funding and personalities behind most of the conservative think tanks in the early 1980s, but the work is valuable for the interconnections it establishes. Sidney Blumenthal's *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment: From Conservative Ideology to Political Power* (New York: Macmillan/Times Books, 1986) also discusses the conservative think tanks and places them in a broader discussion of neoconservative and New Right political and intellectual life. For an investigation of the neoconservative intellectual ethos, Peter Steinfels's *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979) is very good. Supplementary to that is J. David Hoeveler, Jr.'s *Watch on the Right: Conservative Intellectuals in the Reagan Era* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

For the most part, however, the writing on conservative think tanks and their viewpoints may be characterized as (1) appearing in the popular press represented by daily newspapers and periodicals of news and current events, (2) lacking in analytical content, and (3) concentrating almost exclusively on the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. The best such article to date has been Gregg Easterbrook's "Ideas Move Nations: How Conservative Think Tanks Have Helped Transform the Terms of Political Debate" (*Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1986, pp. 66-80). Almost as good is an article by Robert K. Landers, "Think Tanks: The New Partisans?" (*Editorial Research Reports*, June 20, 1986, pp. 455-472), in which he raises pertinent questions concerning the tax-exempt status of these organizations.

Throughout most of the 1980s, the bulk of published material on the conservative think tanks, however, appeared in such weeklies as *Time*, *U.S. News*

*and World Report*, and *Newsweek*, with a sprinkling of articles in newspapers. Most of these pieces contain the type of information which indicate their origin in press releases from the think tanks, although Dan Morgan's "Conservatives: A Well-Financed Network" (*Washington Post*, January 4, 1981) is of an investigative nature, and is accompanied by a chart detailing the various corporate and foundational donors' sources of revenue and the conservative causes they support. Dom Bonafede's "Issue-Oriented Heritage Foundation Hitches Its Wagon to Reagan's Star" (*National Journal*, March 20, 1982, pp. 502-507) is more analytical than most of the other articles in popular periodicals, as is James Rosenthal's "Heritage Hype: The Second-Generation Think Tank" (*New Republic*, September 2, 1985, pp. 14-16).

Material on the New Right and public education in professional journals has been more plentiful, and while none of it addresses higher education, it is nonetheless interesting and useful for understanding this particular strain of conservative thought. Charles Park's "The New Right: Threat to Democracy in Education" (*Educational Leadership*, 38:146-149, November, 1980) is an early call-to-arms for educators, and lays out a skeletal listing of names and organizations associated with the New Right. Joe Kincheloe's monograph *Understanding the New Right and Its Impact on Education* (ED 236 082, 1983) is outstanding, especially for a discussion of the Kanawha Valley, West Virginia textbook controversy. Pierard's and Clouse's "What's New About the New Right?" (*Contemporary Education*, 54:194-200, Spring, 1983) is also very good as an overview of New Right educational philosophy. Hanrahan and Kosterlitz provide sound information on New Right influence within the Department of Education in "How the New Right Affects the U.S. Department of Education" (*Education Digest*, March, 1984, pp. 25-29). Certainly the most complete

work in this area is Terrel H. Bell's *The Thirteenth Man: A Reagan Cabinet Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 1988). A paradigmatic treatment of conservatism and public education is Thomas H. Jones, "Is There a Conservative Ideology of Education?" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, April, 1991).

For more general material on conservatives and the New Right, there are a few other works worth consulting. Seymour Lipset's and Earl Raab's *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1970* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970) is a classic survey of ultraconservative thought and movements in the United States, and it contains empirical data on the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of persons most likely to be affiliated with right-wing organizations. Gillian Peele's *Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1984) deserves notice. For a more journalistic treatment of the New Right, see Bertram Gross's *Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America* (New York: M. Evans, 1980). Finally, Perry D. Young's *God's Bullies: Power Politics and Religious Tyranny* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982) is the author's account of personal interviews with numerous leaders of the New Right and the religious right.

Scholarly analysis, or even notice, of the New Right and the neoconservatives has been conspicuously absent from journals and other publications among higher education professionals for the past decade. Whatever degree of influence, politically or intellectually, the conservative revival in the United States may have had in the last twenty years, there remains much to be written about it.

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## APPENDIX A

### Supplemental Questions to Telephone Interviews

1. What are the criteria by which staff and adjunct scholars are chosen at your policy institution?
2. How long do research staff typically stay at your organization? Where do they typically go upon leaving?
3. Is there a library or document collection on the premises?
4. Does your think tank ever collaborate with other similar organizations in programs or projects?
5. Why was there so little interest in your organization in higher education during most of the 1980s? Why is there interest now?
6. What would you say are the general views this think tank holds on higher education issues?

APPENDIX B

Summary of Telephone Interviews

25 September 1991

Mr. Robert Huberty  
Director, Resource Bank  
The Heritage Foundation  
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Huberty:

Thank you again for taking time to speak with me concerning the Resource Bank and Heritage operations in general. As I explained, I would appreciate your reviewing the short summary of some of the main points we covered and returning this document to me as soon as possible.

1. Individuals are invited to join the Resource Bank when their work is brought to your attention, either by themselves or colleagues. If they feel comfortable with the conservative viewpoint of Heritage, you have "a general agreement to work together when possible." In some cases these individuals later decide that they do not wish to remain in the database.
2. On why higher education issues are receiving more attention from Heritage recently, you indicated that Heritage's primary policy interest is whatever is of most interest to Congress, the executive branch, and the national news media, and that the "political correctness" issue has become a prominent concern.
3. In 1987 the Department of Government and Academic Relations split, with Academic Relations now under Mr. Charles Heatherly.
4. We discussed the Salvatori program, and you explained that applications were solicited from NAS, Intercollegiate Studies Institute, and other like-minded organizations, and 25 individuals were chosen to participate, with a target of 40 for next year.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Willis

26 September 1991

Mr. Michael Schwartz  
Center for Social Policy  
Free Congress Foundation  
717 Second Street, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

Thank you very much for so graciously sharing your time with me in our telephone conversation today. Your remarks were very helpful, and I enjoyed talking with you.

As I explained, I would appreciate your reviewing this brief summary of the main points covered in our conversation.

1. Insofar as your area at Free Congress deals with higher education issues, it is more from a philosophical viewpoint, e.g., "what the nature of our society is, why we exist as a nation."
2. The recent concern over speech codes on some university campuses arises from a genuine fear of "partisan thought control," i.e., some forms of uncivil speech are tolerated while other forms, directed against those who conform to a particular ideological standard, are not.
3. Previously the conservative think tanks had not paid too much attention to higher education issues because they were viewed as a morass of problems with governance structures less accessible to public scrutiny than K-12 institutions.
4. The university exists to pursue truth and scholarly seriousness. This is not to romanticize the past of higher education in the U.S., but the fact is that we have not replaced it with anything better. Our culture tends to sink to the lowest common denominator.
5. The desire to raise all members of society to the same high cultural plane is a misguided utopian vision. Scholars thinking about the great truths should be doing so in continuity with the more popular culture, not in conflict with it.
6. There is not particular legal reason by some policy institutes disclaim that the publications of their affiliated authors do not necessarily reflect the institution's views. This is done more in the spirit of encouraging such authors to think freely, and because the institution does not as an entity always accept each idea put forth.
7. AEI and the Ethics and Public Policy Center are like small publishing houses.

Heritage Foundation and the Free Congress Foundation are more policy-oriented.

Again, thank you for the information.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Willis

25 September 1991

Mr. John Carlisle  
Free Congress Foundation  
717 Second Street, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Carlisle:

Thank you again for taking time to speak with me today concerning education policy analysis at the Free Congress Foundation. As I explained, I would appreciate your reviewing the short summary of our conversation for accuracy.

1. The increased interest in "political correctness" on campus is a result of events in recent years such as the disrupted NAS meeting at SUNY-Binghamton, the proliferation of speech codes at universities across the country, and the curricular changes such as that initiated at Stanford in 1988.
2. The Free Congress Foundation is primarily concerned with grassroots education in democratic principles and strategies.
3. Boris Yeltsin's chief of staff has received training in democratic principles at the Free Congress Foundation.
4. There is now before Congress a Freedom of Speech on Campus Act which would withhold federal monies from universities which impose speech codes.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Willis

4 October 1991

Mr. Robert Royal  
Vice-President for Research  
Ethics and Public Policy Center  
1015 Fifteenth Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Royal:

Thank you very much for talking with me today. As I indicated in our conversation, I would appreciate your reviewing this short summary for accuracy.

1. Your own background is in Italian studies, speciality of Dante, and you have been an editor of the alternative Princeton alumni magazine.
2. The Ethics and Public Policy Center has a staff of 13 people, and a "large group of associated scholars," most of whom are "old friends." This organization is primarily a publishing house, a smaller version of the AEI. Some of the EPPC books have been adopted as college textbooks.
3. The EPPC does not take official positions on policy, although the Heritage Foundation and the Free Congress Foundation do more in terms of political activity.
4. The interest in higher education issues among conservative think tanks has evolved as issues in the wider society have found their way into academia.
5. There is an intellectual recalibration of thought going on in higher education.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Willis

4 October 1991

Mr. Robert Royal  
Vice-President for Research  
Ethics and Public Policy Center  
1015 Fifteenth Street, NW  
Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Royal:

Thank you very much for taking time to speak with me by telephone today. As I indicated in our conversation, I would appreciate your verifying for me this summary of your remarks.

1. Your own background is in Italian studies, speciality of Dante, and you have been an editor of the alternative Princeton alumni magazine.
2. The Ethics and Public Policy Center has a staff of 13 people, and a "large group of associated scholars" most of whom are "old friends." This organization is primarily a publishing house, a smaller version of the American Enterprise Institute. Some of the EPPC books have been adopted as college textbooks.
3. The EPPC does not take official positions on policy, although the Heritage Foundation and the Free Congress Foundation do more in terms of political activity.
4. The interest in higher education issues among conservative think tanks has evolved as issues in the wider society, such as affirmative action, have found their way into academia. The speech codes and "politically correct" atmosphere at most universities "verges on a re-education campaign."
5. There is an intellectual recalibration of thought going on in higher education because the "left-wing agenda" has run out of steam.
6. Western culture is emphasized because of all other cultures it at least "has the capacity for critiquing itself."
7. Funding for the EPPC comes from the Olin and Scaife foundations, "all the usual ones."
8. The EPPC does sponsor a few day-long conferences. While these projects are not necessarily in conjunction with other conservative think tanks as organizations, many of the personalities involved are affiliated with other think tanks.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Willis



