

# The Public Eye

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## Takin' It to the States

### The Rise of Conservative State-Level Think Tanks

by Frederick Clarkson

Like the famously premature announcement of the death of Mark Twain, reports of the decline of the Right in politics and public policy have been greatly exaggerated. Epitomizing the hidden strength of the Right are a growing number of well-funded, state-level right-wing think tanks. Two networks of these think tanks have been growing for a decade, far from the glare of national media attention. Acting largely as arms of the Republican Party, they are advancing policies at the state level that the Right has been unable to achieve in Washington.

The situation is reminiscent of the end of the 1980s, when conventional wisdom had it that the Christian Right was dead. At the time, *prima facie* evidence of the end of the Right was the sex scandals of televangelists Jimmy Swaggart and Jim and Tammy Bakker, the disintegration of the Moral Majority, and the failure of Pat Robertson's 1988 bid for the GOP presidential nomination. The resilience of the Christian Right, and its institutional infrastructure, was little appreciated at the time. For example, for the first three years after its 1989 founding, Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition received scant notice before bounding into the 1992 elections as a major player. In 1999, we are told that the public is disenchanted with right-wing

lawmakers, perceiving them as mean-spirited and focused on narrow ideological goals. This has been played out most dramatically in the mainstream media's analysis of the failed crusade to impeach President Bill Clinton. Now, the apparent diminished influence of right-wing members of Congress and the political and financial troubles of the Christian Coalition itself suggest to some that the Right is once again on the ropes.

However, in the late 1980s, as Ronald Reagan's second term ended and the televangelist scandals were breaking, key right-wing strategists and funders focused on building the kind of political infrastructure in the states that had contributed to their national-level successes. They focused on strengthening and expanding a national network of state-level business/conservative think tanks, each loosely modeled after the Heritage Foundation. The stated purpose of the network was to take the "Reagan Revolution" to the states. The think tanks would provide resources for state-level activists, offer leadership training that would strengthen state-level Republican Parties and, over time, would reinvigorate the Right's national-level leadership.

The network of state-level think tanks became an integral part of the Right's infrastructure of organizations. Some of the think tanks were newly created in the 1980s and 1990s; others have their roots much earlier. Like the Heritage Foundation itself, the groups are deeply engaged in the partisan legislative and electoral process, and their

research is generally geared to affect political outcomes. One of the earliest, largest, and still most influential think tanks is the Heartland Institute in Chicago, Illinois. Founded in 1984, it has been a model for other conservative think tanks. Several others began in the mid-1980s as well, but the next major wave followed the 1988 election of George Bush and the continued good fortunes of the state and national conservative movement. Additional new think tanks have been established since the 1994 elections, in which the Republican Party made dramatic gains in Congress and numerous state legislatures and won an unprecedented 30 governorships. These "younger" think tanks have served the newly elected conservatives at all levels of government. Young and old think tanks alike are now organized in a umbrella organization known as the State Policy Network.

Since 1988, a second and parallel network of think tanks, called "Family Policy Councils," has been developed by Christian Right leader James Dobson's Focus on the Family (FOF). FOF is a large, conservative evangelical "pro-family" organization

#### IN THIS ISSUE

From the Director .....	2
Books Received .....	14
Eyes Right .....	16
Resources .....	17

EDITORS' NOTE: This article has 61 footnotes. For a copy of this article with footnotes, please call Political Research Associates at (617) 661-9313 or e-mail [publiceye@igc.org](mailto:publiceye@igc.org).

# From the Director

Nearly everyone would agree that the Right has achieved an enormous portion of its agenda. The stalemate that now has hold of the Republican-dominated Congress is over the difficulty in achieving the last 15 percent of that public policy agenda. Naturally, that 15 percent is the hardest of the hard core – for example, elimination of the public schools, an end to legal abortion, a withdrawal from international entanglements, official prayer in the schools, every state a “right-to-work” state, and an end to immigration. It appears that the Right has hit a wall because it has reached the portion of its agenda that contains the most revolutionary content and presents the greatest challenges.

These changes cannot be achieved the old fashioned way. A majority of voters does not support them, and is unlikely to elect enough hard core right-wing Republicans to Congress to push them through. The Right needs a new strategy to achieve the policy changes that the country resists at the national level. That new strategy is to take the campaign to the states.

The Right’s leadership has known for some time that its gains at the national level were eventually going to hit their limit. As early as the late-1980s it began building a state-level infrastructure of think tanks, mass-based organizations, single-issue organizations, conservative Christian groups, and right-wing coalitions. It is here that the action is occurring.

Recognizing this, and with help from a generous PRA supporter, we asked Fred Clarkson to prepare a report on the political impact of the Right’s state level think tanks. In this issue of *The Public Eye*, Clarkson reports what he has found – not only a large and growing body of well-financed state-level think tanks, but one that operates at a level of effectiveness that outstrips that of the few liberal state-level think tanks that exist.

Progressive organizing to resist the Right’s initiatives at the state level is difficult for several reasons. State legislators are often markedly more conservative than the state’s Congressional delegation. Within many states there often is no countervailing force adequate to stand up to this conservatism and speak for the economically weak and politically disenfranchised. “States’ rights” was the slogan of southern segregationists for good reason. What state legislators prefer is often well to the right of what the country as a whole would accept.

What the Right cannot achieve at the national level, it often can achieve at the state level. Hang on to your hats. The worst may be yet to come.



Jean Hardisty

**CORRECTION:**

An error in a *Washington Post* article (corrected in a subsequent issue) resulted in several inaccurate statements in *The Public Eye* article “Clinton, Conspiracism, and the Ongoing Culture War,” (Vol. XIII, No. 1). Richard Mellon Scaife is not an investor in Regnery Publishing and does not have a financial relationship with Phillips Publishing, co-owner of Regnery.

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ISSUE 30

with an annual budget of about \$110 million and over 1,300 employees. Since the beginning of FOF's radio and publishing empire in 1977, a political component has been systematically integrated at all levels. Dobson's daily radio program is one of the largest nationally syndicated radio talk shows in the US, broadcasting on some 1,500 stations in North America and 3,400 stations around the world.

The state-level think tanks affiliated with FOF are loosely modeled after the Washington, DC-based Family Research Council, which was founded in 1983 and merged with FOF in 1988. Simultaneously, FOF was creating the first Family Policy Councils in the states. The Family Research Council until recently was headed by former Reagan Administration official and current GOP presidential contender Gary Bauer, who portrays himself as the heir to the Reagan legacy. The Family Policy Councils promote the Christian Right's agenda and often work collaboratively with the parallel network of more secular think tanks like those in the State Policy Network. They also host Community Impact Seminars that recruit, indoctrinate and train activists who are then folded into political networks called Community Impact Committees, whose activities are informed by the Family Policy Councils.

In each network, several generalizations hold. First, the think tanks of each network have similar structures, common goals, and similar methods of carrying them out. It could be argued that each network is a system of franchising in operation. Second, the think tanks interface strikingly with conservative politicians, especially Republicans. Indeed, in a number of cases there is a revolving-door relationship between the think tanks and Republican office holders, especially in gubernatorial administrations. Many of the think tanks do not maintain

even the appearance of independence from the Republican Party and its legislative and electoral interests, though they claim to be non-partisan.

### The State Policy Network

Founded in 1992, the State Policy Network (SPN) evolved from the now-defunct Madison Group, a network of conservative organizations created in the aftermath of a 1986 meeting at the Madison Hotel in Washington, DC. The State Policy Network is based in Ft. Wayne, Indiana and serves as a coordination agency for 37 state-level think tanks in 30 states.

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**The stated purpose of the network was to take the “Reagan Revolution” to the states. The think tanks would provide resources for state-level activists, offer leadership training that would strengthen state-level Republican Parties and, over time, would reinvigorate the Right’s national-level leadership.**

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Although corporate money and executives are the dominant presence in these think tanks, they nevertheless do not solely promote business interests. The tendency is to focus on conservative/libertarian campaigns, from welfare reform to school privatization. According to Byron Lamm, the longtime Executive Director of the State Policy Network, all the think tanks advocate “free market solutions to public policy, with an emphasis on individual rights and responsibility.” While there are often different emphases, determined by the interests of the leadership and the local situation, the think tanks share broad ideological agreement and nearly identical political agendas—primarily supporting privatization of most government services and advocat-

ing “free market solutions” to public policy issues from health care to the environment. Most have a strong emphasis on school privatization. They favor deregulation of business and oppose organized labor.

Because the think tanks of the SPN generally reflect the business/libertarian wing of the GOP, some of them avoid dealing with such social issues as abortion and gay rights, on which some GOP libertarians such as William Weld, former governor of Massachusetts, are often at odds with the Christian Right. Eight SPN think tanks, including the Goldwater, Pioneer, and Heartland Institutes (but none of the Family Policy Councils) reflect a specifically libertarian orientation through their “partnership” in Free-market.net, an on-line libertarian network sponsored by the Henry Hazlitt Foundation.

However, the agenda of many SPN think tanks seems to mesh well with the Christian Right, and others are indistinguishable from the Christian Right's agenda. For example, the California Resource Institute described a 1999 bill in the California legislature (proposing that the states 140 “charter schools” be unionized like the rest of the publicly funded school system) as an effort to “squash the academic freedom of charter schools.” Such an anti-union stance reliably appeals to both the business and Christian Right wings of the Republican Party, and often generates popular appeal well beyond that base. The ideological differences among SPN affiliates seem to originate in the circumstances surrounding their founding and funding.

Like the GOP itself, there are mutually exclusive philosophies among the think tanks on important social issues, even as there is commonality on others. As if to emphasize areas of commonality, in May 1999, SPN's Utah affiliate, the Sutherland Institute, co-hosted a conference with the

Heritage Foundation, featuring Reagan-era Attorney General Ed Meese. The conference theme was “Federalism.” As Sutherland explained: “For those not familiar with the term, federalism is about devolving power: taking power out of the hands of a distant, bloated federal government and putting it into the hands of states, local governments, and most importantly, individual American citizens.”

Massachusetts’ Pioneer Institute is typical of SPN members in projecting an appearance of intellectual rigor while pursuing an unquestionably ideological agenda. The Institute states that its mission is to “change the intellectual climate of Massachusetts.” One of its subsidiary projects, called “The Center for Restructuring Government,” seeks to identify “specific opportunities to streamline government through introducing competition or eliminating unnecessary regulation.” To do this, the Center publishes, among other things, “White Papers” that analyze “opportunities to introduce competition to the delivery of public services, or calculate the compliance costs of particular regulations,” and sponsors a “Better Government Competition.”

Such activities follow closely the model provided by national think tanks, especially the Heritage Foundation, which has historically hitched its research to public policy agendas and action plans. Departing from the tradition of independent scholarship or academic analysis associated with think tanks, the purpose is for research to have political impact. Heritage Foundation President Ed Feulner explained that, “We don’t just stress credibility... We stress an efficient, effective delivery system. Production is one side; marketing is equally important.” Ellen Messer-Davidow of the University of Minnesota, who has studied the Heritage Foundation, writes that its

“delivery system” for marketing ideas “consists of four marketing divisions: Public relations markets ideas to the media and the public; Government Relations to Congress, the Executive branch, and government agencies; Academic Relations to the university community, Resource Bank institutions (including state think tanks), and the international conservative network; and Corporate Relations to business and the trades. Division marketing is coordinated at twice-weekly meetings of the senior management, but policy research drives the process.” While the state level think tanks are too small to have such a large-scale

taxes to abortion and the environment.

The method behind the conservative think tank marketing machine is, according to Messer-Davidow, to conflate expertise in the sense of “knowledge produced by scholarly methods” with the expertise emanating from the “aura of authority surrounding those who practice this knowledge.” “In this way,” she concludes, “the think tanks have constituted an ‘academized’ aura of authority upon which conservatives have capitalized to advance their political agenda.”

Part of the purpose of networking research findings and ideas, according to Hal

Eberle, a director of the South Carolina Policy Council, is that members of school boards and state legislatures are often “part-timers, mostly business people and professionals. They’re used to rubber stamping what the bureaucracy wants or the way things have always been done.

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division of labor, the principles of how to function are the same.

Most of the State Policy Network think tanks are located in or near their respective state capitals because their primary function is to influence state policy, just as the Heritage Foundation’s primary purpose is to influence national policy. Heritage first made a national splash with the release of its book of policy proposals, *Mandate for Leadership*, for the first Reagan Administration. An unprecedented document at the time, the model has been emulated by the mini-Heritage clones in a number of states—for example, by the Pioneer Institute in Massachusetts which titled its 1998 report *Agenda for Leadership 1998*. The Alabama Family Alliance issued a similar book-length manifesto called *Guide to the Issues*, in 1998. It features over 100 staff-prepared issue briefs—many based on think-tank research reports on everything from

But if you just show them how something has been done better somewhere else, you can really change their minds.” Thus it is common to see studies done in one state distributed in other states. It is also common for a think tank in one state to study policies in other states. For example, in 1998 the SPN Alabama affiliate conducted a study of existing privatized child welfare services in three states, and published a report with the unobtrusive subtitle “Models for Alabama.”

While all of the think tanks are highly media savvy in marketing themselves and their ideas, some groups in both networks have established their own media outlets, or have attained a regular presence in the established local and statewide media. All are active on the op-ed pages of the newspapers in their respective states, and are frequently quoted in news stories. Colorado’s Independence Institute produces two



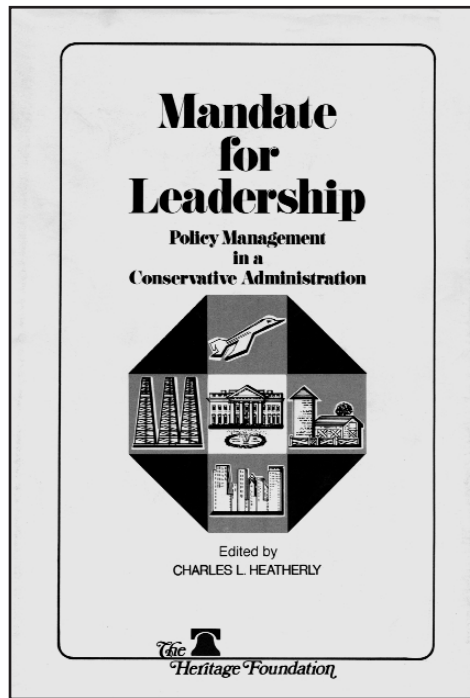
weekly public affairs programs on cable television. Vermont's Ethan Allen Institute director John McClaughry is a regular commentator on Vermont Public Radio and Connecticut's Yankee Institute director Laurence Cohen is a regular columnist for *The Hartford Courant*, the state's largest newspaper.

State Policy Network member organizations range in size from small operations with revenues under \$50,000, such as the SPN affiliates in Connecticut and Vermont, to organizations with multi-million dollar annual budgets, such as Michigan's Mackinac Center, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, and the South Carolina Public Policy Council. The larger think tanks exercise significant intellectual and political clout within their respective states. Some have literally become part of the local political infrastructure. The South Carolina Public Policy Council has new offices located in the Thomas A. and Shirley W. Roe Center for Public Policy Research, across the street from the state capitol complex. The building houses a state-of-the-art research and education facility. Similarly, the Mackinac Center has a new building near the Michigan state capitol in Lansing.

The purpose of the Network is to leverage the resources of a range of rightist organizations, from national level to state level, and back. There are a number of conservative "Associate" member organizations that work closely with the members and reflect the fact that the think tanks are not simply free-standing research units, but are an integrated part of a web of organizations that advance conservative and business interests. Americans for Tax Reform and the American Legislative Exchange Council, which for two decades have developed conservative legislation in cooperation with a national network of conservative state legislators, are examples of organizations that actively "strengthen" the network of think tanks as Associate members of SPN. Other Associate members include The Heritage Foundation, Free Congress Foundation, Reason Foundation, Cato Institute, Institute for Justice, Hillsdale College,

National Center for Policy Analysis, Golden Rule Insurance Company and Landmark Legal Foundation.

There is also a network-wide pattern of interlocking directors among the think tanks, national Associate members, and key funders. This is an outgrowth of the efforts of certain right-wing philanthropists, who have collaborated with Paul Weyrich and Ed Feulner for a generation in building the institutional infrastructure of the conservative movement, but it also reflects



the franchise-style nature of membership in the State Policy Network. The presence of key rightists as directors on multiple boards of state-level right-wing think tanks is comparable to the role of investors who personally (or through their designees) guide and protect their investments through seats on corporate boards of directors. Just as such right-wing philanthropists as Richard Mellon Scaife, Jeffrey Coors and Thomas Roe have been long-time directors of the Heritage and Free Congress Foundations, major ideological investors (or their proxies) occupy the boards of SPN affiliates. For instance, Coors family interests have, since its founding, been the main source of funding for Colorado's Independence Institute

(conveniently located in the beer company's hometown of Golden) and Coors family members have served on the board and advisory board. Representatives of the Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation, which created the Wisconsin Public Policy Research Institute with a gift of \$500,000 in 1987 and provides about two-thirds of its annual budget, have also been members of the board of directors from the beginning. Howard Ahmanson is a major benefactor and director of the California Resource Institute, as well as a major funder and board chair of California's Claremont Institute.

One interesting aspect of the State Policy Network is the apparent brokering role played by the Roe Foundation, the personal philanthropic vehicle of retired South Carolina businessman Thomas Roe. Almost all of its annual grant making goes to SPN member and associate member organizations and Thomas Roe himself chairs the board of the State Policy Network. The Roe Foundation is the single largest contributor to the SPN-affiliated South Carolina Policy Council. Roe is a longtime director of both the Heritage and Free Congress Foundations whose leaders, Ed Feulner and Paul Weyrich, respectively, sit on the small Roe Foundation board, along with Byron Lamm, the director of the SPN. Lamm, in turn, is a board member of SPN's Indiana Policy Review Foundation, and the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs.

### Shadow Governments

The state level think tanks have often functioned as a Republican government-in-waiting. The longtime principal officer of the Mackinac Center, Richard McLellan, served as chief of Michigan Governor John Engler's transition team when he was first elected in 1990. Following the 1994 elections, Massachusetts Republican Governor William Weld "hired almost everybody out of the Pioneer Institute," Laurence Cohen of Connecticut's Yankee Institute gleefully told a reporter. "Almost put them out of business," Cohen added. That year Weld also appointed Pioneer Institute founder and elite corporate exec-

## Conservative State Think Tanks: A Selected List

### ALABAMA

Alabama Family Alliance  
Birmingham (FOF &SPN)

### ARIZONA

Goldwater Institute for  
Public Policy  
Phoenix (SPN)

Center for Arizona Policy  
Scottsdale (FOF)

### ARKANSAS

Arkansas Policy Foundation  
Little Rock (SPN)

Arkansas Family Council  
Little Rock (FOF)

### CALIFORNIA

Capitol Resource Institute  
Sacramento (SPN &FOF)

Pacific Research Institute for  
Public Policy  
San Francisco (SPN)

Golden State Center for  
Policy Studies  
Sacramento (SPN)

### COLORADO

Independence Institute  
Golden (SPN)

Center for the New West  
Denver (SPN)

Rocky Mountain Family Council  
Westminster (FOF)

### CONNECTICUT

The Yankee Institute for  
Public Policy  
Glastonbury (SPN)

### FLORIDA

The James Madison Institute  
Tallahassee (SPN)

Florida Family Council/Family First  
Tampa (FOF)

### GEORGIA

Georgia Public Policy Foundation  
Atlanta (SPN)

Georgia Family Council  
Norcross (FOF)

### HAWAII

Hawaii Family Forum  
Kailua (FOF)

### IDAHO

Idaho Family Forum  
Boise (FOF)

### ILLINOIS

The Heartland Institute  
Chicago (SPN)

Illinois Family Forum  
Glen Ellyn (FOF)

### INDIANA

Indiana Policy Review Foundation  
Ft. Wayne and Indianapolis (SPN)

Indiana Family Institute  
Indianapolis (FOF)

### IOWA

Public Interest Institute  
Mt. Pleasant (SPN)

Iowa Family Policy Center  
Des Moines (FOF)

### KANSAS

Kansas Family Research Institute  
Wichita (FOF)

### KENTUCKY

The Family Foundation  
Lexington (FOF)

### LOUISIANA

Louisiana Family Forum  
Baton Rouge (FOF)

### MAINE

Christian Civic League  
Augusta (FOF)

### MARYLAND

Calvert Institute for Policy Research  
Baltimore (SPN)

### MASSACHUSETTS

Pioneer Institute  
Boston (SPN)

Beacon Hill Institute for  
Public Policy Research  
Boston (SPN)

Massachusetts Family Institute  
Newton Upper Falls (FOF)

### MICHIGAN

Mackinac Center for Public Policy  
Midland (SPN)

Michigan Family Forum  
Lansing (FOF)

### MINNESOTA

Center for the American  
Experiment  
Minneapolis (SPN)

Minnesota Family Council  
Minneapolis (FOF)

### MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Family Council  
Jackson (FOF)

### MISSOURI

Family Policy Center  
Kansas City (FOF)

### NEBRASKA

Nebraska Center for Family  
Policy/Family First  
Lincoln (FOF)

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Josiah Bartlett Center for  
Public Policy  
Concord (SPN)

### NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Family Policy Council  
Parsippany (FOF)

### NEW YORK

Empire Foundation for Policy  
Research  
Clifton Park (SPN)

### NEVADA

Nevada Policy Research Institute  
Reno (SPN)

### NORTH CAROLINA

The John Locke Foundation  
Raleigh (SPN)

North Carolina Family  
Policy Council  
Raleigh (FOF)

### OHIO

Buckeye Institute for Public Policy  
Solutions  
Dayton (SPN)

Ohio Roundtable  
Solon (FOF)

### OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs  
Oklahoma City (SPN)

Oklahoma Family Policy Council  
Oklahoma City (FOF)

### OREGON

Cascade Policy Institute  
Portland (SPN)

Center for Family Policy  
Salem (FOF)

### PENNSYLVANIA

Commonwealth Foundation For  
Public Policy Alternatives  
Harrisburg (SPN)

Allegheny Institute for Public Policy  
Pittsburgh (SPN)

Pennsylvania Family Institute  
Harrisburg (FOF)

### SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina Policy Council  
Education Foundation  
Columbia (SPN)

Palmetto Family Council  
Columbia (FOF)

### SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota Family Policy Council  
Sioux Falls (FOF)

### TENNESSEE

Family Council  
Nashville (FOF)

### TEXAS

Texas Public Policy Foundation  
San Antonio (SPN)

Free Market Foundation  
Dallas (FOF)

### UTAH

Sutherland Institute  
Murray (SPN)

### VERMONT

Ethan Allen Institute  
Concord (SPN)

### VIRGINIA

The Family Foundation  
Richmond (FOF)

### WASHINGTON

Evergreen Freedom Foundation  
Olympia (SPN)

Washington Institute for Policy  
Studies/Washington Institute  
Foundation  
Seattle (SPN)

Washington Family Council  
Bellevue (FOF)

### WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Policy Research Institute  
Mequon (SPN)

Family Research Institute of  
Wisconsin  
Madison (FOF)

utive, Lovett C. Peters, as his advisor on school privatization. Weld's successor, GOP Gov. Paul Cellucci, tapped Pioneer executive director James A. Peyser to chair the state Board of Education in 1999.

In 1997 Gary Palmer, President of the Alabama Family Alliance, explained the role of the think tank in public affairs at Christian Right leader D. James Kennedy's annual "Reclaiming America for Christ" conference. Palmer jokingly complained that "God has... allowed us to bring in people and train them, so when someone like Governor [Fob] James is elected, he calls me up and raids the staff!" Following the 1994 elections, Governor James called Palmer at home and asked to interview three of his top staff. The governor ultimately hired two — Palmer's director of Public Policy and his top researcher. Following the 1996 elections, Palmer 'lost' two more top staff to newly elected GOP members of Congress from Alabama. Palmer explained that training and deployment of staff into government is "part of the purpose of our existence."

The original formulation of this "purpose" appeared in the strategic plan to create the Heritage Foundation. Right-wing commentator Pat Buchanan is often credited with the idea of creating Heritage while he was Director of Communications in the Nixon White House. As early as 1970, the Nixon Administration was alarmed at the influence of liberal think tanks such as the Brookings Institution. Buchanan, the point man in researching liberal think tanks for the White House, noted that "[t]here is a clear need for a conservative counterpart... which can generate ideas Republicans can use."

Following Nixon's re-election in 1972, Buchanan presented the President with a memo outlining how an "institute" could serve to "create a new cadre of Republican professionals who can survive this administration and be prepared to take over future ones." Buchanan felt that conservatives were not being considered for administration jobs, partly because there were too few conservatives with the right experience or credentials. The prospective institute, as

Buchanan envisioned it, would be a "talent bank" for GOP administrations; a "tax exempt refuge" for conservatives when the GOP is out of office; and a communications center for GOP thinkers. The following year, the Heritage Foundation was founded by Paul Weyrich and Ed Feulner, who had been thinking along similar lines for some time. It began with \$250,000 from the Coors beer company, soon followed by \$900,000 from Richard Mellon Scaife, the ultra-conservative activist, millionaire, and funder of numerous right-wing organizations.

Unsurprisingly, state-level SPN think tank affiliations grace the resumes of a number of GOP politicians who have risen to prominence in the past decade. For example, GOP governors John Rowland of Connecticut and John Engler of Michigan were board members of SPN organizations prior to their election to statewide office. Tom Tancredo, founder of Colorado's Independence Institute, is currently a GOP member of Congress. There is also a revolving door between state-level think tanks and conservative GOP staffers. For example, Jeff Judson, president of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, has worked for a series of conservative Texas Republicans in Washington, including serving as Chief Legislative Assistant to US Representative Tom DeLay (R-TX).

There is also a flow of personnel between the state level groups and the national organizations. For example, Doug Munro president of Maryland's Calvert Institute previously worked at the Heritage Foundation and at SPN think tanks in Arizona and Wisconsin. Patrick Poole, a policy analyst with the Alabama Family Alliance in 1998, became the director of Governance and Privacy Projects for Paul Weyrich's Free Congress Foundation in Washington, DC.

Borrowing a successful formula used by Washington advocacy groups, the think tanks have adopted the model of creating various issue-focused "centers" under the same roof. This may mean little more than one or two staff members who work, for

example, on charter schools or welfare reform. A typical example is the Center on Market-Based Education at Arizona's Goldwater Institute. Like the Goldwater Institute, many SPN think tanks have played important roles in passing charter school legislation in their respective states. Once charter school legislation is in place,



there is a shift toward providing "technical assistance" to charter schools—often through the think tanks' subsidiary "centers." For instance, Florida's Tallahassee-based James Madison Institute has a Center for Education Entrepreneurs. Massachusetts' Pioneer Institute offers extensive support for the state's 37 charter schools, through its Charter School Resource Center, which serves as a job bank, publishes a newsletter and even puts out a "handbook" detailing the how-tos of starting and sustaining a charter school.

SPN affiliates in California, Ohio, Washington and Vermont, among others, followed the lead of Massachusetts' Pioneer Institute by holding "better government" competitions, which usually involve proposals to save money on, or to privatize, government services. State legislators often introduce the winning citizen proposals, and some become public policy.

Most of the SPN affiliates have academic advisory councils or "senior fellow" programs. Through these devices, research funds are funneled to sympathetic academics, whose work is then vetted by other

like-minded academics. Florida's James Madison Institute has one of the most explicitly academic orientations, due partly to its merger with the Center for World Capitalism in 1994. Among its senior fellows is James Buchanan, a Nobel Laureate in economics.

### Family Policy Councils

In 1999, there are 34 state level think tanks affiliated with Focus on the Family. These groups, which FOF calls "Family Policy Councils," generally work on issues that animate the Christian Right, such as divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and pornography. They also work on issues less exclusively identified with the Christian Right, such as school privatization and home schooling, religious freedom, parental rights, and gambling. Some, like those in Michigan, California, Florida, and Virginia are significant organizations. Independent scholars have judged the Family Policy Councils in Michigan and Virginia to be more politically significant than Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. Others are small and politically marginal.

Focus on the Family's Statement of Purpose for its network of "State-Level Family Organizations" reads:

"Since 1988, business and community leaders from across the nation have formed state level organizations to invest in the future of America's families. Each Family Policy Council conducts policy analysis, promotes responsible and informed citizenship, facilitates strategic leadership involvement and influences public opinion. Many do community and statewide work to foster a movement to affirm family. These councils are independent entities with no corporate or financial relationship to each other or to Focus on the Family. Their purpose, however, is uniform: To serve as a voice for the family and to assist advocates for family values in recapturing the moral and intellectual high ground in the public arena." FOF often has selected and reshaped an

existing state-level organization rather than create a Family Policy Council from scratch. The Minnesota Family Council, for example, was previously known as The Berean League, a publisher of anti-gay literature, such as *Are Gay Rights Right?*, which has been widely used in opposition to state and local gay and lesbian civil rights ordinances. The roots of Virginia's Family Foundation reach back to 1982, when Family Foundation chief Walter Barbee organized Prince William County Concerned Citizens to oppose sex education programs in the public schools.

After vetting the board of directors of each prospective Family Policy Council,

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FOF then leaves the affiliate as a more or less free-standing entity, affiliated with but not legally incorporated into Focus on the Family. Still, there are many ways in which the affiliates rely on the FOF infrastructure. For example, Dobson provides in-kind services including what a former top FOF insider calls "publicity and copy space in special state-by-state press runs of his *Citizen* magazine." Indeed, state-level newsletters and magazines are typically distributed in this way.

The structure of one of the major FOF affiliates, the Michigan Family Forum (MFF), was outlined by Russ Bellant in his study, *The Religious Right in Michigan Politics*. Some or all of MFF's main components can be seen operating in other

FOF affiliates. It produces and markets original studies, as well as those of like-minded groups or of Focus on the Family itself. Although its level of activism has declined since a change in leadership a few years ago, MFF was a formidable agency in the mid-1990's and a model of the potential political clout of an FOF affiliate.

From its founding in 1990 until 1995, over 1,000 church-based "Community Impact Committees," spurred and modeled by MFF, were created in Michigan churches. Demonstrating its political savvy, the MFF changed the geographical representation of the Community Impact Committees in 1995 so that they corresponded to the legislative districts in the state. MFF also effectively taps and directs religious activities through its Prayer Network, which organizes prayers for public officials and urges members to contact them to evangelize and to notify them of their prayers. Also organized by legislative districts and headed by "prayer captains," these so-called "prayer warriors," or "prayer partners," develop a personal relationship with their legislators, and become conversant in public affairs. Meanwhile, the MFF's Capitol News Bureau produces news for distribution to Christian radio stations in the state.

Like the SPN think tanks, FOF's Family Policy Councils produce research reports and poll public opinion. The results of their studies are aggressively marketed to the media, government officials, and the organization's base constituency, which in turn uses the materials in public affairs activities. For example, in 1998 the Michigan Family Forum commissioned a poll on attitudes about marriage in Michigan, which was conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide, a Republican-oriented firm headed by Ronald Reagan's personal pollster, Richard Wirthlin. The poll was used to demonstrate the numbers of people who are married, where they are, and support for various "reforms." MFF, like other FOF affiliates, lists divorce reform as its top issue and states that it "is supporting legislation" that will make divorce more difficult. These priorities



## The Public Eye

existed prior to their public opinion research findings, which perhaps coincidentally, were supportive of MFF's notion of "reform."

Similar polls conducted by Wirthlin in September 1997 were used as the basis for research reports issued by FOF affiliates in Florida and Alabama. The Alabama Family Alliance used the Wirthlin data to promote legislation which would institute "covenant mar-

riage." An attack on the "no fault divorce reforms of the 1970s," covenant marriage offers the option of a stronger marriage contract, which includes extensive premarital counseling and similar counseling if divorce is contemplated during a two-year waiting period. Covenant marriage legislation has passed in at least the states of Louisiana and Arizona.

One of the most significant services FOF provides to its network of Family Policy Councils is a roving team of Community Impact Seminar leaders. Based at FOF's headquarters in Colorado Springs, the Community Impact Seminar team travels the country training conservative Christian activists to establish Community Impact Committees in their churches, thus helping to develop the base constituency for the FOF affiliates. During its start-up phase in the early 1990s, CIS events sometimes drew hundreds of people: 600 people in Sacramento in 1992; 1,200 in Holland, Michigan in 1993; and 400 in Detroit in 1993. While the Community Impact Sem-

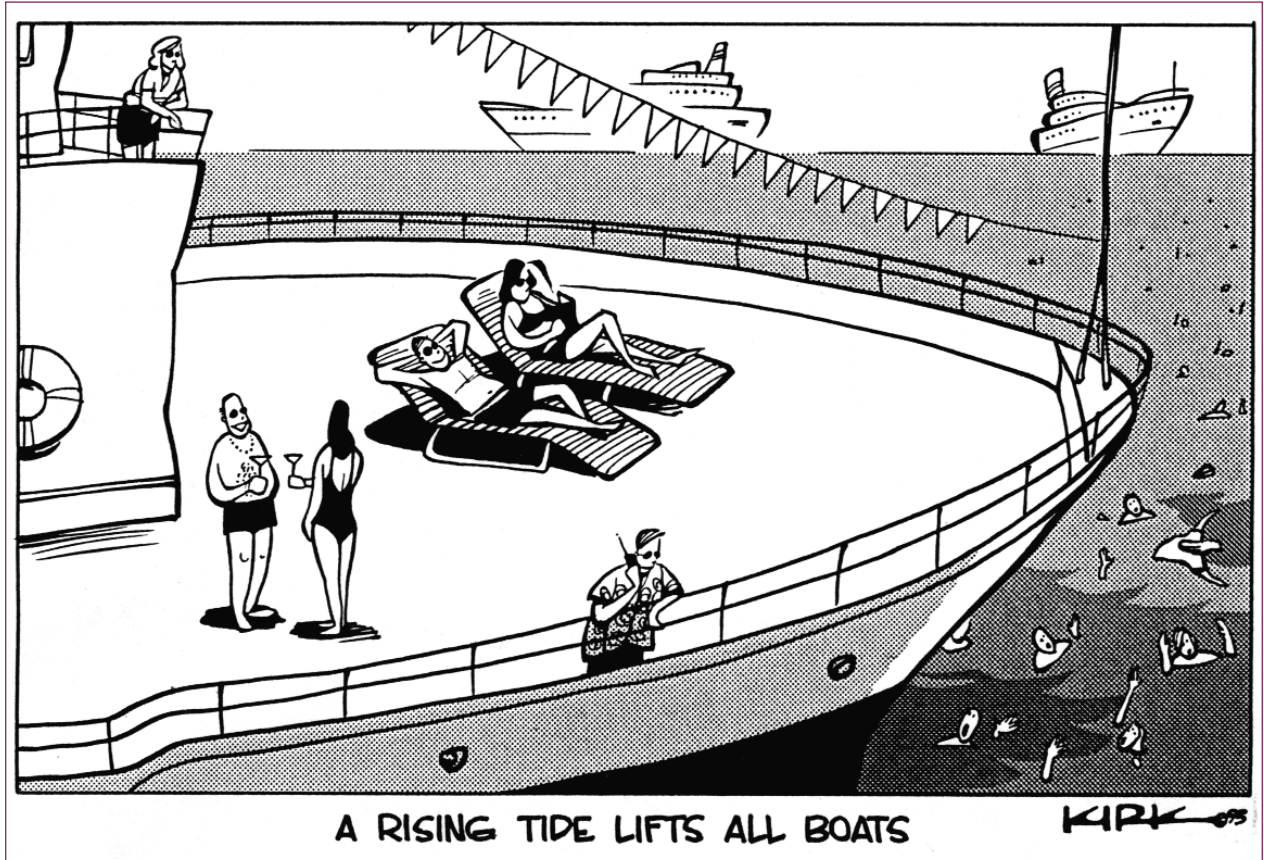
inars are still active around the country, their greatest growth may have peaked. The largest Community Impact Seminar in Michigan in 1999 drew only 70 people.

Like the SPN think tanks, FOF's Family Policy Councils are typically closely linked to the conservative wing of the Republican Party in their states. In California, the principal founders and funders of the California Resource Institute, Howard Ahmanson and Rob Hurtt, are also prominent Republican Party leaders and major funders of GOP political campaigns. Bill Smith, executive director of the Indiana Family Institute, worked for seven years in top jobs for Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN).

Family Policy Councils in at least five states (Pennsylvania, Virginia, Michigan, Colorado, and Texas) have produced election year voter guides. Although not as well known as the Christian Coalition's voter guides, they often exert unrecognized influence. Pennsylvania Family Institute (PFI) has produced voter guides for every

election since 1992. PFI claims that, since 1994, it has distributed "nearly two and a half million Voter's Guides." PFI reportedly distributed over one million voter guides in 1994 alone. The Westport-based Family Institute of Connecticut, which is in the process of becoming a full-fledged Family Policy Council, claims to have distributed 600,000 voter guides in 1996, and one million guides in 1998, which it says were "distributed in every large-circulation newspaper in Connecticut and in dozens of churches...." In Pennsylvania, these guides reportedly detailed "candidates' positions on a balanced budget amendment, abstinence-based sexuality education for adolescents, voluntary school prayer and Bible reading, school vouchers, development of mandatory national curriculum, national health insurance, fetal tissue research, women's access to abortion, and funding for the National Endowment for the Arts."

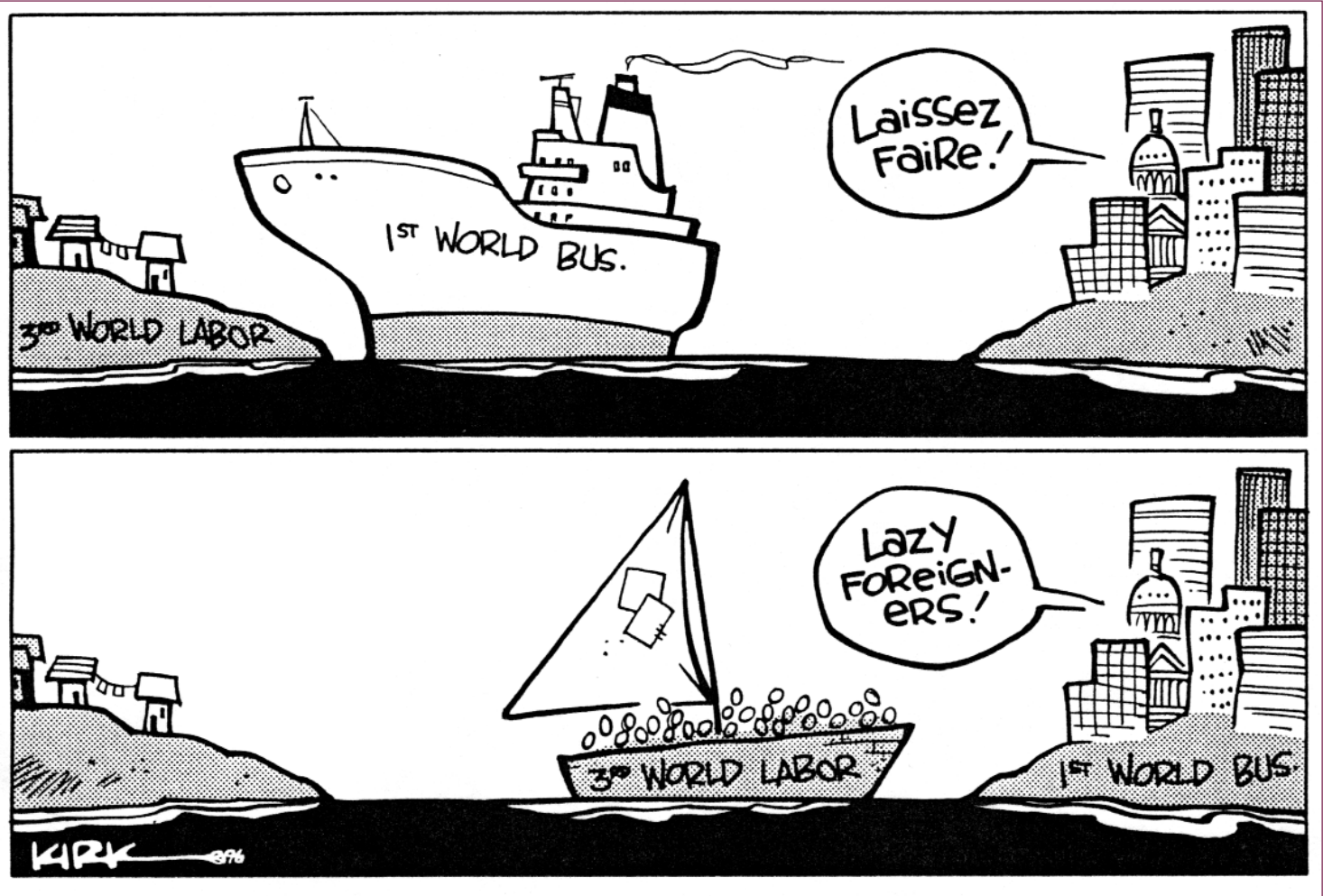
Such questions may not meet the requirements the IRS places on non-profit, tax exempt agencies, which are required to



A RISING TIDE LIFTS ALL BOATS

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## The Public Eye



hold to broad educational standards and cannot narrowly tailor their materials to the agenda and buzz words of a particular political party. Questions about the use of voter guides have emerged in relation to at least two Family Policy Councils. Independent scholars Mark Rozell and Clyde Wilcox reported in their book, *Second Coming: The Christian Right In Virginia Politics*, that in 1993 the Democratic party of Virginia charged that the Family Foundation and its voter guide partner, the Virginia chapter of Concerned Women for America (a national Christian Right organization), “actually were partisan political committees distributing pro-Republican voter guides and therefore were required to register with the state and disclose their sources of funding.” A Fairfax County Circuit judge agreed and placed an injunction against distribution of the guides. The day

before the election, the state Supreme Court lifted the injunction.

In 1996, in response to concerns raised by Americans United for Separation of Church & State, lawyers for FOF’s Ohio affiliate, the Ohio Roundtable, advised them to “significantly alter” their publication in order to conform to the IRS code governing voter guides—in effect compelling them to withdraw their voter guides. Underscoring FOF’s profound (albeit legally separate) relationship to its Family Policy Councils, FOF sent out the Ohio Roundtable’s voter mailing (without guide) under a generic cover letter from FOF’s national vice president for Public Policy, Tom Minnery. Minnery urged FOF followers not only to vote, but to get in touch with their respective state Family Policy Councils. Minnery also noted that FOF offers to distribute “Voter Guides to all

Focus constituents on behalf of the state FPC organizations with which Focus is associated.”

A number of staffers also flow between the national FOF and its state-level affiliates. Glenn Stanton, who heads the Palmetto Family Council in Columbia, South Carolina, was previously FOF’s Director of Research. Idaho Family Forum executive director Dennis Mansfield has been a leader in the Dobson-backed Promise Keepers men’s ministry, serving as host for the Promise Keepers Radio Network heard on over 300 stations, and as Idaho state director of Promise Keepers.

Some Family Policy Councils are branching out into new areas of constituency-building and public policy action. FOF affiliates in Pennsylvania and Alabama maintain “Physicians Resource Networks.” The Network in Alabama claims it can



mobilize over 350 doctors to respond to medically-related public policy issues. The Minnesota Family Council has a staff attorney, but calls its litigation efforts the Northstar Legal Center. The Center represents, among others, students at the University of Minnesota who object to the funding of “radical groups” which “advocate homosexuality, abortion and Marxism” from being funded by student fees.

Like the SPN think tanks, FOF affiliates often work to develop their own media presence in ways designed to inform and mobilize their constituents. Pennsylvania Family Institute’s Michael Geer has a daily five-minute commentary and weekly public affairs program which airs on five Christian radio stations. The Indiana Family Institute produces a daily thirty-minute radio program, which airs on several Christian stations.

### Overlapping Networks

Although the think tanks of the State Policy Network and FOF’s Family Policy Councils are ostensibly separate, their agendas often overlap and their personnel are sometimes interchangeable. Most significantly, the networks themselves overlap. Three FOF affiliates (the Alabama Family Alliance, the Mississippi Family Council and California’s Capitol Resource Institute) also belong to the SPN. Epitomizing the relationship between the networks was the election of Alabama Family Alliance’s Gary Palmer as president of the State Policy Network.

The overlapping nature of the networks has been present from the earliest days of the FOF network, which was founded several years after the first SPN-style think tanks had been in operation. Indeed, evidence suggests that rather than emerging independently there was considerable planning in establishing the role and relationship of the two networks and the constituent think tanks within each. Don Eberly, a former Reagan White House aide and founder of Pennsylvania’s SPN-affiliated Commonwealth Foundation, appears to have laid out the working model for collaboration in a 1989 speech at the Heritage Foundation.

Eberly, who was also director of the Republican Study Group (the conservative caucus of the GOP in the Congress), detailed not only the operating assumptions of what became the State Policy Network, but how the division of labor, theoretically at least, works at the state level in relation to the Christian Right.

Describing Pennsylvania, Eberly declared, “We have organized a leadership

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**While many think tanks in both networks produce actual research, and have staff and affiliated scholars, others appear to be, structurally and functionally, little more than standard legislative lobbies and public relations machines. Most seem to be a hybrid.**

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team that is implementing a multifaceted organizational building plan called the Pennsylvania Plan, which consists of many of the same entities we have effectively used in Washington. These entities include the Commonwealth Foundation, which is the Heritage Foundation equivalent. After over a year of development work, we have just brought on line the Pennsylvania Family Institute, which might be compared to the Family Research Council here in Washington.”

“We now have both economic and social issues coalitions on the state level that meet regularly and are developing agendas,” Eberly continued. “This September [1989], we had our first statewide conservative

conference for local leaders and activists, patterned after C-PAC in Washington.” (C-PAC, the Conservative Political Action Conference, is an annual event in Washington DC, sponsored by the American Conservative Union and Young Americans for Freedom.) “The conference, which will become an annual event, attracted 320 people from all across the state and sent shock waves throughout the political establishment.”

Eberly’s account of the Pennsylvania Plan is corroborated in part by the presence of Eberly’s wife Sheryl on the board of the Pennsylvania Family Institute. Additionally the Commonwealth Foundation shares several board members with, and is substantially funded by, both Richard Mellon Scaife’s Sarah Scaife Foundation and the Philip McKenna Foundation. The latter also funds the Pennsylvania Family Institute, including its bi-annual voter guides. These relationships may also help explain the overlapping agenda of the organizations on such matters as school privatization, and the purported dissolution of the “traditional family.” Indeed, the social policy agenda of both networks blends on some issues. It is common to see both SPN and FOF network affiliates working on, for example, the issue of “fatherlessness,” which is one of the main concerns of Minnesota’s SPN think tank, the Center for the American Experiment, as well as Florida’s FOF affiliate, The Family First.

While most reporting on the phenomenon of state level think tanks has focused exclusively on the State Policy Network, Eberly’s description of the intentional division of labor between the business and the Christian Right-oriented think tanks and their respective constituencies demonstrates why it is important to look at the two networks simultaneously. Underscoring the convergence between these networks is that each network’s leaders and funders also converge as members of the secretive Alexandria, Virginia-based Council for National Policy (CNP), which has served as a classic smoke-filled room of rightist strategizing since 1981. In addition to such

previously mentioned national leaders as Paul Weyrich, Ed Feulner, Thomas Roe, Gary Bauer, James Dobson, Tom Minnerly, Richard Wirthlin, Jeffrey Coors, Howard Ahmanson and Ed Meese, the CNP roster has included Judy Cresanta, executive director of the Nevada Policy Research Institute; former Illinois Family Council executive director Penny Pullen; and former Michigan Family Forum executive director Randall Heckman.

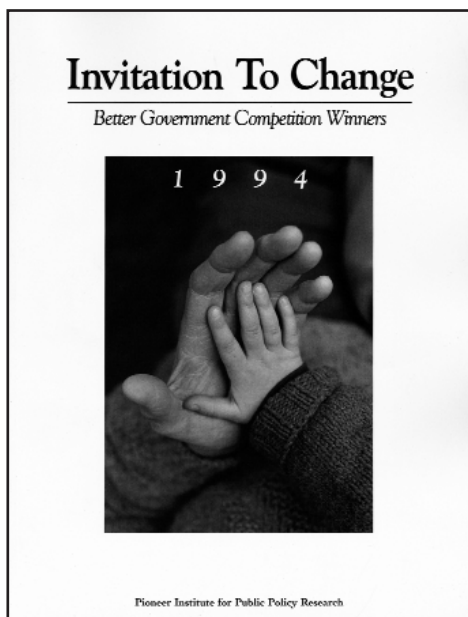
The issues addressed by SPN institutions are presented as public policy concerns but the interests behind them are not always simply ideological. The board of directors of Michigan's Mackinac Center, like other organizations in the State Policy Network, is comprised primarily of business leaders, including the executive director of the state Chamber of Commerce. Mackinac's funding comes mainly from the insurance, chemical and tobacco industries, as well as conservative foundations. This is significant in light of the many privatization initiatives advanced by Mackinac studies, as well as the promotion of medical savings accounts, attacks on national health insurance, and the deregulation of auto insurance. This creates at least the appearance of business influence on the research of the think tanks, but conflicts of interest may also be involved. For example, the Indianapolis-based Golden Rule Insurance Company, an institutional member of the State Policy Network, funds a number of state-level think tanks. Its officers also sit on the boards of several. Golden Rule is not only a provider of, but describes itself as the "pioneer" of medical savings accounts. The promotion of this medical insurance plan by "think tanks" which also receive funds from the "pioneer" provider suggests a direct link between the business interests of the donor and the research product.

### Think Tank or Traditional Lobby?

While many think tanks in both networks produce actual research, and have staff and affiliated scholars, others appear to be, structurally and functionally,

little more than standard legislative lobbies and public relations machines. Most seem to be a hybrid.

Several organizations in both networks have sought to address the problem of pursuing political activities that may be outside their tax-exempt status. Some have divided their research and lobbying into separate-but-related organizations operating out of the same office. For example, in 1998 the Seattle-based Washington Institute for Policy Studies/Washington Institute Foundation, an SPN affiliate, dropped its 501(c)(3)



tax-exempt status in order to legally engage in lobbying and related electoral activities. In 1997, the Minnesota FOF affiliate divided itself into the tax-exempt Minnesota Family Council and the non-tax exempt (501(c)(4)) Minnesota Family Institute to carry out these functions. This is a traditional formula for interest groups seeking to follow the clear rules of the Internal Revenue Service. However, these examples are the exceptions that prove the rule.

All the think tanks in both networks maintain the 501(c)(3) tax status which, under current IRS rules, severely restricts the amount of electoral activity and lobbying that can be done. Examples of questionable practices under tax-exempt status abound. The Olympia, Washington-based Evergreen Free-

dom Foundation produces legislative issue briefs, but no direct research. The staff meets quarterly with the governor and holds weekly briefings for state legislators, yet claims to do no lobbying. The President of Evergreen, Bob Williams, was the unsuccessful 1988 GOP candidate for governor. Executive Director Lynn Harsh was his campaign manager. For years the California Resource Institute has employed three registered lobbyists who work the legislature on behalf of the founders and funders, GOP leaders and Christian Right financiers Howard Ahmanson and Rob Hurtt. Ahmanson is best known for his long involvement with the leading Christian theocratic think tank, the Chalcedon Foundation. Businessman Rob Hurtt served several terms as a Republican member of the state Senate and for a time served as Majority Leader.

### Back to the Future

A review of the web of increasingly influential conservative state-level think tanks points to a pattern of ideological compatibility, organizational coordination, and fluid sharing of staff. The trends also suggest increasing efforts to generate congruence among the think tanks themselves and in their public policy direction. This undoubtedly reflects an even stronger alliance, not simply between the two networks discussed here, but between the business and religious sectors of the Republican Party. James Leininger, founder and primary funder of the SPN's Texas Public Policy Foundation, which does not hold a dual membership in the FOF network, nevertheless epitomizes that trend. TPPF's research studies emphasize privatization in public education and environmental policy, and it has been a leader in the area of tort reform. Leininger controls or influences several political action committees and public interest groups as well as the influential CEO America, an offshoot of the Leininger-controlled Texas Public Policy Foundation. CEO America is a leading advocate of public school vouchers, and a financier of "private" vouchers, bankrolled by wealthy Republican businessmen.



In 1994, 1996 and 1998, Leininger apparently hoped to accelerate school privatization in Texas by backing Christian Right candidates for Texas's State Board of Education against establishment Republicans allied with Gov. George W. Bush. *The Texas Observer* reports he has also contributed more than \$2 million over the years to such national Christian Right agencies as the American Family Association and Focus on the Family. He is a member of a conservative splinter denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), one of whose founders and leaders is televangelist D. James Kennedy. Leininger also has contributed significantly to anti-abortion, anti-gay, anti-public education and anti-labor campaigns and organizations. He was the single largest contributor (\$500,000) to the successful 1998 campaign of Rick Perry for Texas Lieutenant Governor. Perry will become governor if George Bush is elected President. Underscoring the growing significance of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, and its powerful backer, every statewide elected official including Gov. Bush turned out for the TPPF's 10th anniversary, \$250 a plate fundraising dinner in 1998.

The infrastructure of conservative state-level think tanks now draws on some 15 years of experience. Its leaders, researchers and advocates move in and out of government, among think tanks, and between national and state-level organizations. As the trend toward devolution of policy-making from the federal government to the states continues, accompanied by an increasing interest in various forms of privatization, the organizational, intellectual, financial, and policy-making strength of these organizations will further the interests and influence of the conservative movement.

What's more, the policy changes promoted so effectively by the state-level think

tanks are often more extreme than anything possible at the national level. There are several reasons for this. First, state legislatures are often more conservative than Congress. They often reflect more local norms, which may derive from concentrations of conservative Christian activism, racial prejudices, or area business, industry, or corporate interests. In the 1950s and 1960s, when the segregationists of the South invoked the notion of "states' rights" to defend segregation, they were appealing to state-level support for segregation that

to becoming national policy.

It can be difficult, time consuming, and expensive to deflect such state level political efforts, especially when both the governor and the legislature are conservative. Opponents of right-wing initiatives often find themselves on the defensive, as well as out-spent and out-staffed by the right's network of state-level think tanks and the local chapters of national mass-based organizations—all of which are the natural out-growths of long-term strategic planning and funding by rightist leaders.

What might be called a "quiet revolution" is well underway, flying under the radar of national organizations of the political center and left, and avoiding the national spotlight. Reporters and researchers tend to see only the numerous issue- or constituency-specific activities of the Right. Even then, the most conscientious journalists and public policy groups have trouble keeping track of, for example, all the anti-gay and anti-abortion initiatives and bills being mounted at the state level.

While the Right has not abandoned the national stage, over the past ten years it has

developed significant platforms for public policy and political initiatives in the states—from which it has launched a long-term program for political and governmental change.

*Frederick Clarkson is the author of Eternal Hostility: the Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy, (1997) and of the forthcoming, Profiles in Terrorism: Twenty Years of Anti-abortion Violence, both from Common Courage Press. He recently joined the staff of the New York-based Institute for Democracy Studies, as Director of Communications.*

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was being challenged by federal civil rights legislation.

Second, the Right often develops its policies and programs by trial-and-error testing in the states. Beginning with his election in 1987, Wisconsin's Governor Tommy Thompson relied heavily on the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute as he pioneered the attack on welfare that was to spread to other states and eventually become federal welfare "reform." Rightist legislation and ballot initiatives in the states often serve as a "proving ground" or "demonstration project" for an idea that is not yet broadly accepted nationally. Anti-affirmative action programs incubated in California and Texas, for example, are on the way

# Books Received

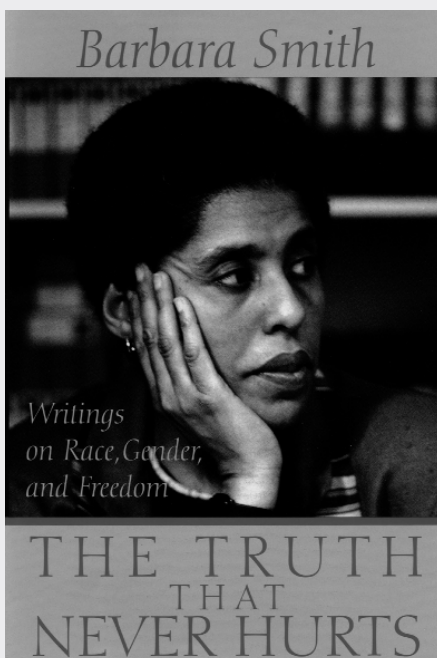
## *A Selected Annotated List*

**Barbara Smith**

**The Truth that Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender and Freedom**

New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998, 217 pages, selected bibliography, organizational listings, notes.

This collection documents two decades of Smith's writing on race, gender, class, power, sexuality, and social change. Smith, a veteran activist and scholar, addresses racism in the women's movement, black and Jewish relations, homophobia in the Black community, and a serious discussion of Black lesbian writing that is a crucial contribution to the struggle for social, economic, and racial justice. The collection begins with Smith's groundbreaking literary criticism from the 1970s of Black feminist writers including Toni Morrison, Zora Neal Hurston, Pat Parker, and Alice Walker. The second, third, and fourth parts of the book



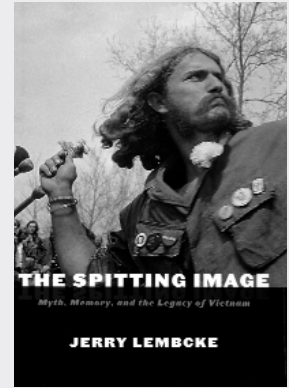
provide much-needed political analysis on issues such as racism and women's studies; police brutality against Rodney King and Abner Louima; reflections on the Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas hearings; and attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts. Also included are new essays from Smith which include a personal reflection on racial violence and bonds between Black women that make it possible to survive in a climate of racial intolerance. All of Smith's essays are timeless, particularly in her honest assertion that racism is still deeply embedded in US society. Smith's writing is both personal and accessible as well as intellectual and stimulating.

**John A. Andrew III**

**The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics**

New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997, 286 pages, appendix, notes, index.

Attempts to balance analysis of the 1960s by focusing on Young Americans for Freedom, the right-wing equivalent of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), from which many leaders in the conservative resurgence of the 1980s and 1990s emerged. In a decade dominated by Kennedy/Johnson liberalism, this group saw the sixties instead as the decade of Barry Goldwater and William Buckley's *National Review*. Their goal was not immediate electoral victory, rather, it was to replace the leadership of the Republican Party in order to seize the "levers of power" and shift the party to the right.



**Jerry Lembcke**

**The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam**

New York and London: New York University Press, 1998, 217 pages, index, filmography, references, notes.

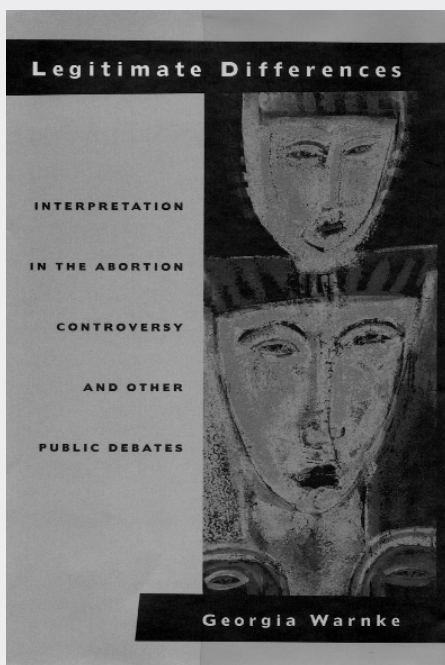
*The Spitting Image* is a well-researched deconstruction of the fabricated antipathy between members of the anti-war movement and veterans of the war in Vietnam, and whom it served. Written in a straightforward manner using good primary source materials, Lembcke demonstrates how Hollywood and the Nixon-Agnew administration (later, the Bush administration in the case of the Gulf War) constructed a mythology of anti-war protesters spitting on returning veterans. Further, he shows how the administration posited that the peaceniks' degradation of soldier and citizen morale was at fault for prolonging the war. What raises the most questions is his chapter *From Badness to Madness*. Here, although he acknowledges the legitimacy and importance of the "discovery" of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) in veterans, what is important to him is how it was exploited by the media and the Nixon-Agnew administration to undermine the credibility of anti-war veterans and de-politicize their actions.

*Georgia Warnke*

## **Legitimate Differences: Interpretation in the Abortion Controversy and Other Public Debates**

Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999, 214 pages, index, notes.

*Legitimate Differences* presents a rather classic liberal justification of such issues as affirmative action and abortion rights, with the difference that Warnke insists on accommodating the opposition's viewpoints as well, so that the debate becomes one of equal provisions rather than of moral imperative. For example, Warnke proposes to expand social services so that someone who is miserably ill but doesn't believe in euthanasia would have access to programs that ease the pain of slow dying (for both the patient and the family). In the introduction we are told, "I shall be recommending forms of compromise and accommodation that eschew any dogmatic interpretation of our principles without, I hope, risking an intolerable relativism." Perhaps Warnke's arguments are not as revolutionary as she thinks, but they are fairly solid and not terribly tainted by academic jargon.



*Kathleen Blee, Editor*

## **No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest**

New York and London: New York University Press, 1998, 329 pages, index.

*No Middle Ground* is a collection of essays documenting radical women's movements, both those explicitly identifying as such and those which, while fitting the criteria for radicalism, do not so identify. Kathleen Blee uses a nice selection of primary and secondary sources by and about right-wing and left-wing radical women. The essays, which cover topics from racism to labor activism, from feminists to environmentalists, are uniformly clearly written, well-researched, and well-analyzed. Blee's introduction explains how the labeling of women's political involvement (as, for instance, following in the footsteps of their fathers and husbands) can serve to erase its radical nature and deny its true power to propose and effect social change. An excellent cross-section of women's causes from the last fifty years.

*Robert Singh*

## **The Farrakhan Phenomenon; Race, Reaction and the Paranoid Style in American Politics**

Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1997, 340 pages, notes, bibliography, index.

Singh offers the thesis that Louis Farrakhan, as a "mirror image" of David Duke, is a unique figure on the American political scene in that he exploits the paranoia of African-Americans in the same manner as many white demagogues. Farrakhan also offers an extremely conservative vision of American society, based on separation along racial lines, which

differentiates him from other African-American leaders. Farrakhan's rise to prominence, moreover, has been marked by a rigid adherence to a confrontational stance rather than a moderation of his views. This adversarial position, according to Singh, has allowed Farrakhan to become perhaps the preeminent voice of the disillusioned and bitter majority of African-Americans, a curious fact considering that his views appear to be in opposition to those of that same majority. While this first academic treatment of Farrakhan offers some illuminating insights, they are difficult to discern from the hopelessly tedious and pedantic text. One would hope the second would be dense with ideas, not just prose.

*Christian Smith*

## **American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving**

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, 310 pages, appendices, references, index.

A highly academic discussion, broadly, of the "prospects for . . . religio[n] in modern, pluralistic, secular societies," and specifically, of the strength of evangelical Christianity which is increased in such societies. Smith asserts that boundaries drawn by religious groups between themselves and various "outgroups" strengthen internal cohesion and identity and increase the strength of such groups in a pluralistic society. This is in opposition to commonly held beliefs that pluralism decreases religious strength. On the contrary, Smith contends that classic American individualism decreases the strength of such religious traditions. "Strength" and other terminology are used in a strictly defined sense, and reinforced by data, both of which add to the book's credibility.



# Eyes RIGHT

## SCHLAFLY'S GLOSSARY

The August 1999 issue of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* attempts to “decode” the National Education Association’s resolutions. “Because so many NEA resolutions are written in a jargon that obscures their real purpose,” writes Schlafly, “here is a glossary to explain what some terms really mean.” According to Schlafly, affirmative action means “preferential hiring of designated minorities including gays and lesbians.” Bilingual education keeps “immigrant children speaking their native language instead of learning English.” Censorship is “any criticism of curriculum by parents.” Diverse role models are really “openly gay teachers.” And diversity really means “teaching the gay/lesbian agenda.” Sexual orientation is also “teaching the gay/lesbian agenda.” Multiculturalism is “teaching that every other culture is superior to Western Judeo-Christian civilization.” Undocumented immigrants are “illegal aliens and their children.” And extremist is “any activity that opposes the NEA agenda.”

## UNION BUSTING

The September 13, 1999 issue of *Insight Magazine* reports that more and more teachers are growing suspicious of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and are switching their allegiance to the American Association of Educators (AAE). AAE is described as “a genuine professional alternative to the ‘union mentality’ that has dominated big unions for decades.” Claiming 17,000 members, AAE “opposes teachers strikes, work slowdowns, compulsory union membership and collective bargaining.” Instead, AAE focuses mainly on one issue: “the right to work.” Based in Mission Viejo,

California, AAE has affiliates in seven states: Professional Educators of Iowa; Kansas Association of American Educators; Kentucky Association of Professional Educators; Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana; Association of Professional Oklahoma Educators; the Professional Educators of Tennessee; and the Keystone Teachers Association based in Pennsylvania.

## THE NATURAL FAMILY VS. THE UN

*The Family Voice* of Brigham Young University and The Howard Center will host the World Congress of Families II in Geneva, Switzerland on November 14-17, 1999. According to the Concerned Women for America (CWA) website, conference organizers are expecting 2,000 delegates and 70 speakers. The World Congress of Families (WCF) was formed in 1996 by Allan Carlson, president of The Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society, in response to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1994. “The Beijing conference pushed gay rights and gender redefinition, as well as abortion and sexual rights for children,” notes an article about WCF on the CWA website. “The platform also advocated the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)—both dangerous documents that threaten the stability of the family. WCF was founded to: “celebrate the natural family as the fundamental social unit; promote its stability, autonomy and fecundity (fruitfulness); counter contemporary anti-family forces with a new positive vision; and build fresh structures for pro-family cooperation and support.” The “natural family” is defined as a “man and a woman

bound in a lifelong covenant of marriage.” In May, 1998 the first planning committee for the Geneva conference met in Rome and drafted “A Call from the Families of the World.” WCF is aiming for 2 million people to sign the “Call,” which will be presented to the UN General Assembly next Spring before the June 2000 New York meeting of the U.N. Beijing +5 Global Forum.

## Eye LASHES

“My advice is for people who don’t live in South Carolina to butt out of the issue. The people of South Carolina can make that decision.”

—George W. Bush, giving a campaign speech in South Carolina in which he dismissed NAACP efforts to push South Carolina to take down the Confederate Flag from its Statehouse, September 6, 1999.

## LIMERICK

In defense of unspeakable greed,  
state think tanks disseminate screech.  
Full of myth and derision,  
they ask for decisions  
that stomp on those poor and in need.



## TOO MUCH TOLERANCE?

The August 1999 *Family News From Dr. James Dobson*, the monthly news letter of Focus on the Family, the Colorado-based Christian media ministry, recommends some reading: *The New Tolerance: How a Cultural Movement Threatens to Destroy You, Your Faith, and Your Children* by Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler. "How Much 'Tolerance' Can We Tolerate?" screams the headline to the blurb recommending the book. "Like it or not, we're in a culture that's increasingly bent on sabotaging the foundations of our faith. That's why *The New Tolerance* is an important book to read. Written by best-selling author Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, it reveals what's behind the cultural 'tolerance' movement and gives ways to counteract its destructive effects on your faith and your family. The authors also explain how to discern between acceptance and approval and how to lovingly respond to a society that seems willing to tolerate anything except biblical truth."

## WOMEN ARE TO BLAME

The August 1999 issue of *The Family in America*, a publication of the Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society, distorts recent research on "an ecological theory of crime" from scholars at Harvard University and the University of Sussex. The Family in America interprets the research to mean that families-headed by single women are directly related to crime. "The multiplication of female-headed families signals an ecological disaster of the first order." Titled "Worse Than an Oil Spill," the article claims that "the proportion of households in an area headed by single females turned out to be 'strongly correlated with violent crime as well as property crime.' More specifically, a high percentage of female-headed households in an area predicted high rates of assault, robbery, burglary, rape, and motor-vehicle theft."

# Resources

*The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy has been at the forefront in tracking and analyzing the growth and influence of conservative public policy-making. It has published three important reports which can be obtained from the NCRP at 2001 S Street NW, #620, Washington, DC 20009. Telephone 202.387.9177; E-Mail ncrp@aol.com.*

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### ***Special Report, Burgeoning Conservative Think Tanks, Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, Spring 1991.***

Groundbreaking collection of articles that examines how the Right developed sophisticated and well-networked centers and think tanks. Articles cover: the role the Madison Group played in linking conservative think tanks; the efforts of the Right at the state legislature level; how these think-tanks exalt the market as the best solution to most problems in society; an examination of the influence and strength of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC); plus a look at a number of individual conservative think tanks.

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### ***Sally Covington, Moving A Public Policy Agenda: The Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations, Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, July 1997.***

Extensively researched and sharply analytical, this report documents the important role conservative foundations have played in building the infrastructure of the Right and influencing public policy at the national, state and local level. Covington analyzes 12 key

foundations' grant-making programs and the missions, activities, staff and boards of grantees. The report includes sections on types of institutions supported; strategic funding; how philanthropic resources have been mobilized; and the institutional, ideological and public policy impact of this conservative philanthropy.

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### ***David Callahan, \$1 Billion for Ideas: Conservative Think Tanks in the 1990s, Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, March 1999.***

This report focuses on the top twenty conservative policy institutes of the 1990s. In addition to the well-known Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute and the American Enterprise Institute, Callahan examines seventeen less-known think tanks. The report includes sections on: how conservative think tanks have expanded their influence in the 1990s; how they operate both in terms of policy research, marketing and change at the state and local levels; how they are supported; and how they are structured internally. Of particular interest is Callahan's analysis of the Right's victories in 5 policy areas: welfare; Social Security and Medicare; deregulation and the environment; taxes; and education.

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### ***The Real Story Behind 'Paycheck Protection': The Hidden Link Between Anti-Worker and Anti-Public Education Initiatives: An Anatomy of the Far Right.***

*Continued on page 18*

Resources continued from page 17

**Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1998.**

Well-researched and extremely useful, this report is a welcome contribution from the labor movement—a sector long targeted and vilified by the Right. The sections “The State-based Assault” and “State Battlegrounds” are good companion pieces to understand, through the use of case studies, how the State Policy Network operates. Also valuable is the guide to State Policy Network Members which gives profiles of each organizational member in a state-by-state format. The precision of the report, however, is somewhat marred by the author’s tendency to use inflammatory rhetoric to describe the conservative movement. To obtain copies, contact: NEA Communications, 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.



**The Assault on Working Families, by the Public Policy Department of AFSCME. Washington, DC: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, 1998.**

In addition to the standard, albeit important, descriptions of conservative

policy organizations, this report has some practical appendices. Included are an analysis of state-based and regional research and policy analysis groups and samples of model state legislation that move the anti-labor, anti-working family, anti-government agenda of the American Legislative Exchange Council.



**Ellen Messer-Davidow, “Manufacturing the Attack on Liberalized Higher Education,” *Social Text*, Fall 1993, 40-80.**

An important early discussion of the creation of the “political correctness” debate by a handful of right-wing think tanks and their ideological allies.



**Jean Stephancic and Richard Delgado, *No Mercy: How Conservative Think Tanks and Foundations Changed America’s Social Agenda*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996.**

Documents the Right’s formidable political machine which has shifted US policy by focusing its efforts on dovetailing sequences of issues; effectively training young conservatives, and its careful use of money, media, and “brains.” While

their premise is that the polity benefits from an equal infusion of ideas from the left and right, their recommendation is that the left emulate the structure of the Right’s policy juggernaut.



**Phillip H. Burch, *Research in Political Economy, Reagan, Bush, and Right-Wing Politics: Elites, Think Tanks, Power and Policy*, Greenwich, CT: Jai Press, 1997.**

**Supplement 1, Part A, *The American Right-Wing Takes Command: Key Executive Appointments***

**Supplement 1, Part B: *The American Right-Wing at Court and in Action: Supreme Court Nominations and Major Policy-Making***

Burch, of Rutgers University, argues that a network called the Counter-Establishment gained power during the Reagan administration, and many of his key appointees, such as Edwin Meese, Caspar Weinberger, William Requist and Clarence Thomas, had ties to this network. The Counter-Establishment network included policy institutes such as The Heritage Foundation, conservative media such as the *Wall Street Journal*, and funders such as the Olin, Scaife, and Coors families.

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*Jean Hardisty is a political scientist who, since 1981, has been executive director of Political Research Associates, an independent nonprofit research center that monitors anti-democratic movements and trends. She lives in Somerville, Massachusetts.*

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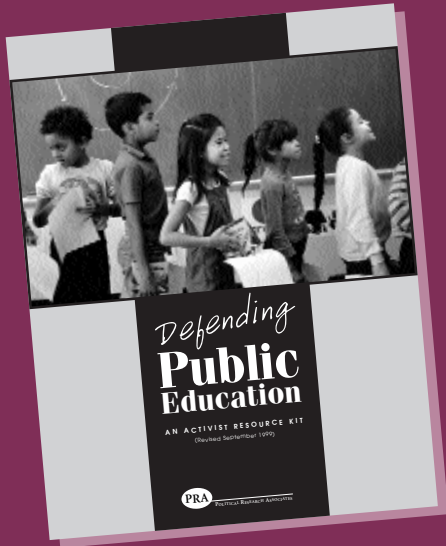
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