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THEY'RE BATTLING FOR YOUR MIND IN LIBERALISM'S LAST STRONGHOLD—THE CAMPUS.

RIGHT WING NEWSPAPERS

By HOWARD GOLDENTHAL & ALBERT NERENBERG

THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL Affairs is at war.

Battling for the minds of young Americans and Canadians, the IEA has taken up the neo-conservative cause against what it believes is one of liberalism's last strongholds — the university community.

And it is challenging liberalism on the battlefield of ideology, long unfamiliar terrain for the New Right. Many neo-conservatives believe liberals have a monopoly over ideology, especially amongst intellectuals and universities, and want to confront liberalism with an ideology of their own.

This is where the IEA, a charitable foundation with access to millions of dollars from ultra-conservative benefactors, comes in. Since 1978, the IEA has searched for ways to bring the neo-conservative message to American campuses. That year, they began to provide start-up grants to ultra-conservative student newspapers, and the movement has since spread across the U.S. and recently spilled into Canada.

IEA president Philip Marcus proudly wrote in the *National Review* that a conference held in 1982, jointly sponsored by the IEA and the *American Spectator*, a conservative monthly, was the needed right step forward in the critical campus advance.

"The force behind the conference," he wrote, "and the golden goose that has hatched these new publications, is the Institute for Educational Affairs, an energetic, but as yet, little known foundation overseen by William E. Simon and Irving Kristol."

Without doubt, the introduction of conservative student viewpoints to Canadian universities, in the form of *McGill Magazine*, the *University of Toronto Magazine*, *Libertas* of Queen's University and seven other clone papers at various Canadian universities, was both inevitable and probably healthy. But the IEA's role in the development of the campus conservative press uncovers that the new student right is less of a product of spontaneous surge of

student sentiment than a carefully nurtured projection of the New Right's increasing awareness of the importance of university students.

The IEA works something like Petro-Canada. Its co-founder, William Simon, was considered for a cabinet post under Reagan and maintains close links with the U.S. government. John Cohen, student journalism co-ordinator of the IEA says the role of the IEA is to supply seed money for conservative papers and support them if they flounder. Each paper is independent, receiving advice upon request and a regular newsletter containing articles.

The IEA will accept a variety of applicants with one main criteria for funds: you can't be a liberal. Coming under the wing of the IEA network doesn't trouble editors, despite their individual entrepreneurial identities and fierce free-enterprise credo.

In 1982, when there were only 13 conservative campus papers on the continent, about 70 students from across the U.S. assembled at the New York Athletics Club for an IEA conference.

David Corn, an American reporter for the *Nation* magazine infiltrated the conference which was closed to the public, posing as a conservative Columbia University student interested in starting a paper of his own.

The IEA's Marcus opened the conference. "We have found that the most effective thing to do to confront the adversary culture in the intellectual world is to go to the students." It is now time to take the last refuge of liberalism — the campus.

Marcus wrote after the conference, "These young journalists took counsel and encouragement from their seniors on topics such as how to cover the cultural beat, how to do political analysis, and how to



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make editorial judgements."

Many students complained of feelings of isolation on their campus. Emmett Tyrell Jr., editor of the *American Spectator*, picked up the conference with his words for the wise.

"Someone once told me not to use the word 'idiot' in a speech. It always gets a laugh (laughter from the audience). Don't be afraid to call liberals idiots (laughter). They are (more laughter). The real intellectual exchange is between the intelligent and the unintelligent. There may be a few intelligent liberals. I'm not sure, and I'm not saying you should invite them into your house. But you should be aware of this."

Throughout the conference, writers were usually advised to ridicule, not debate, liberals.

Midge Decter, a spokesperson for a group called the Committee for a Free World, gave a keynote speech titled "What is the New Alternative Journalism?" which according to Marcus, "has been preserved in a free booklet, available from the IEA... with information about how to start your own conservative newspaper."

"Miss Decter welcomed students to the 'war of ideas,'" said Marcus, "reminding them ideas — the study of ideas — and the transmission of ideas, rule the world." Against liberals, conservative students actually have great advantages, according to Decter, because "the other side is choking on its political and social conventionality."

Some splits developed among students. Roseanne Haggarty, one of the two women at the conference, complained about the "condescending" attitudes she noticed among conservatives. William Catton, one of the editors of the *Dartmouth Review* answered her later, making a statesman-like plea in favour of smugness and condescension.

"To the point we are self-indulgent," he orated, "conservatives have a right to be self-indulgent by virtue of the fact we are publishing. Just look at how many conservative (campus) magazines there are now."

The conference, wrote Marcus, was a tremendous success. That year, there were 13 conservative magazines. By the next year it would be more than triple that number. In 1984, the IEA funded 69 conservative campus publications.

But the IEA is more than just a daddy and a wallet for papers. Because of its position as a non-profit foundation for educational affairs, it can make forays into funding students where more overtly right-wing organizations would balk. The IEA opened up funding avenues for the much larger foundations to fund student papers. The IEA is funded by the John M. Olin Foundation, which is directed by William Simon, the Smith Richardson Foundation, and the single largest crusading neo-conservative foundation, the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts, overseen by one of the richest men in the U.S., Richard Mellon

Scaife.

Scaife's personal fortune is conservatively estimated at \$150 million. Under Scaife's guidance, the foundation supplies about \$10 million a year to conservative causes and institutes.

Scaife rarely speaks to the press. *Columbia Journalism Review* reporter, Karen Rothmyer, managed to catch Scaife as he left the exclusive Union Club in Boston.

"Mr. Scaife, could you explain why you give so much money to the New Right?" she asked him as he tried to hail a cab.

"You fucking communist cunt get out of here," Scaife answered. She followed him. Before he got into the car, he told her she was "ugly" and her teeth were "terrible."

Among conservatives, Scaife is a blessing, and with few exceptions, his money rains only on the correct political orientation. His war on liberalism heartens conservatives, and also employs them. His commitment to win the world back from liberals echos Irving Kristol in his latest book, *Reflections of a Neo-Conservative*. Kristol is a co-founder of the IEA and is widely considered the intellectual leader of the neo-conservative movement.

Conservatism will surely be a lost cause, writes Kristol, unless conservatives "foresake their customary caution and devotion to the status quo and commit themselves to fighting the left for the future."