

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE PAST: THE NEW RIGHT AND THE CRISIS OF HISTORY*

Harvey J. Kaye

Introduction

Writing in the twentieth anniversary issue of the American neo-conservative journal, *The Public Interest*, sociologist Robert Nisbet presented 'The Conservative Renaissance in Perspective'. Though his historical analysis focused on the resurgence of the conservative political tradition in the United States during the 1960s and '70s, his conclusion spoke in more universal terms. He observed that:

A brilliant French critic, **Emile** Faguet, called the first generation of conservatives in Europe 'prophets of the past'. That is very good. They speak by design from the past and often about the past. Churchill said he loved the past, was uneasy about the present, and feared the future. Clement **Atlee** once said Churchill's mind was like a layer cake with each layer a different century, including one 'which may have been the twenty-first'. But for all that Churchill was considerably ahead of his partners, including FDR, in his grasp of the present and its imperatives.

Prophets the conservatives may be, but they have also been, and will doubtless continue to be, guerrillas of the past. Their sorties in politics, economics, education, and a great deal of the whole cultural area have been among the high water levels of history the last 200 years in both America and Britain, and indeed other parts of the West. I suspect that traditional conservatives will remain prophets and guerrillas of the past.'

The coming to power of the New Right Conservatives and Republicans in Britain and America has indeed entailed a political discourse in which Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, along with their political and Cabinet colleagues, 'speak by design from the past and often about the past'. And yet, however much references to the past were to be expected, it seems that even more so than usual, the Thatcher Government and the Reagan Administration have actually made an issue of the past and our relation to it. It has regularly seemed that their resurrections of past personages, events, and experiences, have been intended as much to capture and command history, and thereby fashion particular inter-

* For their unique contributions to the writing of this article I thank Ellen **Meiksins** Wood, Craig Lockard, Tony Galt, Joan Robb and Lorna Stewart Kaye.

pretations and representations of it, as to mobilise it in support of their respective (though often quite similar) programmes and policies. The question of success aside, the more than seven years of Thatcher's premiership and six years of Reagan's presidency have rightly been viewed as involving determined efforts at reshaping late twentieth-century capitalist hegemony in Britain and America along New Right lines. Thatcher's and Reagan's respective historical assertions and initiatives must be read as part of those struggles.

This essay is offered as a set of considerations on the use and abuse of history by Thatcher and Reagan. It does not offer a sociological analysis of the New Right's origins, supporters, organisations, and movements, nor provide a comprehensive examination of their general and extensive campaigns to refashion British and American political and cultural life and the content of hegemonic processes and relations. Such work has been taking place (as this volume of the *Socialist Register* attests), and where possible I refer to it and draw from it. My project is much more limited, though still I hope useful. This paper seeks to provide an account of the mobilisations of the past by Thatcher and Reagan, and others of the New Right; to situate these acts in terms of what has increasingly been referred to as 'the crisis of history'; and thus to highlight the meaning and significance of the Thatcher Government's and Reagan Administration's initiatives in the area of historical education. It does so, not merely to register or reveal these efforts, for readers of this collection may already be familiar with some of the episodes and incidents to be noted, but ultimately to raise questions about historical thought and education which the Left should be considering.

The essay is thus divided into five sections. The first indicates the 'crisis of history' which is said to be characteristic of these last decades of the twentieth century and notes the call to resuscitate historical thought in education and public life. The second section examines the manner in which the rise of the New Right in Britain and America, culminating in the election and re-election victories of Thatcher and Reagan, has, in fact, reintroduced 'history' into politics and public discourse. The third section looks at Thatcher's and Reagan's own historical assertions, i.e., their respective uses and abuses of the past; and the fourth attends to the moves by the Thatcher and Reagan governments to instigate curriculum reforms linked to the conservatives' own political-ideological projects. Finally, the last section briefly considers the implications of the New Right's efforts and the question of what the Left response ought to be.

The Crisis

Critics, journalists, artists, and historians (joined most recently by conservative politicians), have been declaiming for about a generation now that history and historical thought have been in decline in Britain and

America, if not most of Western society. Fritz Stern summed up the situation best from the historian's point of view: 'It may be part of our professional and social predicament that at the very time when historical knowledge is of critical importance it is in fact neglected'.² Put more bluntly, it has seemed as though the view that history is irrelevant—or as Henry Ford declared, 'History is bunk!'—has prevailed. For example, it has been regularly noted that history was dropped from the required to the elective list in general education programmes in American universities, and that in both Britain and the United States social science subjects (or social studies) have taken the place traditionally held by history in school and higher education curricula.

For some this crisis is traceable to the rebellions of the late 1960s and the demands to make education more 'relevant' and more 'practical' (persisting due to the paranoia and/or pragmatism of the '70s and '80s, and the desire on the part of students to be made employable or 'marketable'). However, for others the crisis has been not merely one involving the teaching of history but, more significantly, one of historical consciousness, and the marginalisation of history in education is viewed as a reflection of larger social and cultural forces.³ That is, the devaluation of the discipline is understood to be a consequence of a more generalised decline in historical thinking, described by Russell Jacoby as 'social amnesia—memory driven out of mind by the social and economic dynamic of society'.⁴

The irony of it all—which has made the crisis especially galling and frustrating to historians—has been its paradoxical nature. For, during the same years in which history has been moving to the educational and cultural peripheries there has arisen a tremendous 'popular appetite' and demand for the 'past'. This is well evidenced by the phenomena of best-sellers from historical studies and historical fiction, television docu-dramas and stories based on historical subjects, historical restorations and recreations, genealogy, and the sale of 'tradition' (e.g., antiques, memorabilia, and the gentrification of old neighbourhoods).⁵ But, of course, the popularity of the past has most often entailed nostalgia and/or celebrations of the present, neither of which should necessarily be equated with historical thought.⁶ As Christopher Lasch has so aptly put it: 'There is history that remembers and history that arises from a need to forget.'⁷ It is at the same time crucial to recognise that however much nostalgia represents an alternative to critical appreciation of our relationship to the past and provides an exploitable base for commercial and political purposes, it does express or reflect real needs emerging out of the experience of everyday life.⁸

Exacerbating the sense of crisis still further—again, particularly for historians—is that the marginalisation of history has paralleled what has arguably been a flourishing of historical studies. This can be seen, first, in

the development and rise to pre-eminence in the historical profession of social history, involving a dramatic expansion in the research methodologies and theoretical perspectives practised, and the topics explored.⁹ It is also exhibited in the rehistoricisation of the social sciences. In contrast to what had been for so long an ahistorical, if not antihistorical, orientation on the part of social scientists, recent developments must be read as significant, even if the return to history may still be limited to certain circles and subject areas.¹⁰ Moreover, the socialisation of history has also brought about a certain 'democratisation' of the past by way of the development of 'history from below' or 'the bottom up' with its concern for the experience of peasants, slaves, workers, women, and others who had previously been considered peripheral to the 'essential' historical record.¹¹ To the extent that the writing of history from below has entailed, in Barrington Moore Jr.'s words, 'sympathy with the victims of historical processes and skepticism about the victors' claims', it has rightly been perceived as more 'critical' than the traditional historiography written from the perspective of the top or ruling groups. This has led at least one historian to suggest that 'what we now perceive as the "crisis of history" is merely the coming to an end of the function of history as elite ideology'.¹² And in this vein it should be remembered—for it is indeed consequential—that the expansion of social history and the rewriting of history 'from the bottom up' have been carried on mostly by historians of the Left—liberals, radicals, socialists and feminists.

Naturally, there have been a variety of proposals advanced as to what ought to be done in response to the crisis.¹³ A perusal of them would indicate that most are fairly pragmatic and to some extent worthy of pursuit; however, they tend to be limited to formal educational initiatives and merely call for adaptation to current trends. They do not sufficiently engage or confront the crisis. There is, however, another, broader vision for history regarding what ought to be done, in which 'the future of the past' is not limited to, nor immediately dependent upon, historians' capacities to latch onto market trends. Rather, the possibilities for history are understood to be intimately linked to the vigour of historical thinking in the culture at large.

For me, and probably for many students of my generation,¹⁴ the most captivating presentation of this more comprehensive vision was actually made on the eve of the recognition of the crisis by the British historian, E.H. Carr, in his now-dated, but still intriguing and controversial, *What is History?*¹⁵ Carr provided a manifesto of sorts for those students who sensed that there was more to it than the admittedly essential and disputatious task of 'keeping the record straight'. He articulated both the intellectual excitement which history promised and the intellectual responsibility which it entailed. Insisting upon the inherent centrality of interpretation in historical practice, Carr's portrayal of history indicated, or

at least implied, a crucial responsibility for it in the making of contemporary political and social thought.¹⁶ Here is a conception of history that asserts its essential cultural role, one which has been reiterated on several occasions in the course of the crisis, though in a necessarily different tone and with a greater sense of urgency. For example, in her 1982 inaugural address as President of the Organization of American Historians, Gerda Lerner acknowledged the 'essentiality' of history as collective memory but proceeded to argue that 'history is more than collective memory, it is memory formed and shaped so as to have meaning'. And she implored her fellow historians to 'be open to the ways in which people now relate to the past and reach out to communicate with them at their level'.¹⁷ Not long before this, in *The Yale Review*, James Turner addressed the pressing need to 'recover the uses of history' which have been in jeopardy with the marginalisation of the discipline. He too stressed the interpretive act and in a similar fashion to Lerner, he asserted that if history is to be rescued it must be returned 'to the realm of public discourse'.¹⁸

It is all well, good, and necessary that history be returned to the realm of public discourse, but in this form the project is presented too innocently. One might too readily assume that there is some generic scholarly practice standing to one side called history and some amorphous democratic political practice on the other called public discourse. History, good history, whether emanating from the Right, Left, or Centre, is—and should be—pursued according to certain scholarly norms, but, needless to say, the shape and content of the respective dialogues between past and present do and will continue to vary. Understood in this way, it must be acknowledged that history itself is discourse and that it stands in dialectical relation to political and social thought. Moreover, as we well know, public discourse is not unstructured, and history has all too often been servant and handmaiden to the powerful.¹⁹ This point must be insisted upon because it would appear that contemporary events have already anticipated the project.

'Intellectual Revolution' on the Right

The politics of what have come to be called Thatcherism and Reaganism have entailed confronting two particular historical 'moments' or 'formations' of the past fifty years. First, Thatcher and Reagan—and the New Right political groups which brought them to power—have sought to undermine and break up the welfare state, or social democratic, consensus which had been established following the Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War. Second, they have intended to reverse the political and social changes brought about in the 1960s. David Edgar has offered the following description of the Thatcher and Reagan years thus far:

If in their first terms of office, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan set out to demolish the extant works of the New Deal and welfare state, then it is fair to

say that they are now being encouraged to confront the social libertarianism that characterized public policy and attitudes in the sixties, from anti-militarism to anti-racism, from the liberalization of sexual life and the liberation of women to the protection of the environment and the privacy of the individual.**

The degree of success which these confrontations with contemporary history have had is debatable but it is important that they be recognised for what they are—efforts to refashion late twentieth-century capitalist hegemony. To the extent that hegemonic reform and transformation depend, for a start, on intellectual leadership, the emergence and political victories of Thatcher and Reagan were indeed bound up with what political observers have termed 'intellectual revolutions'. By this it is not being suggested that a stratum of intellectuals has been formed for the purpose of mobilisation at the grassroots level, though the fundamentalist preachers of the religious New Right and 'Moral Majority' in the States should perhaps begin to be studied in just such terms. Rather, intellectual revolution is meant to refer to the formation in the early 1970s of intellectual elites who, by virtue of their being well-placed in the party, cultural, and/or economic establishments, effectively captured the attention of the media and began through the course of the decade to reconstruct political discourse along 'New Right' lines. Peter Riddell describes this period in Britain:

From the mid-1970s onwards the views of what became known as the New Right assumed prominence in intellectual debate and were associated with Mrs. Thatcher and her allies. It was the heyday of the counter-attack against collectivism. Economists such as Hayek and Friedman were the new prophets. In the contest of ideas the Conservative Party appeared to be making the running and could no longer be called the stupid party, as was highlighted by the enthusiastic involvement of converts from the centre/left such as [historians] Hugh Thomas and Max Beloff. . . and Paul Johnson.²¹

The term 'New Right', referring to the intellectual developments of the 1970s in Britain, actually comprehends two quite distinct politico-ideological currents which were, nevertheless, united in Thatcherism. These two are 'neo-liberalism' and 'neo-conservatism', the former more prominent in politico-economic terms and the latter in social policy formation. Derived from the works of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, neo-liberal economic thought in Britain has taken the special form of 'monetarism'. Andrew Gamble has summed up such thinking: 'New Right economists argue for market solutions to economic problems and reject governmental ones. Their general catechism—markets good, governments bad—unites all strands of economic liberalism.'²² Moreover, following Hayek and Friedman they contend that the economic freedom of the capitalist market economy is a prerequisite to political freedom.²³ These ideas had, of course, been actively propagated in opposition to Keynesian

and social democratic policies and programmes of post-war governments by such organisations as the Economic League, Aims of Industry, British United Industrialists, the Institute of Economic Affairs, and the Freedom Association—plus the Adam Smith Institute (1981). But most significant in the development of right-wing Toryism, or Thatcherism, was the establishment in 1974 of the Centre for Policy Studies with Sir Keith Joseph as chairman and Margaret Thatcher as president. The Centre was rightly called 'the think tank for monetarist policies in Britain',²⁴ and as Peter Riddell states, 'Sir Keith's role [in the development of Thatcherism] was to interpret the New Right and to set the intellectual tone'.²⁵

The son of a highly successful London entrepreneur and businessman, Sir Keith had long been an assertive and ambitious Conservative, but it was in 1974 that he was, in his words, truly 'converted to Conservatism'. The Conservatism he had in mind, however, was not then dominant in the party, and thus his first project was to forcefully present the views and ideas which were to become identified with Thatcherism. He took up directly the question which was paramount on both the Right and the Left: 'What's wrong with Britain?'. His repeated answer was that: 1) 'the economy is overburdened with government' and 'state expenditure is greater than the economy can bear'; 2) the trade unions are resisting the changes necessary to increase productivity but expecting and demanding more and more from the economy; and 3) there has been a 'running vendetta conducted by the Socialists against our free enterprise system and those who manage it'.²⁶ This is not the place to treat the political economy of Thatcherism and monetarism, but what is important here is that Sir Keith regularly stated that the reasons for the problems with the British economy 'go back deep into social history'. And he proceeded to offer his own historical interpretation of Britain's political, economic and cultural development:

Britain never internalised capitalist values, if the truth be known. For four centuries, since wealthy commercial classes with political standing began to be thrown up following the supercession of feudalism and the selling off of monastic property, the rich man's aim was to get away from the background of trade—later industry—in which he had made his wealth and power. Rich and powerful people founded landed-gentry families; the capitalist's son was educated not in capitalist values but against them, in favour of the older values of army, church, upper civil service, professions, and landowning. This avoided the class struggles between middle and upper strata familiar from European history—but at what a cost.²⁷

Sir Keith continually argued that it was necessary for radical action to be taken, which meant that the Conservatives had to reject the search for the 'middle ground' in relation to what he saw as the leftward movement of British politics and instead seek out the 'common ground with the people and their aspirations'.²⁸ The *historic* task he proposed for the

Conservatives was 'to recreate the conditions which will again permit the forward march of *embourgeoisement*, which went so far in Victorian times and even in the much maligned "thirties".' By 'bourgeois values' he meant 'a further time-horizon, a willingness to defer gratification, to work hard for years, study, save and look after the family future'. Again, this was not associated with the wealthy commercial classes who had been incorporated into the landed gentry but with 'the peasant, small shopkeeper, independent craftsman, and practitioners of the free professions. . .'. Embourgeoisement was not only necessary for the upper classes but for the social order as a whole. Indeed, referring again to the Victorian era he said: 'The artisan of Victorian days who read literature, supported radical causes, was sober and self-improving, gave hope that the workers would become *bourgeois*'.²⁹ However, he explained, recent developments had undermined such optimism. He blamed the reversal of the process through which everyone was becoming 'bourgeois' on the Socialists and those Conservatives who had been willing to govern in terms of the social democratic consensus. As the party of opposition, Sir Keith called upon Conservatives to prepare for government by aggressively engaging the Socialists in 'the battle of ideas', confident that 'We share more values and aspirations with the people, however they vote. . . [thus] Our task is to articulate *them*'.³⁰

Sir Keith's own campaigns in the battle of ideas have included co-authoring the book *Equality*, the objective of which was 'to challenge one of the central prejudices of modern British politics, the belief that it is a proper function of the State to influence the distribution of wealth for its own *sake*'.³¹ Through the work Sir Keith and his co-author, Jonathan Sumption, intended to show—by way of theoretical logic, historical reference, and certain assumptions about human nature—that the 'demand for equality of results' is misguided and dangerous. A thorough analysis of the text would be an interesting intellectual exercise for students of political and social theory, but suffice it to say that the crux of the argument is that egalitarianism is a threat to liberty: 'Levying war on humanity is not too harsh an expression for the kind of society which is actually being constructed in the name of equality in many parts of the *world*'.³² Moreover, in an approach characteristic of the New Right as much as the Old, Soviet polity and the social-democratic project are presented as merely variations on a theme: egalitarianism = concentration of political power in the State = coercion sooner or later.

Less prominent than the neo-liberals, though still significant in the British New Right's intellectual struggles, have been the neo-conservatives, found most notably in the Conservative Philosophy Group (1975) and the Salisbury Group (originally housed at Peterhouse College, Cambridge). The leading figure amongst these neo-conservative intellectuals has been Roger Scruton, Reader in Philosophy at the University of London and

editor of *The Salisbury Review*.³³ In contrast to the neo-liberal call for a return to an unrestricted, or less-restricted, market economy, the neo-conservatives urge the return to another nineteenth-century vision of the social order, emphasising not freedom but 'hierarchy, authority, and nation'. Yet another neo-conservative of some importance, but whose views are quite different from Scruton's, is Ferdinand Mount: former editor of *The Spectator*; author of *The Subversive Family*³⁴ (which, through a particular reading of history concludes that the family is a 'natural' unit, and therefrom attacks both feminist demands for radical change and those who insist that state support is necessary for the family's survival as an institution); and then advisor to Prime Minister Thatcher and her semi-secret Family Policy Group convened in 1982-83 to formulate plans to 'establish clearer family responsibilities'.³⁵ Though limited in comparison to the role of the Moral Majority forces in the American New Right, it is through these neo-conservatives, and the more popular groups which subscribe to their views, that morality and the family have been formulated as political issues.

It would seem that the neo-liberals and neo-conservatives could not possibly be accommodated in a single New Right, for the neo-liberals' assertion of the need to limit the role of the State in favour of expanded freedom of choice and individual initiative and responsibility runs directly counter to (at least) the Scruton variety of neo-conservatism which contends that "'the concept of freedom. . . cannot occupy a central place in conservative thinking" and must always be subordinate to "another and higher value, the authority of established government"'.³⁶ But perhaps what brings them together in Thatcherism is, as David Edgar's analysis implies, that both neo-liberals and neo-conservatives see an immediate need for 'social discipline' to begin to reverse the developments of the past few decades.³⁷ This is to be accomplished through a combination of the rigours of the market and the authority of the government. Thus, not surprisingly, we find both neo-liberals and neo-conservatives revering, and harking back to, the Victorian era; that is, the differences are resolved 'historically'.

The New Right 'intellectual revolution' in the United States has also involved quite varied elements. First there are the academic and establishment intellectuals who began their careers on the left in the 1930s and '40s, but in the course of the Cold War 1950s and the political and social turmoil and changes of the 1960s moved steadily rightward, until by the early 1970s they were clearly identifiable as a new breed of conservatives, i.e., neo-conservatives. With concerns ranging from domestic to foreign policy and international affairs, the ranks of the neo-conservatives include such luminary figures as Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Robert Nisbet, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Seymour Martin Lipset, Nathan Glazer, Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter and Jeane Kirkpatrick. Their efforts and activities

through the decade of the 1970s were well-funded, well-recorded, and well-noted by the media (and in some instances by the aspiring Presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan). The centre of neo-conservative thought has been the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) which, through its aggressive research and publishing efforts, has become one of the major social science and public policy 'think-tanks'. The two most important neo-conservative periodicals have been the journal, *Public Interest* (founded by Kristol and Bell, and supported by AEI), and the monthly magazine, *Commentary* (sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and edited by Podhoretz).³⁸

Though by no means committed as a group to the Republican Party (for example, Moynihan remained a prominent and active Democrat, gaining election as a Democratic Senator from New York State in 1976), the neo-conservatives were nevertheless quite influential in shaping the 'climate of opinion' in which the Reagan Republicans could achieve victory. Especially significant in these years were the neo-conservatives' critiques and attacks on the public and social policies associated with the 'Great Society' which contributed to undermining the liberal consensus (the American version of a social democratic consensus) originating in the New Deal of the 1930s and renovated in the '60s.

Just as important, perhaps, were the arguments on American foreign policy presented in the pages of *Commentary*, apparently intended to move 'thinking' on the US role in the world beyond the so-called 'Vietnam syndrome'. Therein, neo-conservative writers discussed the 'double standards' which they said liberals and leftists operated from in their analyses and evaluations of US policies in the Third World. Here one thinks immediately of Jeane Kirkpatrick's articles—especially 'Dictatorships and Double Standards',³⁹ for it was this essay which brought her the attention of candidate Reagan and led to her appointment as his Ambassador to the United Nations and foreign policy advisor on Latin America.

Kirkpatrick's writings are prime examples of the use and abuse of history, and she herself is most insistent about the importance of history to political thought and action. Repeatedly in her speeches and writings she demands that we learn from 'experience'.⁴⁰ She has even referred to it as 'taking the cure of history'.⁴¹ And yet her own attentions to the past are crudely ideological and selective. This can be seen especially well in 'Dictatorships and Double Standards' where she provides a historical interpretation of the Shah's regime in Iran and the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, and argues that the US needs to stand by allies such as these to prevent Communist takeovers. The article basically ignores the US role in establishing and maintaining those regimes and 'reduces' the nature of those dictatorships to 'authoritarianism', which she contrasts with the much more oppressive and harsh 'totalitarianism'. She uses 'authoritarianism' to describe Third World dictatorships of the Right and 'totalitarianism' to describe those of the Left. In such a manner, she minimises the

brutality of the Shah's and Somoza's regimes, but even more shockingly, the nightmares of Chilean and Argentinian 'authoritarianisms'. Kirkpatrick explains that her 'realistic' call for the US to 'stand by' its rightwing authoritarian allies for the sake of combatting communism is not completely pessimistic: 'Although there is no instance of a revolutionary "socialist" or Communist society being democratized, right-wing autocracies do sometimes evolve into **democracies**.'⁴² But naturally, she states, such things take time; having already referred to the British development of democracy: '... the road from Magna Carta to the Act of Settlement, to the Great Reform Bills of 1832, 1867, and 1885, took seven centuries to **traverse**.'⁴³ One might also note how on another occasion she stated quite bluntly: 'The United States was never a colonial **power**.'⁴⁴

Along with the neo-conservatives is a cluster of conservative groups specifically termed 'the New Right' which operated as a political movement throughout the 1970s. At the core of this movement was the Conservative Caucus, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, and the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, led by Howard Phillips, Terry Dolan, and Paul Weyrich, respectively. Like the neo-conservatives, the New Right has its own think-tank, The Heritage Foundation, established in 1973 with funding from Richard Scaife (of the Mellon family) and Joseph Coors, the Colorado beer millionaire. The primary vehicle for New Right ideas has been *Conservative Digest*, but there are other periodicals, the most serious of which is the Heritage Foundation journal, *Policy Review*. It should be noted that the New Right is said to be 'new' more because of its aggressive populist fundraising and organising style than its ideas. Actually there are strong ties to the William F. Buckley, Jr. and *National Review* 'Old Right' by way of the New Right's leaders' having been activists in Young Americans for Freedom around Barry Goldwater's 1964 campaign; however, the New Right, as stated, is much more populist in its **appeal**.⁴⁵

The structure of the New Right movement is single-interest based. Fundraising and mobilisation have been carried out by, and depended upon such single-issue campaigns as anti-abortion, anti-pornography and pro-'decency', law and order, and anti-gun control. It is the stress on conservative 'Christian morality' in social policy which has brought the New Right politicians into league with Protestant fundamentalism and provided for the creation of the Moral Majority organisation under the Rev. Jerry Falwell's leadership.

New Right political economy in the United States has included those who subscribe to the free-market and monetarist ideas of Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago, but the Reagan presidential campaign of the late 1970s was increasingly identifying 'supply-side' economics as its own. This approach to economic policy asserts that economic growth depends on lowering upper and middle income tax rates to inspire saving and

investment. It received much attention in the *Wall Street Journal* and was popularised by George Gilder's book, *Wealth and Poverty*.⁴⁵ Both free-marketeters and supply-siders are anti-Keynesian and, therefore, extremely hostile to New Deal political economy.

Thus, it is arguable that what has provided for the American New Right 'coalition' of neo-conservatives, New Right conservatives, and neo-liberals around Reagan Republicanism is not unlike that which enabled the similar coalescence of groups in Britain around Thatcherism; that is, history. For what these apparently disparate groups do share is a yearning for the past. For some, that past is pre-Great Society and the political, social, and cultural changes of the 1960s, and for others it is prior to the class and political-economic developments of the New Deal of the 1930s. In this sense, it might even be argued that when Reagan and Thatcher conjure up the past they are not so much working at hegemonic reform as seeking to 'unify' politically their seemingly contradictory sources of support through historical rhetoric. I would contend, however, that while this may turn out to have been the major consequence of their respective invocations of the past, it is not all that has been intended in their historical assertions and initiatives.

Thatcher's and Reagan's Raids on the Past

As the emergent leaders of the New Right Conservatives and Republicans in the 1970s, and then their victorious political candidates and heads of government in the 1980s, Thatcher and Reagan have well articulated the ideas and aspirations of the British and American New Rights. Both for the sake of welding together the disparate elements of the Right and with the intention of confronting and undermining the seemingly dominant welfare state consensus, Thatcher and Reagan have aggressively mobilised particular readings of Britain's and America's pasts.

Naturally, as conservatives both Thatcher and Reagan would be expected to 'speak from the past' as if the past really matters. For example, when asked in 1983 what her 'vision' for Britain at the end of the decade was Thatcher replied: 'First, we are more than a one-generation society. As Edmund Burke put it, people who never look backward to their ancestors will not look forward to posterity. We are interested in keeping the best of the past, because we believe in *continuity*. . . Second, we are *conserving* the best of the past. . .'⁴⁷ This was not so simple, however, because according to her own arguments in the 1970s, the Left had waged a persistent campaign against British culture past and present: 'We are witnessing a deliberate attack on our values, a deliberate attack on those who wish to promote merit and excellence, a deliberate attack on our heritage and our past. And there are those who gnaw away at our national self-respect, rewriting British history as centuries of unrelieved doom, oppression and failure—as days of hopelessness, not days of hope.'⁴⁸

Thatcher was in accord with her co-founder of the Centre for Policy Studies, Sir Keith Joseph, that it was essential for Conservatives to be engaged in the battle of ideas and, moreover, that this necessarily entailed the reinterpretation and re-presentation of the past. Thus she joined him in the historical project of recovering the Victorian period for the present. For example, in a 1977 lecture we find historical assertions which have been characteristic of her rhetoric:

The Victorian age, which saw the burgeoning of free enterprise, also saw the greatest expansion of voluntary philanthropic activity of all kinds, and new hospitals, new schools, technical colleges, universities, new foundations for orphans, non-profit-making housing trusts, missionary societies. . . The Victorian age has been very badly treated in socialist propaganda. It was an age of constant and constructive endeavour in which the desire to improve the lot of the ordinary person was a powerful factor. We, who are largely living off the Victorians' moral and physical capital, can hardly afford to denigrate them.⁴⁹

Thatcher's Victorian age is offered as a repository of the values and social practices which she would reassert and restore in the late twentieth century. In 1983 she said:

I was brought up by a Victorian grandmother. We were taught to work jolly hard. We were taught to prove yourself; we were taught self-reliance; we were taught to live within our income. You were taught that cleanliness is next to godliness. You were taught self-respect. You were taught always to give a hand to your neighbour. You were taught tremendous pride in your country. All of these things are Victorian values. They are also perennial values.⁵⁰

Curiously merging somehow with Thatcher's recollections of the Depression years of the 1930s, the Victorian age she reveals in her speeches is a time of independent initiative and self-discipline, family care and responsibility, and neighbourly support and cooperation—in contrast to post-war dependence on, and control by, the state, and anomic social and cultural patterns emanating from the 1960s. In this way, as I have previously argued, Thatcher historically merges—or at least holds together—the ideas and aspirations of the neo-liberals, who want to expand the domain of the market, and the neo-conservatives, who want to restore authority and deference. She does so by proposing that the 'best of the past' was the initiative = entrepreneurialism and discipline = work ethic imposed by the 'free market', and the social controls = paternal authority and hierarchy enforced by the Victorian family and workplace—all guaranteed in the last instance by a strong though limited state. Thus freedom and control are harnessed together in Thatcher's Victorian portrait for the present. (Socialist and feminist historians have rightly responded that Thatcher's rendition of the Victorian age is one-sided, mythological, absurd, and/or plainly inaccurate; at the same time acknow-

leding the power of her mythmaking and how it exploits the nostalgia and sense of loss apparently so characteristic of late twentieth-century life, perhaps especially British culture.⁵¹)

In a similar fashion, Reagan too has stressed the importance of holding onto, and the necessity of learning from, the past—or, as his 1967 speech at his undergraduate Alma Mater, Eureka College in Illinois, was titled, 'The Value of Understanding the Past'.⁵² In his recent book on Reagan's rhetoric, Paul Erickson observes the following: 'The past matters. We need to rely on it for our guidance as we approach the future. This position, the most basic premise of Anglo-American conservatism, underlies all of Reagan's politics.'⁵³ Thus he quotes from Reagan's 1981 commencement address at Notre Dame University to illustrate Reagan's concern for remembrance:

My hope today is that in the years to come and come it shall—when it's your turn to explain to another generation the meaning of the past and thereby hold out to them the promise of their future, that you'll recall the truths and traditions of which we've spoken. It is these truths and traditions that define our civilization and make up our national heritage. And now, they're yours to protect and pass on.⁵⁴

Erickson does not, however, suggest that Reagan's seeming reverence for 'the past' is necessarily respectful of history. That is, his analysis shows how Reagan 'moves rhetorically back and forth between fiction and the real world'. In the end he says that Reagan's representation of the past 'is not history, but consciously crafted mythology'.⁵⁵

Also like Thatcher—indeed for many years prior to the 1970s—Reagan has seen himself as engaged in the battle of ideas against 'collectivism', foreign and domestic. In fact, more so perhaps than for Thatcher, Reagan's campaign against the Left has involved both sounding the alarm on the communist threat at home and abroad and, in turn, making the cause of capitalism a national and international campaign of his presidency. He himself identifies the source of these views in his experience as a Hollywood actor (while still a New Deal Democrat), for it was in the late 1940s and early '50s as a leader of the Screen Actors Guild that he says he confronted at firsthand the dangers of government interference in the workings of the market economy (specifically, the movie industry) and also, Communist efforts to take over Hollywood through the unions.⁵⁶ On the latter, he said in 1981:

I know that it sounds kind of foolish maybe to link Hollywood, an experience there, to the world situation, and yet, the tactics seemed to be pretty much the same. But that much rewritten history of Hollywood and distorted history has hidden from many people what actually took place back there in the late forties after World War II. It was a Communist attempt to gain control of the motion picture industry, because at that time the Hollywood motion picture industry

provided the film for 75 percent of the playing time in all the theatres of the world. It was the greatest propaganda device, if someone wanted to use it for that, that's ever been known.⁵¹

During the late 1950s and early '60s, Reagan served as a corporate spokesperson for the General Electric Corporation which had him travelling cross-country preaching the virtues of 'free enterprise' and warning of the persistent threat from abroad of Soviet communism and, at home, from the 'encroaching control' of socialism represented by the expansion of the welfare state. On one such occasion in 1961 he sought to put it all in historical perspective. Repeating the prediction of, in his words, 'one of the foremost authorities on communism', that 'by 1970 the world will be all slave or all free', he then declared that the American Revolution (1776) was '. . . the only true revolution in man's history. All other revolutions simply exchanged one set of rulers for another.'*

Though very much like Thatcher in appealing to supposedly pre-New Deal ideals, Reagan does not nominate a specific period for resurrection or emulation. Rather, as Robert Dallek describes it, Reagan offers 'small-town America', i.e., 'traditional sense of place with traditional values'—recommending character-building experiences to develop self control and self reliance, along with 'pride in country and the work ethic'. Noting the irony of 'a hero of the consumer culture preaching the Protestant ethic', Dallek observes that Reagan takes us back sixty years to when 'Coolidge served in the White House and business tycoons preached rugged individualism'.⁵⁹ Speaking in October 1964 on nationwide television in support of Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign, Reagan reached back to Plutarch to oppose the welfare state: 'The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and benefits.'⁶⁰ He persisted in this theme for more than twenty years, returning full force to it in his 1986 State of the Union Address to Congress. Insisting that 'family and community remain the moral core of our society', he argued that the welfare state has fostered a 'welfare culture' within which the 'breakdown of the family [has] reached crisis proportions'. Then, quoting from none other than Franklin D. Roosevelt himself—completely out of context and spirit—he said: 'Welfare is a "narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit"'. And we must now escape the spider's web of dependency.' Thereupon he called for a thorough review of the welfare system.⁶¹ He had told the Conservative Political Action Conference annual dinner in 1981: 'We can restore to their rightful place in our national consciousness the values of family, work, neighbourhood, and religion.'⁶² (Does it really require a Marxist to explain that social being determines social consciousness—and that industrial unemployment, urban decay, and the demise of the American family farm will hardly support such values?)

Since he does not tie his past-to-be-recovered to any particular period in American history, Reagan has not been temporally limited in his staking of claims on the past. While Thatcher conjures up nineteenth-century allusions and illusions, Reagan mobilises all of United States history to his purposes. From his acceptance speech at the 1980 Republican National Convention through his second term in office, he has instructed us in the making of America, marching out the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Tom Paine, the Founders of the Republic, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and John Kennedy (amongst so many others), to express the continuity of his vision with those of the past whom Americans hold in high esteem. (Even considering the narrowed range of 'legitimate' politics in the US compared to those of Western Europe, it remains unclear as to whether it is the audacity of the speaker or the oft-cited historical amnesia of the American people which enables Reagan to quote or cite the examples of Roosevelt the New Deal Democrat and Kennedy the liberal in support of his own policies which are so obviously hostile to the domestic policies of either earlier administration.) Nor does Reagan restrict his resurrections to elite personages. He often includes stories in his speeches which relate the past experiences of 'ordinary' Americans caught up in moments of national and international crises, especially, for example, 'incidents' from the Second World War. In fact, Reagan regularly speaks of history itself. On the occasion of his second inauguration he said: 'History is a ribbon unfurling; history is a journey. And as we continue on our journey we think of those who traveled before us. . . standing inside this symbol of our democracy [the Capitol Building]. . . we see and hear again the echoes of our past';⁶³ and on another occasion: 'History's not a static thing. History moves; it never stops. And the American Revolution continues as we continue to push back the barriers to freedom'.⁶⁴

Yet perhaps the crudest uses and abuses of history by Thatcher and Reagan have been those linked to international affairs: Thatcher's rhetoric on the 1982 Falklands War with Argentina and Reagan's on Central America and the Holocaust.

Anthony Barnett, in *Iron Britannia*, has examined the nationalistic and patriotic fervour which swept Parliament and the press following the Argentine invasion of the Falklands. Noting that the war 'was pressed upon [Thatcher] by Parliament itself', Barnett's survey shows that Thatcher was, nevertheless, most capable of exploiting 'the opportunity'—as the elections the following year confirmed (though admittedly it was not the only determining factor).⁶⁵ Most remarkable amongst her pronouncements—as Barnett himself clearly indicates by reprinting it as an appendix to his book—was Thatcher's speech at Cheltenham Race Course following the war. Therein Thatcher pursued her characteristic ways by commencing with an attack on those who might have dissented or hesitated from the battle and then drawing upon the nineteenth

century as a political weapon. In this case she offered the Victorian age not as one of self-reliance or family-based morality, but as the Age of Empire:

When we started out, there were the waverers and the fainthearts. . . the people who thought we could no longer do the great things we once did. Those who believed that our decline was irreversible—that we could never again be what we were. . . that Britain was no longer the nation that had built an Empire and ruled a quarter of the world. Well they were wrong. The lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed and that this nation has those sterling qualities which shine through our history.⁶⁵

Invoking what she termed 'the spirit of the South Atlantic—the real spirit of Britain', Thatcher offered direct and indirect comparison between the Falklands War and her leadership of the nation, and the Second World War and Churchill's leadership: 'British people had to be threatened by foreign soldiers and British territory invaded and then—why then—the response was incomparable.' As the speech continued, however, it became evident that Thatcher was not merely celebrating victory in the Falklands, or even the 'spirit of Britain', but rather she was performing a massive resurrection of past and contemporary history for the purposes of 'class war **Conservatism**⁶⁷ waged from above against the organised working class. Thus she turned the Falklands experience against the labour movement: 'Just look at the Task Force as an object lesson. Every man had his own task to do and did it superbly. Officers and men, senior NCO and newest recruit—everyone realised that his contribution was essential for the success of the whole. All were equally valuable—each was differently qualified.' There was also a lesson for management, she explained: the leadership of the officers in the Falklands was a model of what was possible and 'Now is the time for management to lift its sights and to lead with the professionalism and effectiveness it knows is possible'. Yet the real lesson was for the working class, the particular target at that moment being the National Union of Railwaymen, though eventually, as we know, it was to be the mineworkers: 'What has indeed happened is that now once again Britain is not prepared to be pushed **around**.⁶⁸ (For 'Britain' read 'capitalist state').

As noted, Reagan's use and abuse of the past has not been limited to any particular period of American history. Neither has his historical imagination stopped at America's borders. This can be seen especially well in his propaganda campaign against the Sandinistas and his many attempts to secure funds for the *contras*. In its first term the Reagan Administration repeatedly made false or exaggerated assertions regarding the Nicaraguan government's domestic and foreign policies at the same time that the CIA was covertly setting up, training, and supporting exiled Somozista-National Guardsmen in guerrilla and terrorist tactics. In early

1985, following the '84 elections, the Reagan Administration revised its rhetorical campaign to secure Congressional and popular support for supplying the *contras* with aid and equipment (made necessary by an earlier ban established by Congress). Not only were the Sandinistas portrayed as 'puppets of the Cubans and Soviets' and purveyors of 'drugs, terrorism and communism', but now the *contras* came to be defined as 'freedom fighters'—and were thereby elevated to a status previously reserved for the Hungarians who had risen against the Soviets in 1956. Moreover, the entire campaign was framed in historical terms. A prime example of this is found in Reagan's weekly national radio address of 16 February 1985. Grossly misrepresenting past and present, Reagan described the *contras* as 'democratic resistance fighters' whose revolution was betrayed by the Sandinistas and he called upon the American people not to forsake their internationalist tradition: 'Time and again in the course of our history, we've aided those around the world struggling for freedom, democracy, independence, and liberation from tyranny.' In the lines which followed he raised up the images of the two World Wars and the American Revolution of 1776. Attending to the last he invoked the names to which ethnic-conscious Americans could not help but be drawn: 'America may never have been born without the help and support of the freedom-loving people of Europe, of Lafayette and Von Steuben and Kosciusko. And America did not forget.'⁶⁹ Three weeks later, once again speaking at a Conservative Political Action Conference annual dinner, Reagan referred to the 'freedom fighters' in Afghanistan, Angola, Kampuchea and Central America, saying specifically of the *contras*: 'They are the moral equal of our Founding Fathers and the brave men and women of the French Resistance.'⁷⁰ Such constructions hardly require commentary in this venue, but the observation offered by the Editors of *In These Times*, the American socialist weekly, is worth recording. They suggested that Reagan had his history upside down, for if anything Reagan himself would be better cast as George III than Lafayette.⁷¹

There is so much which might be detailed in an accounting of Reagan's use and abuse of history. But surely the crudest and most vulgar of his historical assessments was his remark explaining his 1985 visit to a German military cemetery where soldiers of the infamous Waffen SS are buried. Responding to a reporter's question regarding why he did not drop the visit to the cemetery, as requested by 53 US Senators and numerous veterans' and American Jewish organisations, Reagan bluntly stated that those Nazis 'were victims, just as surely as the victims in the concentration camps'.⁷²

This remark is seemingly removed from Reagan's New Right agenda and thus—though still inexcusable—might easily be attributed to a lapse of thought. Such statements, however, were made by Reagan through the entire course of the controversy surrounding the itinerary of his visit to

West Germany as part of his West European tour in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe. Indeed, the past does matter—in the US and Germany—for Reagan's attempt to reconstrue history was very much a part of his effort to support the West German Right and thereby secure the German government's continued co-operation on the stationing of nuclear armaments and eventually 'Star Wars'.⁷³

In light of Thatcher's and Reagan's pronouncements on the past, I cannot help but rethink one of the points made by Robert Nisbet in the lines quoted at the outset of this article. That is, when he refers to conservatives as 'guerrillas of the past' I must dissent. Surely, at least, Thatcher and Reagan would be more appropriately defined as 'terrorists of the past', for their raids on history are well-captured by a definition of 'terror' found in *The American Heritage Dictionary*: 'A policy of violence aiming to achieve or maintain supremacy'.⁷⁴ Though we have not yet descended to an Orwellian scenario, Reagan's and Thatcher's rhetoric and initiatives demand that we do not soon forget O'Brien's ominous words in the novel 1984: 'Those who control the present control the past. . . those who control the past control the present.'⁷⁵

The New Right and Historical/Political Education

It is not just that Reagan and Thatcher and their colleagues use and abuse history in such dramatic fashion, though this alone requires watching and aggressive response. But beyond this they have turned the 'crisis of history' into a public issue focusing on historical education itself. Both were already on record against critical history—which, as discussed earlier, has been developed especially by social historians of the Left. Implying a real problem for the Conservatives, Thatcher once wrote that 'a whole generation has been brought up to misunderstand and denigrate our national history. Far the blackest picture is drawn by our socialist academics and writers of precisely those periods of our history when greatest progress was achieved'.⁷⁶

Reagan, too, had occasion to speak against Left academics, first as a candidate and then as Governor of California (1967–71—public higher education in the US is organised and funded by the respective states). In 1970, in a speech titled 'What is Academic Freedom?', Reagan levelled an accusation at faculty who refused to assert that 'there are any absolutes' when he added: 'Strangely and illogically this is very often the same educator who interprets his academic freedom as the right to indoctrinate students with his view of things', and 'The student generation is being wooed by many who charge that **this** way we have known is inadequate to meet the challenges of our **times**'.⁷⁷ He had stated a few years earlier what he would have: 'If scholars are to be recognized as having a right to press their particular value judgments, perhaps the time has come also for

institutions of higher learning to assert themselves as positive forces in the battles for men's minds. . . and [we] might even call on them to be proponents of those ethical and moral standards demanded by the great majority of our **society**.'⁷⁸

As Prime Minister and President, respectively, Thatcher and Reagan have been able to act on their concerns, and their appointments to head their governments' departments of education have made historical pedagogy and appreciation central concerns of their offices (if not fiscally, at least rhetorically).

In **1981** Thatcher reshuffled the Cabinet and Sir Keith Joseph moved from Industry to the post once held by Thatcher herself a decade earlier in the Heath Government, i.e., Secretary of State for **Education**.⁷⁹ In **1983** Sir Keith announced a set of initiatives which involved reform of the school curriculum in several subjects including physics, English, and history. An important aspect of the changes to be carried out was the 'nationalisation' of the curriculum in these fields. As part of his campaign to garner support for this action Sir Keith presented the keynote address to the Historical Association Conference in February **1984**. Speaking of the crisis of the discipline he stressed the political, economic, and cultural significance of historical education, and in classically Conservative terms he stated that 'one of the aims of studying history is to understand the development of the shared *values* which are a distinctive feature of British society and culture and which continue to shape private attitudes and **public policy**'.⁸⁰ Though we should also note his statement—to which I believe any good soul of the Left would subscribe—that 'It is particularly salutary that pupils are brought to realise that the ideas and values as well as the material conditions which they take for granted were acquired through processes which are often painful and difficult and that the institutions we most value were won at a price in human endeavour: a price that continues to be asked of each succeeding **generation**'.⁸¹

In the months which followed this speech Sir Keith aggressively pursued his campaign for reform. In response to criticism he denied that his plans included making the teaching of history more 'nationalistic', though he did insist that it should 'foster a sense of pride in one's country and its **achievements**'.⁸² In one sense this is most reasonable, for as the great English Marxist historian, Christopher Hill, declared in reaction to Sir Keith's call: 'We have much to be proud of in our past. . . one of the great literatures of the world, much of it on the side of freedom. . . [also] the creative achievements of the British people. . . [e.g.] traditions of popular resistance to tyranny'. (Of course, Hill did not fail to add that 'We have a great deal to be ashamed of in our history', citing the slave trade, the plundering of India and Africa, the opium trade, etc.)⁸³ Sir Keith's project, however, entailed more than an appreciation of the British past. The nationalisation of the history curriculum arose not

only out of an intention to arrest the decline in young Britons' historical education and knowledge, but also, arguably, out of Thatcher's and Joseph's desire to turn the teaching of history to Conservative purposes in the 'battle of ideas'. As *The Times* reported it, the Thatcher Government was concerned about what they considered to be leftist 'bias in the classroom'.⁸⁴

Related to all this, we should recall an episode of ten years earlier during the Heath Government in which Margaret Thatcher was Secretary of State for Education. In January 1973 the story broke that the Conservative Party was providing so-called 'political education' conferences for sixth-formers which were being organised through the schools, apparently taking advantage of there being a Tory government in power. Noting the locations chosen for these conferences, and the continuing dramatic decline in the number of Young Conservatives, *The Times* reported that the conferences 'were the first stage of a nationwide plan to make the party's presence felt among new voters in marginal constituencies'.⁸⁵ Speaking as Secretary of State for Education, Mrs. Thatcher rejected a demand by Labour for an inquiry on the grounds that 'curriculum was subject to the control of the local education authority in a primary school and of the governors in a secondary school'.⁸⁶ A few weeks later, once again confronted on the issue in the House of Commons, she stated: 'This House has given me no specific powers over secular education. The history of British education is to keep ministers out of control of curriculum matters.'* Nevertheless, a decade later she would have her own education minister break with that 'tradition'.

It should be noted that Sir Keith was not alone in pushing for a national history curriculum to instil pride in Britain's achievements. So too was Lord Hugh Thomas, retired Professor of History at Reading University and a close personal advisor to Margaret Thatcher. Even more significant in the historical profession, Geoffrey Elton was making use of his new status as Regius Professor of History at Cambridge University to call for a renewed commitment to the teaching of English history. For almost twenty years he had been preaching against innovation in historical studies and decrying what he interpreted to be the increasingly critical perspective which historians were taking on English history. On at least one occasion he proposed that 'the historian's task consists among other things, if I may so put it, in a crude re-kindling of a certain respect for a country whose past justifies that respect'.⁸⁸ Returning to this theme in the 1984 inaugural lecture of his Regius Professorship, Elton said: 'A *New Statesman* era like ours, full of self-deprecation and envy, can do with the corrective of a past that demonstrates virtue and achievement.' Suggesting certain themes to be pursued he urged that English history be taught emphasising its length and 'continuity'.⁸⁹

Sir Keith Joseph's counterpart in the US is William J. Bennett, who

ascended from the directorship of the privately-endowed National Center for the Humanities in North Carolina⁹⁰ to chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities (the NEH is a Federal agency), a position he held until early 1985 when he was appointed Secretary of Education.⁹¹ Prior to his government appointments Bennett, an academic philosopher, had been a regular contributor to neo-conservative journals like *The Public Interest* and *Commentary*, a co-author of an anti-affirmative action text, *Counting by Race: Equality from the Founding Fathers to 'Bakke' and 'Weber'*,⁹² and a consultant and contributing author to the Heritage Foundation report prepared for the Reagan White House 'transition team'.

While heading up the NEH, Bennett authored the report, *To Reclaim A Legacy*, a study into the state of the humanities in higher education. The report is extremely critical of the way in which the humanities have been allowed to decline over the past twenty years. Special alarm, however, is sounded at 'the tendency of some humanities professors to present their subjects in a tendentious, ideological manner'. It goes on to attack what it views as the humanities' 'subordination' to the status of being a 'handmaiden to ideology. . . and contemporary prejudices'. Specific recommendations are offered towards their renewal, and history is assigned a central role in the effort. The study of 'at least one non-Western culture in depth' is cited as essential. Primary emphasis, however, is given to the study of 'Western Civilization. . . Because our society is the product and we the inheritors of [it]'.⁹³

This report received a favourable response in the media,⁹⁴ and, in spite of its authorial origins, we must be careful that we do not reject it out of hand for there is much to be commended and welcomed in it. Indeed, a reading of the document raises serious questions for the Left and (for me at least) quite contradictory thoughts and sensations. For example, in words akin to those of Sir Keith Joseph, Bennett writes 'the humanities can contribute to an informed sense of community by enabling us to learn about and become participants in a common culture, shareholders in our civilization. But our goal should be more than just a common culture. . . we should instead want all students to know a common culture rooted in civilization's lasting vision, its highest shared ideals and aspirations, and its heritage'. This sounds marvellous, and I am even reminded of Antonio Gramsci's remarks asserting that Marxism ('the philosophy of praxis') does not involve a rejection of Western Civilisation but its incorporation: 'The philosophy of praxis presupposes all this cultural past: Renaissance and Reformation, German philosophy and the French Revolution, Calvinism and English classical economics, secular liberalism and historicism which is at the root of the whole modern conception of life. [It] is the crowning point of this entire movement of intellectual and moral reformation.'⁹⁵ In these terms it is not surprising that Gramsci insisted upon a fairly classical historical education for the working class: 'If it is true that

universal history is a chain made up of the efforts man has exerted to free himself from privilege, prejudice and idolatry, then it is hard to understand why the proletariat, which seeks to add another link to that chain, should not know how and why and by whom it was preceded, or what advantage it might derive from this **knowledge.**⁹⁶

But unlike Sir Keith's speech, which at least included the statement on 'struggles' quoted above, the Bennett paper does not propose that history convey a sense of the conflicts between social and political groups over ideas, values, *and* social relations. Nor does it posit the necessity of examining the distance between 'ideal' and 'experience' in Western **Civilisation** *and* world history. Better said, the report refrains from calling for a *social* history which would provide for the kind of historical realism insisted upon by Walter Benjamin:

Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures, and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For without exception the cultural treasures he surveys have an origin which he cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of **barbarism.**⁹⁷

In fact, *To Reclaim A Legacy* is characterised by the virtual absence of any recognition that the constitution of the humanities includes social history, which of course for the past twenty years and more has been associated with so many scholars of the **Left.**⁹⁸ Since I have quoted Gramsci in sympathy with Bennett, it is only fair to quote him in critique. Here Gramsci seems to elaborate on his defence of the study of the 'high culture' of philosophers, explaining that the history of ideas must be joined up with a broader cultural, or social, **history.**

From our point of view, studying the history and the logic of the various philosophers' philosophies is not enough. At least as a methodological guideline, attention should be drawn to the other parts of the history of philosophy; to the conceptions of the world held by the great masses, to those of the most restricted ruling (or intellectual) groups, and finally to the links between these various cultural complexes and the philosophy of the **philosophers.**⁹⁹

To be fair, the NEH report is not an undemocratic document. It might even be termed 'populist' for it does not postulate any limits to the audience for the humanities, and the texts which are accorded a place in 'the tradition' do include 'radical' pieces from the classical to the contemporary, for example, writings by Rousseau, Marx, and Martin Luther King, Jr. But the neglect of social history and related developments in

historiography since the early 1960s is a notable and polemical omission. Thus, the report's references to 'ideology' are made somewhat clearer.

Having joined the Cabinet as Secretary of Education, Bennett has continued to speak out on this subject, emphasising the crisis of history in particular. In these talks and speeches, he regularly frames the crisis as a political one. The decline of history, he argues, represents a failure by the schools to 'transmit [the nation's] social and political values', and thereby 'help legitimize the political system'.¹⁰⁰ Proposing an 'intellectual initiative'—which he refers to as a kind of 'defense initiative'—Bennett urges a renewed commitment to history teaching in the schools, separate from the teaching of social studies. In language reaffirming the practice of comprehending US history in terms of exceptionalism and as the culmination of Western Civilisation he is confident that 'If taught honestly and truthfully, the study of history will give our students a grasp of their nation, a nation that the study of history and current events will reveal is still, indeed, "the last best hope on earth". Our students should know that. They must know that, because nations can be destroyed from without, but they can also be destroyed from within.'''

An important aspect of Bennett's campaign for historical education as political education has been its persistent critique of 'cultural relativism', which has also been a dominant theme in New Right and Moral Majority attacks on the contemporary public school system. In this vein Bennett's Under Secretary of Education, Gary Bauer, recently spoke to the Association of American Publishers of the cultural relativism he found in so many of the social studies textbooks used in schools. It was his assessment that the 'textbooks. . . are quick to be hyper-critical of American institutions, while glossing over the. . . character of totalitarian governments'. Essentially Bauer was complaining that the textbooks are too neutral, and while he did not propose that government get involved, he did say: 'If no government agency can tell you what to publish—and clearly in this country none must ever do so—then it falls on your shoulders to act responsibly in helping decide what our children learn.'¹⁰²

It should also be noted, though it falls outside the activities of the Reagan Administration and, in fact, Bennett has disavowed its efforts, that the New Right has spawned an organisation called Accuracy in Academia (AIA) which has taken upon itself the task of classroom surveillance against liberal and Left 'bias'. Its founder, Reed Irvine, who was previously responsible for Accuracy in Media (AIM), claims there are 10,000 Marxist professors in American higher education. Seeking to recruit students and retired persons to confront social science and history professors who, in their view, spread 'disinformation or misinformation', AIA has thus far had extremely limited success, but the organisation has done damage in a few places and generated in some others an environment hostile to academic freedom.¹⁰³

Once again there is more which might be recounted of the Reagan Administration's use and abuse of history, for example the representations of US constitutional history offered by Attorney General Edwin Meese III in his attempts to undermine aspects of the affirmative action programme and civil rights legislation,¹⁰⁴ and also Reagan's establishment of the National Endowment for Democracy, and its questionable activities.¹⁰⁵ But what has been discussed should be adequate to attest to the practice.

The Left and the Necessity of History

Conservatives have, as Robert Nisbet claims, traditionally spoken 'by design from the past and often about the past' (though clearly a past to which we would not too often assent). As a result, it is the Right which 'traditionally' has most been able to assert claims to speak *for* the past. In this sense, as we have noted, Thatcher and Reagan were to be expected to speak often in times of 'days gone by'. However, more so than we might have imagined, Thatcher and Reagan have sought to harness and manipulate the past for both their immediate and long-term requirements and aspirations. Thus, they have actually denigrated the past and subordinated it to the present. They have not mastered history—for an effective relationship between past and present entails respect—but rather they have used and abused it.

Clearly the Thatcher and Reagan regimes have been extremely consequential. They have wrought confusion, disarray, and hardship, and the social, political and class conflicts are ever more evident. They have not accomplished the refashioning of late twentieth-century capitalist hegemony, at least not in the (simple) sense of domination, *i.e.*, 'when a certain way of life and thought is dominant. In which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society. . .'.¹⁰⁶ And yet, if we understand hegemony as an 'order of struggle' (to use E.P. Thompson's formula), then the New Rights can be seen to have succeeded, for they have apparently undermined the social democratic consensus on both sides of the Atlantic and revised the terms of the struggle; and a part of that revision has involved making historical thought and education—and the 'crisis of history'—more centrally political issues. That is, the historical assertions and educational initiatives of the Thatcher Government and Reagan Administration have not only done much towards returning 'history' to public discourse (however crudely), but at the same time they have placed the crisis of history on the political agenda in Britain and America.

The Left then must respond. First, the Left must continue to dispute Thatcher's and Reagan's specific representations of the past, and we must also continue to aggressively contest the formation and re-formation of the 'significant past', or 'selective tradition',¹⁰⁷ in Britain and America. Second, the Left has to address the historical education initiatives promulgated by the Secretaries of Education, Sir Keith Joseph and William

J. Bennett. But whereas we must refute the historical assertions of the New Right, I would argue that we ought not to reject their educational initiatives too readily. Rather, we should struggle to appropriate them and make them our own, for, indeed, there is a crisis of history. This, of course, represents a serious challenge, for in spite of Left historians' and social scientists' commanding efforts in their respective disciplines there is not yet formulated a coherent strategy or vision of what a critical historical pedagogy ought to consist. Too often we have assumed that it means merely confronting and challenging 'traditional' or 'establishment' historiography with history from the bottom up. This practice must continue, and should be taken further. Yet we must also acknowledge that in some areas the Left at present actually constitutes the historical establishment (however tenuously), and thus it becomes our task to find a way to *critically* incorporate the project called for by the Right, at least as Bennett's NEH report, *To Reclaim A Legacy*, outlines it: 'we should want all students to know a common culture rooted in civilization's lasting vision, its highest shared ideals and aspirations, and its heritage'. Actually this would be in the best tradition of the Left, for as Gramsci wrote in the midst of the 1919 Italian factory workers' struggles: 'In the accumulation of ideas transmitted to us by a millenium of work and thought there are elements which have eternal value, which cannot and must not perish. The loss of consciousness of these values is one of the most serious signs of degradation brought about by the bourgeois regime; to them everything becomes an object of trade and a weapon of war', and 'Ours is the task of taking them up, ours the task of making them glow with new light'.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, the Left's historical education initiatives cannot be limited to the formal school and university settings, but must be made even more 'public' and extended somehow into the popular media (admittedly no simple task). At the same time, new vehicles must be created and old ones extended. For example, labour history societies closely enjoined with labour and trade union activities should be established or reinvigorated. However much such talks seem naively optimistic, experience dictates both the possibility and necessity of such work. The Left especially must take to heart the words of Gerda Lerner to her fellow American historians noted above: 'be open to the ways in which people now relate to the past and reach out to communicate with them at their level'.

In essence, I am proposing that the Left, too, become 'prophets of the past' and thus firmly commit itself to the project of returning history to the realm of public discourse. This becomes all the more crucial in light of the ongoing reassessments by the British and American Lefts of their respective strategies and visions—which potentially involve decisive breaks with the past.¹⁰⁹ It is crucial because such a commitment would determine

that the Left extend and further develop efforts to attend to the popular demand for the past. By this I am not suggesting that the Left seek to cultivate or contribute further to the nostalgia which already seems so prevalent, for, in one sense at least, Marx was correct when he wrote: 'The tradition of the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living.'¹¹⁰ But I would repeat that for a start we must recognise that however much the demand for the past may seem to be caught up in nostalgia, the demand itself arises out of the real and legitimate needs and aspirations of working people themselves. If our goal truly is the making of *democratic* socialist movements and, ultimately, *socialist democracies*, then it remains fundamental to articulate these needs and aspirations in a dialectical and democratic fashion.'''

At the same time, the Left must be careful not to reduce the exploration and mobilisation of the past to the immediacy of political utility, because, as we have seen with Thatcher, Reagan, and the New Right, this too easily leads from the use to the abuse of history. Rather, we must acknowledge—nay, subscribe to—the necessity of history, for the Left not only has much to offer out of a dialogue with the past, but, as well, much to learn. Though there is not the space to pursue this argument I would offer the following as the imperatives of history: perspective, critique, consciousness, remembrance, and imagination. By *perspective* I mean the awareness that the way things are is not the way they have always been nor the way they will, or must, necessarily be in the future. *Critique* is more specific, entailing a deliberate notion of unveiling, de-reification, negation, and oppositional thought. As one British historian has written: history has the capacity to 'break the tyranny of the present'.¹¹² *Consciousness* refers to an appreciation of the *making* of history; that is, as Gramsci put it, an awareness of 'the sum of effort and sacrifice which the present has cost the past and which the future is costing the present'.¹¹³ *Remembrance* acknowledges that while 'the past is not for living in, it is a well of conclusions from which we draw in order to act'.¹¹⁴ And *imagination* insists that we consider the structure, movement, and possibilities in the contemporary order of things and how we might act to prevent the barbaric and develop the humanistic.

Again, it is not my intention to instigate history for the sake of nostalgia, but neither is history for directives and specific instructions for political practice in the present. Rather, a commitment to the dialogue between past and present should be in the manner suggested by E.H. Carr:

A historically-minded generation is one which looks back, not indeed for the solutions which cannot be found in the past, but for those critical insights which are necessary both to the understanding of its existing situation and to the realisation of the values which it holds.¹¹⁵

This is clearly what Gramsci had in mind. It is also in the spirit of

William Morris and thus might well be called the *historical* 'education of desire'.¹¹⁶ Indeed, it is this tradition and practice which Victor Kiernan was thinking of when he titled socialism 'the prophetic memory'.¹¹⁷ It is even quite likely that Marx would have urged us in this direction, for although, as we well know, on one occasion he insisted that 'The social revolution of the nineteenth century can only create its poetry from the future, not from the past', on yet another he observed that

It will then be clear that the world has long possessed the dream of a thing of which it needs only to possess the consciousness in order to really possess it. It will be clear that the problem is not some great gap between the thoughts of the past and those of the future but the completion of the thoughts of the past.¹¹⁸

NOTES

1. Robert Nisbet, 'The Conservative Renaissance in Perspective', *The Public Interest*, No. 81 (Fall, 1985), pp. 140–141.
2. Fritz Stern (ed.), *The Varieties of History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972 ed.), p. 9.
3. For discussions of the crisis, see: Hayden White, 'The Burden of History' (1966), in his *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 27–58; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, 'The Crisis of Our Culture and the Teaching of History', *The History Teacher*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1979), pp. 89–101; Henry A. Giroux, 'Schooling and the Culture of Positivism: Notes on the Death of History', in *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1981), pp. 37–62; James Fitzgerald, 'History in the Curriculum', *History and Theory, Bebest* No. 22 (1983), pp. 81–100; and John Berger, *Pig Earth* (New York: Pantheon, 1979), esp. 'Historical Afterword', pp. 195–213.
4. Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), p. 4.
5. See John Lukacs, 'American History? American History', *Salmagundi*, Nos. 50–51 (Fall 1980–Winter 1981), pp. 172–180, and Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985).
6. On nostalgia, see David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), esp. p. 7.
7. 'Introduction' to R. Jacoby, *Social Amnesia, op. cit.*, p. viii. Also see Lasch's review essay, 'The Politics of Nostalgia', *Harper's*, November 1984, pp. 65–70.
8. See the discussion in Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country, op. cit.*, esp. pp. 14–26. For examples of critical examinations of the commercial exploitation of the past, see Roy Rosenzweig, *et al.*, (eds.), *Presenting the Past: Critical Perspectives on History and the Public* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1985). I should add—and it will be made quite apparent in the closing section of the essay—that I see the past as a great reservoir of experience from which we can, and do by nature, draw sustenance as we confront the problem of existence. Thus I do not believe that all turnings to the past are reducible to nostalgia.
9. On this, see the collection of essays edited by Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard, *Historical Studies Today* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1972).

10. On historical sociology, see Peter Burke, *Sociology and History* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980); Charles Tilly, *As Sociology Meets History* (New York: Academic Press, 1981); Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* (Somerset, England: Open Books, 1982); and Theda Skocpol (ed.), *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge University Press, 1984).
11. For a discussion of one group of historians who have been 'founding figures' of history from the bottom up, see Harvey J. Kaye, *The British Marxist Historians* (Oxford: Polity Press/Basil Blackwell, 1984).
12. Gerda Lerner, 'The Necessity of History and the Professional Historian', *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (1982), p. 19.
13. For examples of such proposals, see: Anthony Sutcliffe, 'Past tense. . . future imperfect', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 11 May 1984, p. 13 and his contribution to 'Forum' in *History Today*, November 1984, pp. 3-4; Christopher J. Lucas, 'Toward a Pedagogy of the Useful Past for Teacher Preparation', *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 1985), pp. 19-33; and Richard Neustadt, 'Uses of History in Public Policy', *Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (1981), pp. 1-3.
14. I was an undergraduate in history at Rutgers University in the years 1967-71. Several years older, but speaking from the '60s, is Gareth Stedman Jones' essay, 'History: the Poverty of Empiricism', in R. Blackburn (ed.), *Ideology in Social Science* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 96-118.
15. E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961). The principal attack against Carr came from Geoffrey Elton in *The Practice of History* (London: Fontana, 1969). On Carr's book from the perspective of almost 25 years later, see Arthur Marwick, 'In Pursuit of the Past', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 16 November, p. 14, and the much more sympathetic piece by Tim Mason published in the 'Forum' collection of essays in *History Today*, May 1984, pp. 10-11.
16. E.H. Carr, *What is History?* *op. cit.*, p. 69.
17. Gerda Lerner, 'The Necessity of History and the Professional Historian', *op. cit.*, p. 17.
18. James Turner, 'Recovering the Uses of History', *Yale Review*, Vol. 70, (Winter 1971), p. 224.
19. See the discussion provided by J.H. Plumb in *The Death of the Past* (London: Macmillan, 1969).
20. David Edgar, 'The Free or the Good', in R. Levitas (ed.), *The Ideology of the New Right* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1986), p. 56.
21. Peter Riddell, *The Thatcher Government* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985 rev. ed.), p. 24.
22. Andrew Gamble, 'The Political Economy of Freedom', in R. Levitas (ed.), *The Ideology of the New Right*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
23. See the discussion in Anthony Arblaster, *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 339-349.
24. On the organisations and institutes of the New Right, see Nigel Williamson, *The New Right: The Men Behind Mrs. Thatcher* (London: Tribune, 1984).
25. Peter Riddell, *The Thatcher Government*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
26. From his speech 'This is not the Time to be Mealy-Mouthed: Intervention is Destroying Us' (June 1974), in Sir Keith Joseph, *Reversing the Trend* (London: Barry Rose Publishers, 1975).
27. Sir Keith Joseph, 'The Politics of Political Economy', in *Reversing the Trend*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
28. Sir Keith Joseph, 'The Quest for Common Ground', in *Stranded on the Middle Ground?* (London: Centre for Policy Studies, 1976), pp. 19-36.

29. Sir Keith Joseph, 'The Politics of Political Economy', *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.
30. Sir Keith Joseph, 'The Quest for Common Ground', *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.
31. Keith Joseph and Jonathan Sumption, *Equality* (London: John Murray, 1979), p. 1.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
33. On Scruton, see Anthony Arblaster, 'Scruton: Intellectual by Appointment', *New Socialist*, November 1985, pp. 16-20.
34. F. Mount, *The Subversive Family* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982).
35. On Mount, see Miriam David, 'Moral and Maternity, The Family in the Right', in R. Levitas (ed.), *The Ideology of the New Right*, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.
36. Quoted in A. Arblaster, 'Scruton: Intellectual by Appointment', *op. cit.*, p. 17, from Scruton's *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980).
37. David Edgar, 'The Free or the Good', *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.
38. On the neo-conservatives, see Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America* (Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 19-51.
39. The article is reprinted with a selection of her other writings on foreign and domestic issues in Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, *Dictatorship and Double Standards* (New York: Simon and Schuster and American Enterprise Institute, 1982).
40. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
41. Jeane Kirkpatrick, 'Ideas and Institutions' (1981), in her book, *The Reagan Phenomenon—and other speeches on foreign policy* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1983), p. 44.
42. Jeane Kirkpatrick, 'Dictatorships and Double Standards', *op. cit.*, p. 32.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
44. Jeane Kirkpatrick, 'Reagan Policies and Black American Goals for Africa' (1981), in *The Reagan Phenomenon*, *op. cit.*, p. 27. For a recent discussion of the neo-conservatives' use and abuse of the past, see Theodore Draper, 'Neo-conservative History', *New York Review of Books*, January 16, 1986, pp. 5-15.
45. Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-55 and 77-78.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 6. George Gilder's, *Wealth and Poverty* (London: Buchan and Enright, 1982).
47. M. Thatcher interviewed, 'Programme for the 1980s', *Illustrated London News*, May 1983, p. 24. My emphases.
48. M. Thatcher, 'Let Me Give You My Vision' (1975), in Margaret Thatcher, *Let Our Children Grow: Selected Speeches, 1975-1977* (London: Centre for Policy Studies, 1977), p. 29.
49. M. Thatcher, 'Dimensions and Conservatism', in *ibid.*, pp. 110-111.
50. M. Thatcher, 'Those Good Old Days, by Maggie', *The Standard*, April 15, 1983.
51. See in particular the special supplement, 'Victorian Values', in *New Statesman*, May 27, 1983, which includes: Raphael Samuel, 'Soft Focus Nostalgia' and 'Cry God for Maggie, England and St. George'; Michael Ignatieff, 'Law and Order in a City of Strangers'; Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Poor Law and Market Forces'; and Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, 'Home Sweet Home'.
52. *A Time for Choosing: The Speeches of Ronald Reagan, 1961-1982* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1983), pp. 73-84.
53. Paul D. Erickson, *Reagan Speaks. The Making of an American Myth* (New York University Press, 1985), p. 45.
54. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
56. Laurence I. Barrett, *Gambling With History: Ronald Reagan in the White House* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984 ed.), pp. 55-57.
57. 'Interview with President Reagan', December 27, 1981, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1981* (Washington

- 1982), p. 1197.
58. Ronald Reagan, 'Encroaching Control—The Peril of Ever-Expanding Government' (1961), in *A Time for Choosing*, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
 59. Robert Dallek, *Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 4–8.
 60. Ronald Reagan, 'A Time for Choosing' (1964), in *Ronald Reagan Talks to America* (Old Greenwich, Ct.: Devin Adair Co., 1983), p. 4.
 61. Ronald Reagan, 'Text of President's Address to Congress on State of the Union', *New York Times*, February 5, 1986, p. A-20.
 62. Ronald Reagan, 'Remarks at the Conservative Political Action Conference Dinner', in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan 1981*, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
 63. Ronald Reagan, 'Second Inaugural Address', in *Vital Speeches*, February 1, 1985, p. 228.
 64. Ronald Reagan, 'Remarks at the "Prelude to Independence" Celebration', May 31, 1985, in *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, June 3, 1985, p. 718.
 65. Anthony Barnett, *Iron Britannia* (London: Allison & Busby, 1982), p. 18.
 66. Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech to a Conservative Rally at Cheltenham Race Course' (July 3, 1982), repr. in *ibid.*, pp. 149–150.
 67. I find this a most apt phrase to describe Thatcherism. It is taken from the title of an article by Ralph Miliband, 'Class War Conservatism', *New Society*, June 19, 1980, pp. 278–280.
 68. Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech to a Conservative Rally at Cheltenham Race Course', *op. cit.*, pp. 150–152.
 69. Ronald Reagan, 'Radio Address to the Nation', February 16, 1985, in *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, February 25, 1985, pp. 186–187.
 70. Ronald Reagan, 'Remarks at the Conservative Political Action Conference Dinner', March 1, 1985, in *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, March 8, 1985, p. 245.
 71. 'Editorial: Reagan Cast as King George', *In These Times*, February 27–March 12, 1985, p. 14.
 72. Ronald Reagan, 'Press Conference', April 18, 1985, in *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, April 22, 1985, p. 475.
 73. See the articles discussing Reagan's trip and its links to US–German relations in *New York Times*, April 19, 1985, esp. pp. 1 and 4.
 74. *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1979 ed.), p. 715.
 75. George Orwell, 1984 (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 204.
 76. Quoted in Paul Preston, 'Paperback History', *History Today*, August 1985, p. 59; from M. Thatcher's Foreword to Hugh Thomas, *History, Capitalism and Freedom* (London: Centre for Policy Studies).
 77. Ronald Reagan, 'What is Academic Freedom?' (1970), in *Ronald Reagan Talks to America*, *op. cit.*, pp. 186 and 188.
 78. Ronald Reagan, 'On the Function of a University' (1966), in *ibid.*, p. 173.
 79. Within weeks after the completion of this paper Sir Keith Joseph left the Cabinet.
 80. Sir Keith Joseph, 'Why Teach History in School?', *The Historian*, No. 2 (Spring 1984), p. 12 (my emphasis).
 81. *Zbid.*, p. 11.
 82. Colin Hughes, 'History Teaching Should Foster Pride in Britain, Joseph Says', *The Times*, August 24, 1984, p. 4.
 83. Christopher Hill, in contribution to 'Forum', *History Today*, Vol. 34, May

- 1984, pp. 6-7.
84. Colin Hughes, 'History Teaching Should Foster Pride', *op. cit.*, p. 4.
 85. E. Ellsworth-Jones and P. Pringle, 'Tories Plan Teach-ins in More Marginal Seats', *The Sunday Times*, January 14, 1973, pp. 1 and 3.
 86. Margaret Thatcher quoted in 'Conference "bias" seen as a task for teachers', *The Times*, January 18, 1973, p. 6.
 87. 'Ministers kept out of curriculum matters', *The Times*, February 14, 1973, p. 11.
 88. G.R. Elton, *The Future of the Past* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 22. Also by Elton, see *The Practice of History, op. cit.*, and 'The Historian's Social Function', *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 5th Series, Vol. 27, 1977, pp. 197-211.
 89. G.R. Elton, *The History of England* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 28 and 25-26.
 90. On the National Humanities Center, see David Noble's two-part article 'Corporatist Culture Ministries', *The Nation*, March 21, 1981, pp. 336-340, and June 20, 1981, pp. 754-757.
 91. On Bennett's appointment to the NEH, see John S. Friedman, 'The Battle for the NEH', *The Nation*, December 19, 1981, pp. 662-663.
 92. W. Bennett and T. Eastland, *Counting by Race* (New York: Basic Books, 1979).
 93. The text of the report appears in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 28, 1984, pp. 16-21.
 94. See Leonard Kriegel, 'Who Cares About the Humanities?', *The Nation*, December 29, 1984-January 5, 1985, pp. 712-714, for a skeptic's discussion of the report.
 95. From Gramsci's *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 395. Quoted in Harold Entwistle, *Antonio Gramsci: Conservative Schooling for Radical Politics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 41.
 96. From Gramsci's *Selection from Political Writings (1910-1920)*, edited by Q. Hoare (New York: International Publishers, 1977), p. 13.
 97. *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 256.
 98. For a discussion of the Left in historical studies in the US, see Michael Merril and Michael Wallace, 'Marxism and History', in B. Ollman and E. Vernoff, *The Left Academy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), pp. 202-241.
 99. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 344-345.
 100. William J. Bennett, US Secretary of Education, 'Lost Generation: Why America's Children are Strangers in Their Own Land', *Policy Review*, No. 33 (Summer 1985), p. 43.
 101. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
 102. Gary Bauer, 'Speech to Association of American Publishers', January 15, 1986.
 103. See Joe Conason, 'Return of the Inquisitors', *Village Voice Supplement: Class Action*, January 21, 1986, pp. 3-5.
 104. For an example of Meese's rhetoric, see his speech 'The Battle for the Constitution', reprinted in *Policy Review*, No. 35 (Winter 1986), pp. 32-35.
 105. For a report on the Endowment's activities, see *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, December 8, 1985, pp. 11-12. Also, see Reagan's 'Address to a Special Session of the European Parliament', May 8, 1985, in *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Papers*, May 20, 1985, pp. 602-609.
 106. From Gwyn A. Williams, 'The Concept of *Egemonia* in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (October-December 1960), pp. 586-599.
 107. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 115-116.
 108. A. Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York: International

- Publishers, 1957), p. 20. This aspect of Gramsci's thought is well indicated in Victor Kiernan, 'The Socialism of Antonio Gramsci', in K. Coates (ed.), *Essays on Socialist Humanism* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 1972), pp. 63–89.
109. For example: in the UK, James Curran (ed.), *The Future of the Left* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1984); and in the US, Steve Rosskamm Shalom (ed.), *Socialist Visions* (Boston: South End Press, 1983).
110. K. Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in K. Marx, *Surveys From Exile*, David Fernbach (ed.), (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 146.
111. I develop this further in 'Political Theory and History: Antonio Gramsci and the British Marxist Historians', *Italian Quarterly*, Nos. 97–98 (Summer–Fall 1984), pp. 145–166.
112. Alan Bullock, 'Breaking the Tyranny of the Present', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, May 24, 1985, pp. 18–19.
113. A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
114. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 11.
115. E.H. Carr, *The New Society* (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 18.
116. See H.J. Kaye, *The British Marxist Historians*, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
117. V. Kiernan, 'Socialism, The Prophetic Memory', in B. Parekh (ed.), *The Concept of Socialism* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1975), pp. 14–37, also in H.J. Kaye (ed.), *Marxism, Classes and Nation States: Selected Writings of V.G. Kiernan* (Oxford: Polity Press, forthcoming).
118. K. Marx, 'A Correspondence of 1843', in K. Marx: *Selected Writings*, D. McLellan (ed.), (Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 38.