

# THE DICTATORSHIP OF CONSERVATIVE THINK TANKS

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Most think-tanks in the United States are well-financed conservative organizations; for instance: the Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute, Hudson Institute, and Manhattan Institute, to name a few.

They are highly politicized, and strongly dedicated to propagating free-market definitions and solutions to politico-economic and social problems, including both domestic and international issues.

They wage war against progressive income taxes, public health services, public housing, welfare, legal rights of the poor, and Social Security, among other things.

Their goal is to make the world

safe for transnational corporate investment and capital accumulation, and to prevent independent and populist governments from arising abroad.

The relatively few liberal and progressive think-tanks in the USA, such as the Institute for Policy Studies (of which I was a Visiting Fellow for several years in the early 1980s), are smaller and markedly less well financed than the right-wing ones. They usually focus on specific issues; for instance, protecting the environment and offering critical treatment of nuclear power, and opposing this or that specific US war abroad.

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In the mid-twentieth century it became evident to conservative thinkers that they would have to wage a long range war of political consciousness in America. Financed by big corporations and rich individuals and foundations, they formed think-tanks that consciously pursue rightist ideological hegemony in America, creating a reactionary paradigm. The goal has been to give supremacy to a free-market paradigm within the United States and everywhere else in the world.

They developed themes and narratives designed to gain the allegiance of the great mass of the general public, and they help popularize the following sentiments:

- Government is the problem, not the solution.
- The free market is the answer to our ills.
- People should be self-reliant rather than dependent on social programs. (No mention is made of the hundreds of billions of dollars that Corporate America gets every year from federal, state, and local governments.)
- America must stand strong against ‘the communist terrorists with their headquarters in Moscow,’ which was later replaced in 1992 or so by ‘Islamic

terrorists’ with their headquarters in any number of places.

- Progressive programs only lead to a squandering of tax dollars by dissolute elements and bureaucrats. Progressive programs only lead to inflation and poverty, and to policies of tax and spend, tax and spend.

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Obama seems to believe in nothing in particular. He constantly leans toward the reactionaries, making concessions on issues even before the debate has been joined. He is unfriendly toward progressives in Congress (such as the Progressive Caucus) and leans right instead of left. Indeed, he seems happiest when agreeing with the Republican rightists.

On foreign policy, Obama is as reactionary and as fervent a servant of the US global empire as any president before him, conducting bombing operations against five or six countries, and increasing the military budget to record heights.

On domestic issues, Obama has done little or nothing regarding our terrible unemployment problem and economic depression. Moreover, he is freezing and even cutting domestic spending.

There are numerous political leaders who are progressive and who would do better than Obama: Ralph Nader, Cynthia McKinney, Dennis Kucinich, etc. But they lack access to the major media and to the hundreds of millions of dollars now needed to campaign for the presidential election.

Still there is a good deal of agitation among progressive elements, demonstrations of large numbers, and many demands for change. But these get almost no coverage or exposure in the corporate owned media, which are too busy giving endless play to far smaller ‘Tea Party’ groups. ■

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