

TAKING CONTROL BY IMPLEMENTING THE MANIFESTO

I came to realize that there really is a smoke-filled room in America - an association called the Business Roundtable.

T. Boone Pickens

The Powell Manifesto¹ is essentially a three-part document:

First, it describes the symptoms of the illness;

Second, it provides a diagnosis; and,

Third, it prescribes the cure.

The Illness

“The American economic system,” Powell concluded, “is under broad attack.” Although the attack varies “in scope, intensity, (and) in the techniques employed,” he added, “The assault on the enterprise system is broadly based and consistently pursued. It is gaining momentum and converts.” The sources were “varied and diffused,” but included “Communists, New Leftists and other revolutionaries who would destroy the entire system, both political and economic.”

The Diagnosis

Confronted by a threat to its very survival, a “massive assault upon its fundamental economics, upon its philosophy, upon its right to continue to manage its own affairs, and indeed upon its integrity,” business had responded -- if at all -- by appeasement, ineptitude and ignoring the problem.” This response included the “boards of directors' and the top executives of corporations great and small and business organizations at all levels.”

The Cures

¹ During the course of researching and writing *Saving Ourselves*, I have come to question whether the manifesto is truly a product of Lewis Powell. The fiery rhetoric, blanket condemnations and inflammatory charges are inconsistent with Powell's background and training. By all accounts, Powell was a mild and temperate man. In his account of service as a law clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court, Edward Lazarus recalls that in retirement Powell would “perambulate around the quiet corridors, exchanging pleasantries and generally exuding the southern gentility for which he was renowned.” The language in his opinions is temperate, his positions on cases “forcefully commanded the political center,” imposing “cautious conservatism,” according to Lazarus. Powell's opinions are written with an elegance inconsistent with crisp sharpness of the manifesto. Powell, a former president of the American Bar Association, was at the top of a profession that does not reward intemperant language or views of the sort found in the manifesto.

The “first essential,” indeed “a prerequisite to any effective action,” counseled Powell, was “for businessmen to confront this problem as a primary responsibility of corporate management.” They did.

The Business Roundtable (www.businessroundtable.org), an association of chief executive officers of more than 140 of the nation’s Fortune 500 companies, was founded in 1972. With a 2006 budget of \$23 million,²⁴ and members whose companies had \$4.5 trillion in annual revenues and more than 10 million employees, it was founded “in the belief that the business sector should play an active and effective role in the formation of public policy.”²⁵

By November, 1975, the Roundtable was powerful enough to stop proposed amendments to the anti-trust laws dead in their tracks. The changes would have allowed state attorneys general to sue violators of anti-trust laws on behalf of their citizens and collect money damages –for price fixing, for example.²⁶ Earlier efforts by the Roundtable on the proposed creation of a national consumer protection agency had peeled away enough votes to make the legislation vulnerable to a veto. In still another effort, the group sought to have the price of natural gas deregulated. A proposal to change the way overseas profits of U.S. companies were taxed was also killed.²⁷

“These people are in the process of gaining control of the apparatus of government,” said Rep. Benjamin S. Rosenthal, chair of a Government Operations Affairs subcommittee in the House. Soon big business had perfected its strategy: ad hoc alliances would be formed on specific issues, worker safety, for example, in which companies and industries pooled their resources. Conventional lobbyists collected strategic information, and a half-dozen of them would band together in “lobby teams” to target pivotal members of Congress. At corporate headquarters, grassroots campaigns would be mounted, enlisting workers, suppliers, customers and local officials to write letters and make telephone calls. Visits to Washington by corporate chief executives would be arranged by the Business Roundtable.²⁸

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THIRTY-ONE YEARS AGO

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One Carter proposal was to consolidate a number of disparate agencies into a single Department of Energy. The second was to adopt reforms aimed at weaning the nation from foreign oil, deploying wind, solar and other forms of renewable energy, as well as boosting the efficient use of energy. The “cornerstone” of his proposals, Carter said, was conservation, “the quickest, cheapest, most practical source of energy.”³⁰ He did not note that burning less oil, gas and coal would reduce profits for those who drilled, mined, shipped and sold those fuels, but others did. The government reorganization sailed through. The other package was subjected to, in the words of *The New York Times*, “virtual emasculation.”³¹

By 1987, the power of the Business Roundtable was so great that the natural gas and oil baron, T. Boone Pickens, whose attempts to take over other companies had been resisted by the Roundtable, complained that “I came to realize that there really is a smoke-filled room in America - an association called the Business Roundtable.”³²

“Corporate America today - the regimentation, stifling of the entrepreneurial spirit, disregard for stockholders, and obsession with perquisites and power - is symbolized by the Business Roundtable,” Pickens wrote in *The New York Times*.³³

Pickens took to task a statement by the Roundtable’s head and chief executive officer of Champion International, Andrew Sigler, that stockholders do not own companies, “society” does. “Things that affect free enterprise,” Sigler told a group of New York financial writers, “affect the whole society. So that the underlying issue is not the shareholder or the business. It is the society.”³⁴

On hearing that, Pickens wrote, “I asked myself, ‘Does this guy understand what the free enterprise system is? Does he think people would buy stock in a company owned by ‘society’?’”³⁵

Within a few years, the Business Roundtable was leaving its imprint on virtually every major piece of legislation considered by Congress: national health insurance,³⁶ civil rights,³⁷ military spending,³⁸ trade with Mexico,³⁹ and even “mad cow” disease.⁴⁰ It “seems to sweep out of the night, kill public interest legislation, then disappear” said one legislator.⁴¹

The “Communists, New Leftists and other revolutionaries” that Powell had vilified came to include even the New York Stock Exchange, when in 2002 it sought to require companies whose shares traded on the Exchange to put all stock option plans to shareholder votes. The effect of the Exchange’s proposal would have been to provide shareholders with a say in the wildly lucrative stock options that executives were receiving. Attacking the suggestion as “counterproductive,” the Roundtable urged members to denounce the Exchange’s proposal immediately, even before it and the Exchange’s other corporate governance proposals had been publicly announced.⁴²

Eventually the Roundtable was weighing in on many issues that had no connection whatsoever with proposals before Congress. In April, 2006, for example, the Roundtable was demanding that the U.S. government turn over what *The New York Times* described as “huge amounts of government data on the cost and quality of health care provided by doctors around the country.” Supposedly, Roundtable companies wanted the data to compare and rate doctors, allowing them to steer patients — workers, and retirees and their dependents — to doctors who achieved the best results and offered the best value.⁴³

"The Medicare data would be a gold mine of information," said Maria M. Ghazal, director of public policy at the Roundtable. "The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services should release 100 percent of the Medicare claims database," said Robert W. Lane, chairman of Deere & Company, the world's largest maker of farm equipment and a member of the Business Roundtable. "This is essential to measuring cost efficiency and compliance with clinical guidelines."⁴⁴

Although the Roundtable is clearly the most powerful and effective of the business organization, others began to play expanded roles as well.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation, represents more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions. It includes hundreds of associations, thousands of local chambers, and 106 American Chambers of Commerce in 94 countries. With the implementation of the Powell Manifesto, all these resources were mobilized.

At its headquarters near the White House, the Chamber houses a professional staff of more than 300 lobbyists, lawyers, and others. The Washington staff is supported by eight regional offices around the country; offices in New York and Brussels; an on-the-ground presence in China; and a network of grassroots business activists. The Chamber has 16 policy committees and six special councils and task forces.⁴⁵ The Chamber is complemented by the National Association of Manufacturers as well as scores of trade associations.

As the decade of the 70s wore on, corporations reached the point where they were no longer content to fight defensive battles, and instead went on the offensive to implement their policy agendas. They were aided in this by the emergence of what has been referred to as a “counter intelligentsia” composed of corporate front groups and subsidized university schools and centers. This was yet another of Powell’s recommendations, saying that “the counter attack should address the campus origin of this hostility (by) establishing a staff of highly qualified scholars in the social sciences who believe in the system.”

The first of the modern “think tanks,” (virtually all of which are in actuality organizations of pretend scholarship) was founded with a gift of \$250,000 to Republican activist Paul Weyrich from Colorado brewing magnate Joseph Coors. He had read the Powell Manifesto, and to assure that it was not ignored by mainstream business, Coors bellied up to the bar with his own cash. Coors asked his home state senator, Gordon Allott, who should receive the cash, and he nominated a member of his staff, Paul Weyrich.

A religious conservative, Weyrich and a few others started would become one of the best known of the corporate fronts, the Heritage Foundation.

Heritage currently has a staff of 73 “experts” on virtually every aspect of domestic and foreign policy.⁴⁶ It bills them as “your single-source directory for locating knowledgeable authorities and leading policy institutes ,” adding that “journalists, researchers, public officials and conference planners find it to be an indispensable guide for locating the right expert at a moment's notice.”⁴⁷ Heritage and other front groups guard their detailed budget numbers closely, but one source has reported that its 1995 income was \$25 million.⁴⁸ Because of Heritage’s success, corporations and their captive foundations have funded the creation of more than 400 imitators, virtually all of which produce huge numbers of policy papers,² providing a veneer of intellectual respectability for a corporate agenda that is driven by greed, not principle.

Support for these front groups is provided either by corporate charitable foundations (e.g. the General Motors Foundation, the ExxonMobil Foundation), or by private foundations established by people who got rich from corporations. The Scaife Foundation, for example, was made possible by the immense wealth of the Mellon family, who made billions from banking and Gulf Oil.

Comparable efforts targeting colleges and universities, engineered “a right-wing intelligentsia that has come to wield enormous influence in national policy debates”⁴⁹ in the words of People for the American Way. Company executives had always been on the boards of higher education’s decision making bodies, as the manifesto noted. But in manifesto’s wake, the amounts of money moving from corporate and private foundations to these institutions are vast, and some of it is virtually untraceable. People for the American Way has expended a massive amount of time and effort on its “Buying a Movement” campaign, attempting to following the money trail. The findings are It can be found at <http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=2052>.

Among PAW’s disclosure are the following:

- The University of Chicago received \$3.7 million from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (money from the Allen-Bradley electronics manufacturing company) to support its Bradley Fellows program. The Bradley Fellows’ purpose is to create an “intellectual infrastructure” for influencing the “framework of national life.”⁵⁰ A list of some grants can be found at http://www.bradleyfdn.org/pdfs/Intellectual_Infrastructure.pdf.

- The Institute for Humane Studies at George Mason University, devoted to the study of "the self-ordering market, free trade,(and) free migration," received \$2 million between 1986 and

² The Heritage Foundation was pivotally important to the Republican Party in another way as well. Heritage intervened in a school textbook dispute in Kanawha County, West Virginia, to train those opposed to new books in various forms of confrontation. Before the dispute ended, the school board was assaulted, three schools bombed, one firebombed, a bus containing students who refused to honor a boycott called by textbook opponents was shot at, a CBS news crew was roughed up, and the Ku Klux Klan visited a local church. Using the Kanawha conflict as a spring board, Heritage established a bridge to the fundamentalist community that ultimately resulted in formation of the Moral Majority and an alliance between religious organizations and the GOP.

1990⁵¹ from Koch family foundations. As a practical matter the money was from the largest privately owned and oil rich company in the United States Koch Industries, since the brothers own it and can therefore disburse money to themselves at will.⁵¹

- Harvard University received more than \$6.2 million from the Olin Foundation (money from Western Cartridge, later known as Olin Industries, then Olin Mathieson chemicals) between 1993 and 1997 to set up various conservative law, business, economics and strategic studies programs.

- The National Association of Scholars (NAS.), a network of university professors dedicated to combating perceived "liberal bias" on college campuses, received \$125,000 from Olin in 1994; Bradley gave it \$378,400 between 1990-92 and authorized a two-year, \$150,000 grant in 1994; the Scaife foundations have contributed more than \$400,000 in recent years; and the Adolph Coors (beer), J.M. and Smith Richardson foundations (Vicks Vaporub) are also regular contributors.

- The Madison Center for Educational Affairs received \$100,000 grants from the Olin, Scaife, J.M. and Smith Richardson foundations to finance pro-market college newspapers .

Powell wanted "a staff of speakers of the highest competency," so highly regarded that their authorship would be widely respected "even when disagreed with."

The Cato Institute, a front group based in Washington, D.C., has done perhaps the best job of disguising the true nature of its "scholars." For example, Cato says Patrick J. Michaels "may be the most popular lecturer in the nation on the subject of global warming." Few will dispute that he is entertaining.— "Michaels is show-biz," an editor that he and I have in common once told me.⁵²

Michaels' credentials are impressive: degrees from University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin at Madison.⁵³ What neither Cato nor Michaels willingly reveal, however, is that since the late 1980s he has been funded directly or indirectly by a variety of coal interests, including the Western Fuels Association, a group of firms that mine, sell and ship coal in the West. Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA), for example, a coal-burning co-op utility in Colorado, gave \$100,000 to Michaels' privately owned business in February 2006.⁵⁴

Indeed, when Michaels was slated to testify on behalf of General Motors and other polluters that wanted federal courts to bar Vermont and other states from controlling emissions that cause global warming, he withdrew. Why? Because "he was dependent for his livelihood on the income he got through his wholly owned firm, New Hope Environmental Services, Inc.," whose clients wanted their identities kept secret.⁵⁵

Michaels is the rule, not the exception. Many of the so-called "scholars" or "experts" found at the corporate fronts are supported by cash from corporations. The extremes to which some of them are willing to go is extraordinary.

The vitriol of these “free market” and “conservative” capitalism proponents is astonishing and repugnant. One, Dinesh D'Souza, places the blame for the 9/11 attacks in the left wing's “aggressive global campaign to undermine the traditional patriarchal family.”⁵⁵ The screeds of D'Souza, Ann Coulter and others reared in and supported by corporate front groups, would have the public believe that campuses are populated mostly by long-haired Marxist-Leninist professors persecuting students who dare challenge their views. In fact, as corporate money has infused collegiate academics, the opposite has occurred.

Corporate giving to universities rose sharply in the wake of the manifesto, growing from \$850 million in 1985 to \$4.25 billion less than a decade later -- and increasingly the money came with strings attached. Much of this largesse was not the garden variety of tax-write-off charity welcomed as philanthropy. Rather it was seen by university community members as a controversial way of making sure that up-and-coming intellectual and political leaders would not bite the hands that fed them. There was pay-back. Kmart endowed a chair in the management school at West Virginia University that requires its holder to spend up to thirty days a year training assistant store managers. Freeport McMoRan, a mining company embroiled in allegations of environmental misconduct in Indonesia, created a chair in environmental studies at Tulane.

In November, 1998 for instance, the University of California at Berkeley signed an agreement with Novartis, a Swiss pharmaceutical giant and producer of genetically engineered crops, in which the firm gave Berkeley \$25 million to fund basic research at one its departments. That sum was roughly one third of the research budget of the entire department. In exchange, Berkeley granted Novartis first right to negotiate licenses on roughly a third of the department's discoveries -- including the results of research funded by state and federal sources, as well as by Novartis. It also granted the company two of five seats on the department's research committee, which determines how the money is spent.

THE KEPT UNIVERSITY

Among those attending a 1999 meeting of the American Association of University Professors, was David Kern, former director of occupational medicine at Brown University's Memorial Hospital. In 1996, while serving as a consultant to Microfibres, a Rhode Island company that produces nylon flock, Kern discovered evidence of a serious new lung disease among the company's employees. Upon learning that he planned to publish his findings, the company threatened to sue, citing a confidentiality agreement that forbade Kern to expose "trade secrets."

The information that Kern had gathered had come from tests on volunteers, and concerned not proprietary secrets but a serious threat to public health. Yet Brown University, too, tried to dissuade Kern from publishing, warning that the company might file suit. Outraged, Kern published anyway, and in 1997 the Centers for Disease Control officially recognized the new disease, flock worker's lung. Although Microfibres never

filed suit, Kern's position at Brown was eliminated. "Universities should protect their faculty from any efforts to encroach on academic freedom," Kern says. "Unfortunately, with so much corporate money flooding into academia, that's not happening."⁵⁶

The money has had its desired, and predictable result: corporate millions became an ever growing and pernicious influence on U.S. colleges and universities, spawning corporate "institutes," such as the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and off-campus think tanks such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies.^{bbb}

Corporations have paid special attention to collegiate schools of business.

As early as 1980, DuPont, ARCO, Pfizer, Kaiser Steel and other firms began developing relationships with the academic community specifically to "promote a better understanding of the business sector." In addition, at roughly the same time, the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business began urging the adoption of courses to "deal with the interface between business and society."⁵⁷ Virtually every major business school has endowed chairs supported by corporations for the express purpose of enhancing the respectability of the "market."

One study of the specific segment of entrepreneurship faculty concluded that both the demand and supply of faculty had "increased spectacularly."⁵⁸ Increasingly, corporations endow chairs with some amusing names: Bell South Professor of Education through Telecommunication (University of South Carolina), John McCoy-Banc One Corp. Professor of Creativity and Innovation (Stanford University), Carlson Travel Tourism and Hospitality Chair (University of Minnesota), Sears Roebuck Professor of Economics (University of Chicago), and the mouth-watering McLamore/Burger King Chair (University of Miami).⁵⁹

Corporations also—again as recommended by Powell—have extended the reach of their "educational" programs into high schools, as well, seeking out teachers and screening textbooks.

A corporate front group, the National Council on Economic Education, (NCEE) bills itself as "a nationwide network that leads in promoting economic literacy with students and their teachers."⁶⁰ According to The Foundation Directory on line, the following companies gave over \$11.5 million to NCEE in 2003-07. (The Directory, a fee-for-service reporting firm, does not report all donations, so this would be an understatement of income.):

^{bbb}Of course, academics are not necessarily above biting the hand that feeds them. In 1994 Shoshana Zuboff the Charles Edward Wilson Professor of Business Administration at Harvard University's School of Business concluded that "I no longer believed in the progressive vision of the corporation espoused in my book. I decided to take some time out from publishing for study and reflection in order to see if I could find a new way forward in the field of management. That began a decade-long intellectual journey from which I concluded that today's managerial capitalism has reached the limits of its adaptive range. Instead of being the engine of wealth creation, it has become the obstacle to wealth creation. The society of the twenty-first century requires a new approach to capitalism that I call 'distributed capitalism'." Harvard Business School, Biography, Shoshana Zuboff, <http://drfd.hbs.edu/fit/public/facultyInfo.do?facInfo=bio&facEmId=szuboff>.

3M, Allstate, American Express , Ameritas, Bank of America , Central National-Gottesman, Chicago Mercantile Exchange Citi, Crane, Dart, Dillon, ExxonMobil, Ford Motor Company, General Mills, Georgia-Pacific, Goldman Sachs, Gund, Gordon and Llura, International Paper, Ewing Kauffman, Kellogg, Kirby, Kress, MBIA, McClelland , Stephanie and Carter, MeadWestvaco , Minneapolis, Moody's, Morgan Stanley, Murphy, Nasdaq Stock Market Educational, New York Community Trust, Northwestern Mutual , PACCAR, Procter & Gamble Charles Schwab, Spencer, Stiles-Nicholson, Templeton, John, Towbes, UPS, Verizon, Walton Family, Wells Fargo and Whitehead. NCEE is also supported by the Federal Reserve.

Its seminars feature speakers such as Kathi Ratti of the Foundation for Teaching Economics (FTE) and Center for Free Market Environmentalism (CFME) in Littleton, Colorado, two other corporate front organizations. They deliver to teachers messages such as the following:

Despite the fall of the Soviet Union and the persistent, abject poverty of people in countries where private property is nonexistent or under attack, there remains a widespread misconception that property rights are a weapon the wealthy use to exploit the poor. History has recorded the opposite. Time and again, the doors to wealth-producing economic growth have been opened — not closed — by secure, well-defined private property rights.

Funders of FTE range from the Anschutz Foundation to the Western Union Foundation. CFME is an offshoot of a Bozeman, Montana organization, the Political Economy Research Center, which is supported by Searle Freedom Trust and the Lily Endowment, among others. It distributes books, such as *Eco-Sanity: A Common Sense Guide to Environmentalism and Facts, Not Fear: Teaching Children About the Environment* as well as *Free Market Environmentalism*.

Textbooks are adopted at the state and local level. There are 22 states with a process for approval or adoption of textbooks, but Texas standards are pivotal because they are widely followed.^{61,bbb} Thus, those who oppose adoption of a textbook because they disagree with its statements on, say, evolution, can leverage their power by targeting decisions in Texas. By doing this, they thus effectively determine what children read—or do not read, since in many cases the objective is to scrub lessons that discuss evolution, global warming or other subjects they find offensive--in other states.

A case in point is the decision by the Texas State Board of Education in 2001 to reject *Environmental Science: Creating a Sustainable Future* as a textbook. Written by Daniel D. Chiras, Ph.D., and published by Massachusetts-based Jones and Bartlett Publishers, the book has been widely used for over 20 years in top-tier universities including Baylor University in Waco and the University of Texas at Tyler. Review

^{bbb} In educational publishing, Texas, California, and Florida are known as the "big three" textbook adoption states; together, they account for 30 percent of the multibillion-dollar K-12 textbook market. Together, they largely determine the content and context of textbooks used in your community's classrooms.

panels of science professors at Texas A&M University and the Science Teachers Association of Texas had given the book high marks. The Board nevertheless rejected the book.

No reasons were given, nor is an explanation required. *The Christian Science Monitor*, however, said board members were unhappy because “it put the US and the free enterprise system in a bad light as significant players in global warming.”⁶²

Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF), which describes itself as a “non-partisan research institute guided by the core principles of individual liberty, personal responsibility, private property rights, free markets and limited government” keeps a careful watch on Board reviews.⁶² Like so many other groups founded in the wake of the Powell Manifesto, TPPF is funded by corporations directly (e.g. in this case ExxonMobil), corporate foundations and the family foundations like Lynde and Harry Bradley.⁶³

Powell was especially troubled by the role that newspapers as well as radio and television networks played in attracting attention to rivers that caught fire and cars that crashed, and urged that they be “monitored” with “constant examination” of the texts for print media and of “adequate samples of programs” for radio and television.

The solution to this problem was fairly simple and straightforward. Corporations and the rich simply bought the networks. Two of the three major networks are now owned by corporations: ABC by The Walt Disney Company and NBC by General Electric. CBS belongs to Sumner Redstone, said by *Forbes* magazine to be the world’s 63rd richest person.⁶³ The fourth network, Fox, is owned by The News Corporation, which is controlled by Rupert Murdoch, said to be the world’s 103rd richest person by *Forbes* magazine,⁶⁴ and by *Fortune* magazine to be the second most powerful person in business,⁶⁵ trailing only Steve Jobs, chairman and CEO of Apple Computer.⁶⁶ It’s a safe bet that the networks no longer pose much of a threat to corporations or the rich.

Massive consolidation has occurred in radio stations and, to a lesser degree, newspapers as well. Clear Channel, Cumulus Broadcasting and Citadel Communication Corporation own just over 1,600 radio stations, with Clear Channel owning 1,207 of them. Much was triggered by elimination in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 of a rule that capped the number of stations one company could own at 40.

Tracking what is said and printed is the primary responsibility of Accuracy in Media, a front group that says it is for “fairness, accuracy and balance in news reporting.”⁶⁷ The contributors to its \$1 million annual budget are said by SourceWatch to include Bethlehem Steel, Chevron, Ciba-Geigy, Coors Foundation, Dressor Industries, Exxon, Lawrence Fertig Foundation, Getty Oil, Horizon Oil and Gas, IBM, Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical, F.M. Kirby Foundation, Mobil Foundation, Pepsico, Phillips Petroleum Company, Smith Richardson Charitable Trust, Texaco Philanthropic Foundation, Union Carbide.⁶⁸

Powell found particularly chafing the so-called Fairness Doctrine, a policy of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that required the holders of broadcast licenses both to present controversial issues of public importance and to do so in a manner that was (in the FCC's view) honest, equitable, and balanced. Powell said complaints to the FCC about program content or bias “should be made promptly and strongly and equal time demanded.”

Corporations did him one better: They simply arranged for the Reagan Administration FCC to rescind the Fairness Doctrine.⁶⁹

The manifesto also called on corporate executives to take their complaints straight to newspaper management. Whether corporate executives were reluctant to complain to editors prior to the Powell Manifesto, that is certainly not the case today. On the contrary, it is common for environmental reporters to be called on the carpet for their coverage. Without revealing confidences, I can say that one colleague who worked at one of the three major weekly news magazines, described being called on the carpet by an editor for being “too fair.” A reporter in a New England state was ordered by his paper’s publisher, to whom a corporation had complained, to revise a story. The reporter refused and quit. The reporter quit. In yet another instance one of the nation’s best known—and simply best—environmental reporters was removed from that beat and assigned to cover the Internal Revenue Service after business complaints. That reporter also quit.

The most chilling development has been the increasing use of legal actions--so-called SLAPPs, or Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation. Such suits are not necessarily intended to be won. Instead, they are employed to intimidate and silence critics by burdening them with the cost of a legal defense until they shut up and sit down. Prominent television personality Oprah Winfrey was hit with one after she discussed on her program the dangers of Mad Cow disease and said she would never again eat a hamburger. (She won.)

Much of the genius of the Powell Manifesto was its breadth. It left not a single stone unturned. It unleashed a flood of corporate money for the purpose of stripping away the products of democracy and, indeed, the suppressing democracy itself. The relationship between Americans and their governments has been altered, the rules by which we govern ourselves have been changed, the very mores of our society have been shifted, all because of a massive outpouring of money.

Money from corporations and the rich is everywhere It is plowed into the soil of America, just as a farmer would till fertilizer and pesticides into fields. The plants the farmer wants, the crops so to speak, grow healthy and strong providing a bountiful harvest. The other plants, the weeds, wither and die.

Everywhere the eye can see, reaching to the horizon and beyond, with only a few patches of weeds here and there, are their healthy, beaming, broad shouldered, ruggedly handsome, God-fearing, crops.

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