

Two decades have now elapsed since the book before you was published in its original form—and nearly a decade since it was last in print. In the lives of men and women, as well as the cycles of book publishing, such a period of time can constitute an epoch.

So it has been for the subject of the pages that follow. When *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* was first published, Ronald Reagan was a former governor of California with no apparent political future, and Newt Gingrich a professor at a small college in Georgia. While intelligent conservatism was clearly on the upswing in the 1970s, it was still a minority phenomenon, especially in the academic community. Abroad, Lech Walesa was an unknown Polish electrician, Vaclav Havel a persecuted Czech playwright, and Margaret Thatcher the new leader of a British Conservative Party that was out of power. The pontificate of Pope John Paul II had not yet begun, and the Berlin Wall stood firm. The Cold War was very much a reality.

And yet, as I reread these pages, mostly written in graduate school, I am struck by how contemporary their subject still seems. Despite the corrosive passage of time and the ephemerality of so much public discourse, the conservative intellectual movement chronicled in this book has not faded into quaint irrelevance. It has not become history. To the contrary, in the years since 1976 it has *made* history and is still making history—to the point that, for adherents and detractors alike, it is more relevant to our nation's life than ever before.

For this reason alone, it seems fitting to make my book readily accessible once more, with an Epilogue devoted to the swirling intellectual and political currents of recent years. There is another reason as well: in the 1990s the conservative movement has entered a period of introspection not seen, in such acute form, since the early 1960s. So close to political triumph, yet so far from assurance of it, many on the Right are seeking to refine, and even redefine, the conservative mission. In such confusing circumstances, it is usually helpful to “remember who we are” or have come to be. As thoughtful conservatives (and some of their critics) go “back to basics,” perhaps this study of modern American conservatism’s intellectual history will provide some edifying perspective.

“The only thing that’s new in the world is the history you don’t know,” Winston Churchill once remarked. It is my hope that students of all persuasions, especially students who call themselves conservatives, will find in this book some history that they “don’t know” but will want to know, if they would truly understand the national debates raging around them.

Many people have influenced and facilitated the preparation of this volume. In my Acknowledgments pages I cite those individuals who contributed to the process of study and reflection that culminated in the first edition. In this Preface it is a pleasure to acknowledge those who made a second edition possible. I particularly thank Jeffrey O. Nelson of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute for initiating this reprint project and for encouraging me to write an Epilogue. To Mr. Nelson and Brooke Daley at ISI, I offer additional thanks for skillfully shepherding the book to publication. For able and conscientious proofreading assistance, I am

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