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Kanawha County and Orange County

Who, more precisely, were the book protesters? And how are they related to other Americans?

The *Charleston Gazette* conducted a poll of 386 voters the last week of September, asking, "How do you stand in the Kanawha County textbook controversy?" and tabulated 41.2 percent against the books, 31.6 percent undecided or unconcerned, and 27.2 percent for the books.[1] That three-fourths as many were undecided as opposed surely characterizes the situation at that point. Voting polarized predictably between the affluent Charleston hill sections such as Lowden Heights and the stretches of Kanawha Valley above and south of the city, other areas voting in between.

Newspaper polls in December and January got different results for elementary school—70 percent opposed—than for secondary—73 percent in favor.[2] So the age of the children determined substantially how much support the protest movement drew from the populace. In the elementary poll the geographical split was familiar. Four of the six schools that approved the books were in Charleston, out of a total of thirty, whereas in Alum Creek (the Rev. Avis Hill's home) only 9 of 378 parents favored the series, a typical vote for some outlying settlements.[3] Superintendent Underwood claimed that misinformation and fear would account for much of the adverse feeling.

It would have been interesting to know how the parents polled after emotion ran high, would have voted before all the brouhaha arose. We note that the earlier poll in September showed about 30 percent fewer opposed than the two later polls did and that most of the 31 percent undecided earlier seemed, two and three months later, to have sided against the books. At any rate, when in November the board sent forms home for parents to indicate the books they did not want their children to use, 65.5 percent of the parents of elementary children rejected *Com-*

municating, the basal 1–6 series, a figure only 5 percent below that of the newspaper's poll of elementary parents.[4]

An analysis of November election results showed that in the clean sweep Democrats made of all twenty-one offices, those candidates who sided with the protesters tended to receive considerably fewer votes. Dr. Charles Bertram, director of research and evaluation for the Appalachian Educational Laboratory, wrote in an internal paper that "the moderately high negative correlation would indicate that the protest movement does not have the support of the voting public that was generally believed by county residents."[5]

An interesting indicator was the behavior of mayors in the county. In September, when the Charleston mayor remained silent, the Upper Kanawha County Mayors Association called for withdrawal of the books and an end to picketing—not a neutral stance. Later they undertook measures to secede from the county in order to found their own school system. The mayor of South Charleston, the seat of massive chemical and refining works, said he hadn't read the books but if what he heard was true he vigorously opposed them. The mayor of Cedar Grove, which is near Cabin Creek in the Lower Valley, had his police chief serve a warrant for the arrest of Superintendent Underwood and members of the board for contributing to the delinquency of minors by making obscene books available within the school system. At one point in the boycott only 9 children of 922 in the Cedar Grove elementary school reported for class.

Attendance figures during the controversy constitute, in fact, another demographic indicator. Although *average* attendance in the county ranged from 70 percent to 90 percent during the periods of boycotting, it fell to 50 percent and often well below that in the creek areas and from South Charleston on through the Upper Kanawha Valley.

The settlements of the most intense feeling and dramatic incident were rural, folk Appalachian, and fundamentalist, but it is clear from all the same indicators that attitudes scaled along a gradient between them ("creekers") and Lowdon Heights ("hillers"), through industrial, blue-collar Nitro and South Charleston on into the poorer urban, white-collar and professional world of Charleston itself. The resistance to the book adoption mobilized a coalition of somewhat disparate bedfellows. Indeed, the social significance of the whole case lies in this resonance across classes and communities.

Elmer Fike, the aforementioned founder/president of the Business and Professional People's Alliance for Better Textbooks, told me that many antibook people "didn't want to become associated with some of the radical elements. There were some hillbilly preachers who took this thing and really made a career out of it."[6] Board member Alice Moore, the

"Sweet Alice" celebrated in song and placard by the ministers' followers, did not, at the time she first challenged the books, know the Rev. Marvin Horan, whose brand of violent activism she deplored but who probably did more than anyone besides herself to make the revolt so effective. She avoided appearing with him at the rallies of his Concerned Citizens, the major local antibook organization, of which he was leader and which put out the flier with the false excerpts. She seemed genuinely shocked by the dangerous and unruly physical means by which those she inflamed enacted her wish. But she too worked for the boycotts and the alternative schools. She encouraged the miners to go on wildcat strikes and said that without their cooperation the other groups would not have been able to mount and sustain such a protest. Indeed, there seems little question that what made the revolt work here whereas similar efforts elsewhere failed, was the tactics of the labor movement, applied by both miners and others who had learned from their struggles.

Like Alice Moore, Fike was not always comfortable with his allies. Publicly he deplored the violence, but he worked with the ministers and even tried to extend legal aid to Horan, the minister convicted of conspiring to fire-bomb schools. And like the ministers, all while repudiating the KKK, he spoke on the same platform with some of its members. Fike did not like the bad odor that these cohorts lent the cause. Hence the wording "Business and Professional People's" part of his organization's title. What is more important, he differs from the reverends in both ideas and motives. He warrants attention because he represents better than Alice Moore what kind of person we may find ranged between the bulk of the American public and those hellfire preachers in the hollows who may at first appear to this public as quaint and very different. He has a degree in chemical engineering, and as an informed, articulate, and skillful debater who also knows how to make money he clearly feels in a different class from the miners, factory hands, and fundamentalist preachers that his beliefs have cast him with.

He did not attempt to conceal his ideological differences with these collaborators. "Evolution does take place," he told me, for example, "there's no question about it. Anyone who says it doesn't just isn't thinking." The fundamentalists, he went on, are wrong to say the world started as described in Genesis. "The only question is whether God is directing it."[7] He carefully distinguished this from "random evolution," which he does not accept. He believes, as most Christians do, that Darwinian evolution is not opposed to religion. This position on a paramount issue for fundamentalists marks the gap between them and someone who, though sharing much of their regional culture, has undergone some scientific training and the conditions of corporate commerce.

The Reverends Avis Hill and Ezra Graley ran their own businesses,

like Fike, and their mountaineer's defiance of law and government resembles too his fulminations against Washington, but I felt their conservatism was more social and moral, his more commercial and political. When I raised with Fike the contradiction of his denouncing the textbooks for "Un-Americanism" while constantly lambasting the federal government himself, he said, "Hell, nobody criticizes the government more than I do, but the textbooks weren't criticizing the government from the standpoint of the oppression and the excessive regulation. They were criticizing the free enterprise system." In other words, they weren't criticizing it for *his* reasons! Fike exhibited, I felt, a plain material self-interest not generally characterizing the fundamentalist protesters.

Mountaineers don't like central government because it disrupts their folkways and has never, throughout their history, seriously come to their aid. (The state and federal agencies charged with safety regulation in mines seldom do their job well, as the number of mine disasters shows.) Businessmen don't like it because it regulates and taxes them. Fike wants government to play a role that will increase, not threaten, his profits. The commercial brand of conservatism he represents allies itself with religious conservatism under the rubrics of anti-Communism and free enterprise and in a sincere sharing of other sentiments of chauvinistic mystique, including unavowed racism.

To begin to relate the participants in the Kanawha County dispute to citizens elsewhere, let's look now at some connections that formed between insiders and outsiders. As early as September an outside group had volunteered aid to the book protesters, an anti-sex education organization in Louisiana called The Hard Core Parental Group, claiming followers in all 50 states, which offered to send food, supplies, and cash.

The Heritage Foundation of Washington, D.C., sent into Kanawha County within a month of the opening of school its counsel, James McKenna, as legal aid to protesters who were getting arrested, chiefly for blocking the operation of school activities in defiance of court injunctions. He worked with the four fundamentalist ministers—Horan, Graley, Hill, and Quigley—who organized for October 6th in Charleston a statewide textbook rally that drew several thousand. Outside speakers besides McKenna were Mel and Norma Gabler, the self-appointed textbook evaluators, who run from their home a not-for-profit corporation called Educational Research Analysts in Longview, Texas, and by Robert Dornan of the Citizens for Decency Through Law in Los Angeles. Under this stimulation the local protest leaders began to plan a state campaign.

Dornan took a leave of absence later from CDL to return to Kanawha County and further support the protest movement. Back in California, he subsequently won election to Congress to represent Anaheim in Orange County, the western home of the John Birch Society and the

home of a publisher of textbooks on creationism. His behavior seemed to epitomize for some people around the School Board how outsiders sometimes exploited their participation in the dispute.

Here is how the Gablers' biographer described their participation:

> Responding to an urgent West Virginia request, the Gablers flew to Charleston on October 5 for a whirlwind six-day speaking campaign. Both spoke at a city-wide rally to an estimated 8,000 persons the next afternoon (Sunday) in the Charleston ball park. The next day they separated, and were chauffeured up and down the valley, each speaking twice daily to groups of concerned parents.
>
> One morning Norma substituted for Alice Moore in an appearance before a Charleston women's group. . . .[8]

Hefley also mentions that "while the Gablers were in West Virginia they met with the minority members of the [Textbook] Review Committee for several hours."[9] Then proudly, at the beginning of his last chapter of the biography, Hefley writes:

> The Gablers were scarcely noticed by the national news media in West Virginia. Yet, according to leaders of the protest there, their contribution was significant. "They showed us how to document our objection to a bad text by page, paragraph, and column," says Larry Freeman, a minority member of the Textbook Review Committee.[10]

This minority group of the committee, which, as we saw, split off when they felt outnumbered, put together the book of objections that we will sample later on.

By exerting a very powerful influence on textbook adoption in the most profitable state for publishers, Texas, the Mel Gablers have in effect played a considerable role in restricting what gets published for American schools. Key adoptions like California (alone one-tenth of the United States market) and Texas, both of which provide leadership for other states, determine to an alarming degree what the rest of the nation will be offered. But whereas California adopts such a broad listing that little is excluded, Texas adopts only up to five publishers' programs for each school subject, and those chosen stay in for five years. Given these conditions, to fail to get adopted in Texas is tantamount to disaster in most cases, and publishers will stop at little to ensure against failure. (It is an indication of how calculated a gamble *Interaction* was that it was conceived with no regard for the Texas adoptions, which require hard covers. We knew from the outset that our ungraded classroom libraries of paperback books would not pass there.) Texas procedures include public hearings before the state Board of Education at which objectors

may criticize the books and publishers defend them. Written objections, "bills of particulars," may be submitted to the State Board and be rebutted by publishers in writing. Although salespeople not specialists in the subjects are not the best people to defend the books, the procedures are on the whole a democratic way of creating a forum before adoption.

The fact that the Gablers have utilized these procedures so effectively and lobbied in other ways so successfully should not be a cause for complaint. Not only are they in their rights, as Alice Moore was also in her utilization of the Gablers in turn, but democracy would be best served if other parents showed as much interest in their children's education. The public must understand that to an alarming degree the rest of the United States lives with the results of negotiations between the Texas Education Agency and the textbook publishers, conducted under pressure from people like the Gablers. Those chapters, selections, passages, and phrases deleted or altered for Texas will almost certainly be absent in offerings to other school systems because changing plates is expensive. Furthermore, having passed in Texas becomes a selling point elsewhere, a proof that a program has been sanitized against conservative complaints.

Only equally strong pressure from other big markets can cause publishers to put out alternative forms of a book or a program. In 1986 California's commissioner of education, William Honig, refused to accept any of the publishers' offerings in science because they all had seriously compromised the presentation of evolution to placate creationists. This stand threw the industry into consternation: it had to choose between losing a lucrative market or creating, at much expense, alternative science books.

CBS' "Sixty Minutes" showed on a program in 1980 how the Gablers screen and blacklist textbooks and quoted the vice-president of a major publisher attesting to the danger a company like his risks in persisting against their disapproval. Editors keep the Gablers' bills of particulars before them as they work. "The Gablers are the two most important people in education," asserted Edward B. Jenkinson, former chair of the National Council of Teachers of English Committee Against Censorship. "In 1978 they shot down 18 of the 28 books up for adoption in Texas."[11]

This background explains why the visit and consultations of the Gablers were of great importance to the Kanawha County protesters. Through the Gablers a spontaneous local revolt became part of a national network long in operation but just fully savoring its power.

In an issue noting this power in 1979, *Parade* linked the Gablers with the other most significant organization to get involved in Kanawha County, the Heritage Foundation, also represented at the October 8 rally:

> Another writer and traveling "consumer advocate" for education is Dr. Onalee McGraw, education consultant for The Heritage Foundation. . . . The Gablers and Dr. McGraw keep in touch with hundreds of state and local groups concerned with improving education: Parents Rights, Inc. in St. Louis; Guardians of Education in Maine; and Let's Improve Today's Education in Arizona—to name a few.[12]

Writing on United States House of Representatives stationery, Congressman Phillip Crane of Illinois' Twelfth District sent out form letters on December 2nd, 1974, summarizing the conflict so as to martyrize the jailed protesters. An enclosed flier was headed, "Police Brutality Used to Intimidate Charleston Textbook Protest." While asking for contributions to defray legal fees and other costs of the foundation's work, Crane wrote:

> The Heritage Foundation in Washington is helping the parents of Charleston regain their right to control the education of their children. Through the legal assistance of their lawyer, Heritage has been in Charleston courts defending protesting parents who have gone to jail for their beliefs. . . .
>
> Heritage has received inquiry from other parts of the country where parents share the same concern as the Charleston protestors. Legal action may be undertaken in those places. . . .
>
> I sincerely hope you will be able to help Heritage stop forcing pornography and other objectionable subjects into schools all over America.[13]

The copy of the letter that happened to fall to me was addressed to a construction company in Tennessee.

> As a member of the U.S. Congress I would like to know what books are being used in the Nashville area schools, since federal funds go to almost every public school system in the country. A textbook survey is enclosed so you can let me know if you have any information about this.[14]

(Nashville is one of many cities in the Deep South where *Interaction* was used without outcry or outrage. "Several textbooks under protest in the West Virginia 'book banning' have been used in Metro [greater Nashville] schools for several years without complaint, Metro's coordinator of Language Arts said.")[15] The Heritage Foundation developed—and reinforced—strong ties with members of the administration of Ronald Reagan, within two years of whose inauguration, according to the American Library Association, complaints about books in public libraries increased fivefold.

Other outside organizations that became involved in Kanawha County were, on the rightist side, the National Parents Organization, the

John Birch Society, Guardians of Traditional Education, the Ku Klux Klan, and, on the left, the Young Socialist party and the International Workers party. The Rev. Quigley told Catherine Candor-Chandler "that without outsiders he doubted that more than one hundred people from Kanawha County would have been involved in the protest at this point in time."[16] That point in time was November, when these groups came in and when the decision to return the books to classrooms had been made (on the 8th).

At the end of November protesters held in Charleston a national textbook rally at which featured speaker the Rev. Carl McIntire, a fundamentalist, chastized politicians for not coming out on the side of the protesters. In December the Reverends Horan, Hill, and Graley met in Washington with Congressman Roger Zion, R-Indiana, who read into the *Congressional Record* alleged material from the disputed Kanawha County textbooks and introduced a bill permitting citizens to examine any book in a school and to recall school board members.

At the request of the Kanawha County Association of Classroom Teachers, the National Education Association sent into the county in December a blue-ribbon national panel to conduct an inquiry for three days. The NEA is a large and powerful advocate of educators based in Washington, D.C. In its report a few months later this team supported the board's selection of language arts materials but criticized it for knuckling under (by removing the books in September), which makes "censors of parents" and constitutes "an abdication of the board's legal obligation to maintain responsible control of the schools."[17]

The NEA panel recommended that school authorities offer alternative schooling in "traditional teaching methods" and open up channels for a more sensitive communication with its rural constituents. It also advised the state legislature to stave off inroads on teachers' rights to select materials, give legal authority to the Kanawha board's mandate for multicultural content, and pass a bill requiring as a certification standard that the training of teachers include courses in human relations and multiethnic education.[18]

Concerned Citizens of Kanawha County and the Business and Professional People's Alliance for Better Textbooks held in January of 1975 three days of hearings of their own before a local panel. The resulting report was to go to citizens of Kanawha County and to Congress in Washington. Out-of-state speakers came from an Arizona publication, the Arizona legislature, the Heritage Foundation, Parents of New York United, the National Parents League (an Oregon-based organization which assists formation of parent-run schools to avoid corruption of children in public schools), Fordham and George Washington universities, a Maryland parents organization called CURE, and a member of a Maryland board of education, among others.

On January 18, the day after the Rev. Horan and five others were indicted by a federal grand jury for conspiracy to blow up two elementary schools and other School Board property

> nearly two hundred protesters gathered at the State Capitol to welcome the Ku Klux Klan to Charleston. Rev. Horan, free on bail, and Ed Miller, founder of the Non-Christian American Parents group, appeared with Dale Reush, grand dragon of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Ohio, and James Venable, imperial wizard of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan from Stone Mountain, Georgia. Visiting Klansmen, in full dress with robes and hoods, held a brief rally on the steps of the State Capitol before proceeding to an indoor rally at the Charleston Civic Center where the number of spectators more than doubled. Venable told protesters that the "Communist, Socialist, nigger race is going to dominate this nation." Visiting Klansmen pledged support of Kanawha County protesters, including possible legal aid for Rev. Horan and told the Charleston audience to apply for membership in the KKK.[19]

Not only did the local NAACP, the state Human Rights Commission, and the mayor of Charleston denounce the KKK involvement but also Elmer Fike's antibook organization, the Business and Professional People's Alliance for Better Textbooks. In March a contingent of over 70 Kanawha County protesters joined with Boston antibusing forces in a Washington rally to oppose federal intervention in local school districts.

By far, the majority of outsiders contributing to the controversy represented the right wing. Among the five factors beyond the control of the School Board that fueled the conflict, Candor-Chandler counts outside intervention. In a press release of February 6, 1975, the NEA said that its panel

> concluded that the protest would not have been as prolonged and intense had it not been "infiltrated by representatives of highly sophisticated, well-organized right-wing extremist groups. . . .
>
> These groups, which have provided legal, organizational, and financial assistance in the textbook conflict, are either directly associated or in apparent close sympathy with the John Birch Society, NEA charged.
>
> The protest would not have been as unyielding and violent had the educational materials in dispute not been multi-ethnic and multi-cultural in content, according to the NEA report.
>
> After reviewing many of the protestors' objections to writings by or about blacks, the NEA panel concluded that the protest is, at least in part, "a reaction to the black presence in America."[20]

To this statement was attached a list that mentions groups I've already referred to.

By "the protest" NEA seems to mean only the turmoil following the

opening of school, not the controversy and demonstrations of the preceding spring and summer. In the longer perspective, outside intervention occurred relatively late, as I've indicated, at least overtly enough to make itself known to others than the dissenters. I think a fair assessment of the role of outsiders would not assume they fomented the original outcry but that they eagerly seized on the book dispute to expand a previously existing network of textbook surveillance and to strengthen more general conservative movements.

The involvement of outsiders in the Kanawha County dispute gives some idea of how much the feelings and beliefs enacted there are shared by others across the continent. It would be a serious mistake not to recognize the consonance between the attitudes of some of the poorest, least educated people in America and those of some of the wealthiest and best educated, because this psychological kinship spanning socioeconomic differences lays the basis for an alignment of forces that often determines United States policy and hence that may help decide the planetary future. It welds religion with economics and politics; that is, it confuses spiritual with material motives.

The relationship between Elmer Fike and his fundamentalist allies parallels a relationship between Orange County in California and Kanawha County, dissimilar as the two regions may appear on the surface. Between Los Angeles and San Diego, protected from Pacific fogs by the low coastal hills, thrive in warm hollows and along sunny slopes those grand groves of glossy-leaved oranges and avocados. Magnificent Mediterranean-style homes with red-tile roofs spill purple ice-plants down their cliff yards to the ocean itself. The string of well-to-do beach towns culminating in La Jolla, by San Diego, are playgrounds filled with yachting marinas, seafood restaurants, hibiscus, and fancy boutiques. This stretch of shore and hinterland contains some of the wealthiest and most conservative citizens of the United States (along with the poor Chicanos who work their lands and service their households). The former range from ranch owners to millionaire celebrities to retired admirals. Orange County itself, which contains Robert Dornan's congressional district, a publisher of creationist textbooks, and the western home of the John Birch Society, occupies that portion of the stretch between Long Beach and Camp Pendleton, the Santa Ana Mountains and the sea. It includes, besides the one large city of Santa Ana, San Clemente, where Richard Nixon lived in a beach mansion which he was accused of unlawfully improving at taxpayers' expense; Newport Beach, which drew spotlights during the Watergate proceedings as the home of John and Martha Mitchell; Anaheim, the site of Disneyland; and the famous old mission beach town of San Juan Capistrano, to which the swallows return.

Although it is impossible for me to describe unsatirically the tanned

and gilded life of this area, I have to say that some of the most impressive people I've met in education circles have been in Orange County. At the turn of the sixties into the seventies, before *Interaction* came out, I consulted several times in the Newport Beach–Costa Mesa Unified School District, where secondary school people wanted to work into classrooms the curriculum I was developing in literature, drama, and writing. Later, I filmed for *Interaction* some remarkable activities in choral reading and theater improvisations that teachers had set in motion at Laguna Beach High. Principals and teachers were intelligent, sophisticated, and talented like many others from Orange County I have known through the California Association of Teachers of English or met at various conventions and conferences. The faculty of the English Department of the University of California at Irvine had me there in the early seventies and later in the eighties to discuss English curriculum and teacher training. They too were questing, receptive, and flexible. Because of the wealth, Orange County can attract such teachers. Because of its sophistication it asks for creative schooling—or did then, at any rate.

But this represents only one side of this very curious county. Its people, like those of Kanawha County, are divided over values. While a playland like Newport Beach is not a working city like Anaheim, no more than Charleston is Campbell's Creek, nevertheless conflict does not all come down to gross socioeconomic or cultural differences. As Charleston split within itself, so did Anaheim, which was another of those communities that convulsed itself over school books in the wake of the Kanawha County revolt.

> Part of the 33,000-student Union High School district in Anaheim, Cal.—the largest west of the Mississippi—voted to secede and form its own school district after the Union school board banned sex and drug education and a course on women's liberation. The board eliminated flexible scheduling; required seniors to take a course called "Free Enterprise," which reportedly includes attacks on government interference in society and excludes discussions of unions; banned from high school reading lists all of Shakespeare's works except *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet;* banned all of Charles Dickens' works except *Oliver Twist;* and found all but one of Mark Twain's works "unsuitable."[21]

So here is another large school district pulled apart by its divergent factions. And it is not even the whole county but just one urban area of it. How finely can one analyze conflict into social differences before the differences become merely individual differences within the same class, before outer conflict becomes inner, and we are faced with personal ambivalence. My impression is that many parents in these conflicted districts, like many elsewhere, really want creative schooling that will

expand the consciousness of their children but yet fear losing the minds of their children to the minds they will meet in books. A little learning *is* a dangerous thing.

For various and sometimes amusing reasons my name has wound up on mailing lists for fervid organizations located in Orange County. While on sabbatical leave in 1961 from Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, my wife and I rented for the year a house in the San Francisco Bay area from an eccentric right-wing dowager who still had a locked closet full of hoarded sugar from World War II. (Such instances restore the meaning of "conservative.") While cruising the world she subscribed us, without our knowledge, to *The Cross and the Flag*, put out by the once infamous Gerald L. K. Smith, a rabid hatemonger from the Deep South who had found a home in Orange County. This magazine, which called even Dwight Eisenhower a Communist, spat into our home each month an astonishing poison against blacks, Jews, and Catholics—explicit and unabashed diatribes.

Over a decade later, after I was residing in California and lobbying vigorously with other teachers against the installation in the state school system of Planning, Programming, and Budgeting Systems, I began receiving literature from conservative organizations in Orange County and elsewhere in Southern California. Since Washington was railroading PPBS into states, the movement became identified as a familiar cause—the undue intervention of federal government into local affairs. I have more than once decried a tendency to employ federal funding to standardize and mechanize the curriculum across the nation. By denouncing PPBS with colleagues before the California Department of Education I had become a conservative hero! (It's perhaps germane to mention that the largest audience to which I ever spoke about PPBS—or any other subject, I'm afraid—was in the Anaheim Convention Center, where the Southern California Council of Teachers of English had sponsored a special conference to halt this federal invasion.) My reward for coinciding with a conservative view—and this happens naturally from time to time because I don't try to line up either right or left—was to be pelted by literature advocating patriotic chauvinism, militarism, federal deregulation of business, free enterprise, anti-Communism, and other noneducational planks in the familiar platform. Then purely as an author in English education I received newsletters and newspapers from phonics foundations, who always attack the "look-say" method (as Elmer Fike does) in a simplistic, evangelical crusade that exults in its own partisanship.

Predictably, these organizations center in Orange County or the Phoenix area of Arizona. These are places, like San Diego and certain other localities in the Southwest, where for a long time people have been retiring, many wealthy but many not. Orange County I see as a handy sym-

bol for these rightist sites. Age and wealth partly account for why these become conservative strongholds, but the Southwest also has strong traditions from settler days of a hacienda aristocracy among big ranchers that dislikes drifters and foreigners, resists sharing its land, and prides itself on lineage. This blood-and-soil mentality differs not greatly from Appalachian heritage. Neither in turn differs, except perhaps in intensity and concentration, from similar traditions elsewhere in America—Yankee in New England, Antebellum in the Deep South, or Old World immigrant in the Midwest. The resonance between elements of Orange County and elements of Kanawha County tells us clearly that mountaineers are not freaks.

The affinity between these two otherwise disparate counties seems less remarkable when one considers how many Americans share opinions with the book dissenters. Of 1,518 adults polled by George Gallup Jr.'s organization in 300 areas of the United States during the early 1980s, 44 percent accepted as true the statement that, "God created man pretty much in his present form at one time within the last ten thousand years," which is a creationist credo. One-fourth of these people had graduated from college.[22]

Dimensions of Tolerance, a study conducted during the late 1970s by political scientist Herbert McClosky of the University of California at Berkeley and scholar Alida Brill of the Russell Sage Foundation, revealed that less than 40 percent of the American public consistently supports such civil liberties as free speech, free assembly, and due process of law. Sampling not only the general public but also judges and lawyers, community leaders, government officials, and police, the researchers found that even fewer Americans tolerate assertion of civil liberties by unpopular groups such as minorities and homosexuals.[23]

Perhaps the strongest single indicator of how much many other Americans agree with the West Virginia book protesters is the extraordinary popularity of Ronald Reagan, who was not only supported by some of the same organizations that aided them but whose platform, virtually plank by plank, coincides with their views and values. Though launched into politics by Southern California millionaires, Reagan gradually won over people of all classes, even those hurt by his economic policies, as the republic reacted to postwar changes and drifted into the retrenchments of anxiety.

But, shifts in the public psyche aside, we all think too narrowly, are overattached to the things of our little world, to our own blood and soil, in an age when even our everyday fixation of ideas and customary loyalties may cost us the world itself. Anybody whose understanding is incomplete is partial, and whoever is partial is avoiding knowing something, is censoring. So let us listen more closely to what book banners

say. They more nearly harp the thought of mainstream America than first appears. They utter that part of everyone that forms the only conspiracy that can ever hurt us.

Ballad of Kanawha County
Mary Rose (alias)

(*Textbook War—Hills of West Virginia*, a record album by Pastor Avis Hill and company.)

Chorus: Sweet Alice, Little Avis, Graley, Quigley, Horan,
What are you doin' in them mountains stirrin' up a storm?
Don't you know you're rousin' people 'round the U.S.A.,
Tellin' folks right from wrong and God-fearin' ways?

Our bridges fell in, the dams gave way, and they strip-mined our beautiful hills.
We turned our cheek when the bridges blew up, but they even blew our stills.

Chorus

Yes, we turned our cheeks seventy times seven, we did not resist
Till they came for the souls of our precious ones, and now we're gonna resist.
Now they come for our kids with the dirty books and their one-world plan,
But they got a surprise from us mountain folk, because now the Lord said stand.
Well, first to come were the miners from the deep dark bowels of the earth.
They know what it is to trust in the Lord for their every breath.

Chorus

Next to come was the NEA, the textbook leaders of our land.
They said our religion was due to the hills; we needed help and more plans.
Well, we always thought our help came from God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit too.
As for professional help, we've had it for years without believing in the ACLU.

Chorus

One nasty cold night at a School Board meetin' the superintendent was there.
They pulled out a plug, excitement broke out, fists flying everywhere.
One board member hid under a table, and the superintendent went down.

Then an angry mountain mama mashed his face. Would you believe that super left town?

Chorus

On February 22nd of *The Daily World* out spoke the Communists:
"You're racist," they said, "and know nothing too, and you're backed by big business.
The books are fine, they mean a decent education, a break for academic freedom."
But what they *really* mean is, "Read the books, kids, and we'll soon have your nation."

Chorus

Now Supreme Court judges we never voted for way over there in Washington,
Some folks said they committed treason for the shape our nation's in.
You can't pray in school, you can kill a baby, you can bus the kids for hours on end.
It's OK to fight an undeclared war and find out that men aren't men.

Chorus

Now listen, America, you might give in to the Supreme Court mess,
But we're standing for God, children, and country, liberty, and happiness.
So if you're a believer, not just a pretender, for the Lord Jesus Christ,
Throw out the dirty books, stand up for the Lord and your child's eternal life.

Chorus