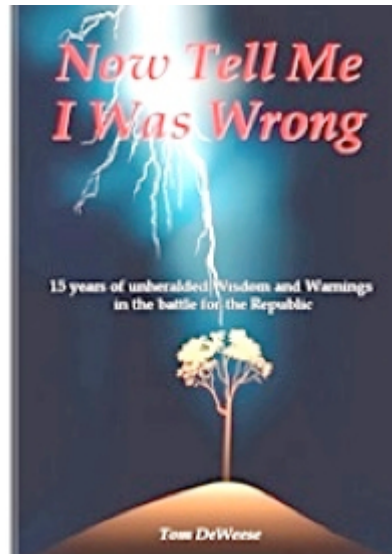




Written by [Beverly K. Eakman](#) on April 18, 2011

Book Review: Now Tell Me I Was Wrong

Tom DeWeese is among the unsung heroes of the real conservative activist movement, the one that focuses on individual (as opposed to collective) liberty, free enterprise (sans the uber-regulations aimed at paring it down), private property rights and personal privacy (under unprecedented assault since 2001), and U.S. sovereignty (instead of global governance). He is founder and president of the Washington, DC-Metro-based American Policy Center, a privately funded think tank founded in 1988.



With a solid, 30-year background in international politics and business, as newspaper editor and high-profile debater on the international stage, Mr. DeWeese has compiled and presented [Now Tell Me I Was Wrong](#) — a nine-chapter anthology of his many columns and feature articles that opens with a revealing Introduction detailing his meteoric rise from humble candidate for the Ohio state legislature to heralded voice of reason and Americanism in the 21st century.* His life could have taken so many different turns — more remunerative than the one he selected. But he was jolted out of an academic stupor during his senior year in high school as a pupil for a required course in government taught by a liberal professor. Up to that point non-political and uninspired, young Tom DeWeese was sparked by this professor to read voraciously. He wound up reading not only the assigned works, but those alluded to in the footnotes and fine print, including those his erstwhile professor had either passed over or reviled.

Young Tom went on to head Youth for Decency in the Year of Woodstock, 1969, when a Jim Morrison of the pop group, the Doors, was arrested for indecent behavior during a concert in Miami. No prude either then or now, DeWeese recognized that even the youth of those volatile times did not require licentious behavior to be entertained.

From this relatively small-scale movement in Ohio, DeWeese became a force to be reckoned with.



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“Older Americans,” he writes, “[were by then] weary of ...antiwar demonstrations and campus riots....” These folks reached out to him as he piled on the proof showing that millions of Boomer students were not impressed with the shenanigans of the self-styled hooligans and “useful idiots” of Vladimir Lenin’s dreams. DeWeese started speaking before such organizations as the Kiwanis, Optimist, and Rotary Clubs, then was courted by radio and television interviewers.

By the time he ran into a traditionalist college group called Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), he was deeply into heavy philosophical writings — the old Federalist writings of Thomas Jefferson, Ludwig von Mises, Frederick Hayek, Ayn Rand, Milton Friedman, and William F. Buckley. No slacker, he immersed himself as well in pages of their collective nemises, such as Berandine Dohrn and other self-admitted leftists of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), knowing full well that he would require a thorough knowledge of both sides if he hoped to debate issues, be it foreign policy, education, economics — or “decency.”

Unfortunately — or maybe fortunately for us readers — DeWeese soon came face-to-face with the emerging brick wall of an encroaching leftist media. He noticed whose messages, speeches and gatherings were covered — and whose were not. This one-sidedness, at a time when more young Americans were patriotic and traditional than not, struck him as way out of sync. He admits that for all his reading, he “never changed [his] basic philosophy or message from those first activist years.” Although he tried his hand at many other enterprises — politics, after all, can be short-lived — his heart wasn’t in any of them. DeWeese had found his calling — in politics.

Predictably, DeWeese was labeled variously as an alarmist, extremist, out-of-step and worse, but he could see even from his vantage point of the 1960s and 70s what many adults refused to believe would become a permanent phenomenon. Today, of course, that “phenomenon” has culminated in an administration proudly supporting the kind of socialist-authoritarian policies that would make soldiers of the World War II generation cringe.

The most onerous premonition for Mr. DeWeese first came when the federal government began infringing on state and local curricular choices and school policies. Local control was being dismantled piecemeal by successive administrations, both Republican and Democrat, using sleights of hand like “compelling state interest,” “equality,” and “standards.” But the result was that standards *per se* disappeared, save for politically correct dogma, and that a massive program of conditioning produced a generation of young graduates (and new voters) who valued security over liberty, phony science and save-the-planet hogwash over the scientific method, and global governance over national sovereignty. Most of this redirection grew out a belief that the United Nations could put everything right. That curriculum increasingly emanated from that body somehow passed over the heads of both students and their bewildered parents. But it spelled doom for such highly vaunted constitutional principles as personal property rights; Christian ideals of right and wrong; and intact, self-sufficient families. Tom DeWeese explains in Chapters 2, 3, and 5 how the United Nations and the environmentalist movement together turned our nation from an honorable path of self-determination and self-rule to dependency mindset of wealth-redistribution and entitlement. Suddenly, wars that once were fought in self-defense, with one side surrendering and the other side winning, were launched in a futile effort at nation-building, which in turn demanded never-ending subsidies and sacrifices from American taxpayers.

This book comes at the right time, just prior to the campaign that will probably determine for the 100 years or so whether this nation follows a socialist-to-totalitarian path, or reverts to its constitutional roots as a sovereign Republic. The question is important, as much of the population no longer is



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schooled in the weighty deliberations of the Founders who created the new experiment in self-governance, in which religious values are viewed as a “default setting” in the abstract, but without the particulars of any one denominational dogma morphing into an authoritarian State. Most people today have no idea just how revolutionary that concept was at the time.

DeWeese provides a riveting 35-year history of his writings that chronicle the speed with which America veered from its constitutional moorings. One can’t help but be struck by the rapidity of the timeframe, even given the enormous advances in technology. For 200 years of American idealism to be overturned in just 35 required help, and Tom DeWeese gives the reader an up-front-and-personal eyeful of just where it came from. With “little help from our (Marxist) friends,” *fanaticism* was ushered in under the pretense of “tolerance,” *censorship* under the cover of “free speech and press,” *enforced atheism* under monikers like “progress” and “mental health,” and *collectivism* under the guise of “team spirit.” Fifteen years before the fact, Tom DeWeese predicted “Climategate,” the ascendancy of rabid environmentalism, together with what he dubbed the “Pacman” effect on private property rights. Nobody listened when he foretold an era where the demand for “your-papers” and universal surveillance would become customary, or that a National ID would accompany an invasion of illegal aliens, many of them violent criminals, whose accessibility to higher education, health care and employment trumps that of the law-abiding citizens who subsidize the resulting underclass of predators and freeloaders.

The amazing thing is DeWeese’s continued unflagging belief in the average American’s ability — and will — to turn things around. He senses that a majority still holds to traditional American values, whether people realize it or not, and that in the end, the leftists, including the media and the increasing ranks of GOP “RINOs (Republicans in Name Only)” — who “go along to get along”: All of them will eventually misstep. Even as newspapers report almost daily on the outrageous excesses by such agencies as the Transportation Security Administration, the populace responds more with grumbles (which are swiftly and aggressively squelched) than demands for action, but DeWeese’s optimism remains.

In the end, he points to past societies, some believed to be so dispirited as to have lost all energy to resist. Yet suddenly they have risen up and surprised their tormenters with a determination that could be neither denied nor thwarted. In that vein, DeWeese closes on an optimistic note, with a quote from Gandhi that gets one’s attention: “First they ignore you. Then they laugh at you. Then they fight you. Then we win.”

With DeWeese’s track record of spot-on commentary, I’m not about to tell him that he’s wrong now!

***Now Tell Me I Was Wrong**, by Tom DeWeese; Founder and President, American Policy Center; 233 pp., softcover, \$19.99, ISBN 978-1-3568-4812-5, Xlibris Corp, 2011.

Beverly K. Eakman is a former speechwriter for the heads of two federal agencies, a sought-after lecturer and the author of six books (including the best-selling, international award-winner, [Cloning of the American Mind: Eradicating Morality Through Education](#)) on education policy, mental-health and illicit data-trafficking. Her latest work is [Walking Targets: How Our Psychologized Classrooms Are Creating a Nation of Sitting Ducks](#). Her seminar manual, [How To Counter Group Manipulation Tactics](#), just came out in its 2011 Edition, 5th printing. She can be reached through her web site: www.BeverlyE.com.



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