

## The Century Foundation

*The Little-Known Liberal Stalwart*

By Martin Morse Wooster

**Summary:** From a posh townhouse on Manhattan's Upper East Side, the Century Foundation has been pumping out research and opinion on homeland security, Social Security, immigration, war, the media, education, and healthcare. Many of its products reflect an almost quaint unreconstructed faith in the Great Society of the 1960s, but the foundation is accelerating its activity and partnering with younger "progressive" groups to advance its agenda. The Century Foundation is the most venerable liberal foundation you've never heard of.

As this issue goes to press, a conference is scheduled for January 19 on the topic of American media coverage of the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. Slated to appear at New York's Harvard Club are CBS's Morley Safer; Sydney Schanberg, the author of *The Life and Death of Dith Pran* (the witness to the Cambodian holocaust celebrated in the film *The Killing Fields*); and veteran reporter Peter Osnos, now editor-at-large of the book publisher PublicAffairs. The notice for the forum observes, "Forty years after the United States became a direct combatant in Vietnam, it is again embroiled in a distant war that deeply divides the American public and alienates much of the world." The venue for the conference is highly respectable, the speakers venerable, the politics left-leaning. In other words, the conference sounds just like its sponsor, the Century Foundation.

The Century Foundation is one of the Left's oldest think tanks, putting out scores of op-eds and policy briefs on issues ranging



Edward A. Filene, of the department store fame, founded the organization that would become the Century Foundation in 1919.

from homeland security to voting reform to affirmative action. Under its previous name, the Twentieth Century Fund, the foundation was one of the most respected liberal nonprofits in the U.S.

Yet the Century Foundation, founded in 1919, has received surprisingly little scrutiny from the press. This article is the longest profile of the foundation's history and activities since a *Business Week* article that appeared in 1953.

In 1999, the Twentieth Century Fund bade the old century farewell by changing its name. If the Twentieth Century Fund was a stolid champion of the liberal establishment, the Century Foundation has become a modern, action-oriented think tank flooding the Internet with policy papers and op-eds. While retaining its Upper East Side townhouse as its headquarters, the

Foundation established a Washington D.C. office, from which it has begun to build ties to other left-liberal think tanks and journals to make liberalism—and big government—respectable again.

A recent close ally of the Century Foundation is the Center for American

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**CONTENTS**

The Century Foundation

Page 1

Philanthropy Notes

Page 8

Progress (CAP), the think tank conceived by George Soros and headed by former Clinton chief of staff John Podesta. A 2003 ~~article in the~~ *New York Times* reported that Century Foundation president Richard Leone was one of the center's founders.

The Century Foundation and CAP jointly sponsor the Security and Peace Initiative ([securitypeace.org](http://securitypeace.org)), which "places emphasis on identifying and promoting emerging voices in progressive foreign policy." The Initiative provides one added bit of evidence for the increasing links between the Century Foundation and George Soros: the director of the Initiative is Morton H. Halperin, who is not only senior vice president of CAP, but is also director of Soros's Washington, D.C.-based Open Society Policy Center. The arrangement seems to be mutually beneficial—the Century Foundation draws on the talent and resources of CAP, a young, vibrant organization, while CAP profits from its association with a venerable progressive foundation. Meanwhile, the Open Society Policy Center, whose name is used quite sparingly on the Security and Peace Initiative's website, can promote its ideas through a respectable proxy at several removes from the name Soros, which is politically poisonous.

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The Initiative did team directly with the Open Society Institute in 2005 to produce a major report titled "Restoring American Leadership: 13 Cooperative Steps to Advance Global Progress." Among the recommended steps are promoting nuclear nonproliferation, supporting the international criminal court (a perennial issue for Soros), moving away from unilateral military action, ratifying the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (a thirty-article behemoth that easily dwarfs the Equal Rights Amendment), increasing foreign aid, and cooperating with the UN on "climate change." Among the reports authors are representatives from Amnesty International, the National Environmental Trust, the International Women's Health Coalition, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Open Society Institute. The recurrent themes are resistance to unilateralism, support for welfare entitlement programs on an international scale, and mobilizing support for the creation of international bureaucracies.

The Century Foundation is poised to revive liberalism in the twenty-first century by combating the policy proposals of conservatives. No one can say that it has neglected to follow its donor's intentions.

### **Beginnings**

The Century Foundation's creator was Edward A. Filene (1860-1937), who took a small department store created by his father and, working with his younger brother Lincoln, turned William Filene's Sons into Boston's leading retailer.

As an entrepreneur, Filene's greatest achievement was the creation of the "Automatic Bargain Basement" in 1909. In the basement, unsold merchandise was periodically discounted, with the discounts rising the longer the goods stayed on the shelves. The "basement" proved popular with thrifty Bostonians, and, as Filene's Basement, became a national chain prized by bargain hunters.<sup>1</sup>

Politically, Filene prided himself on his liberalism. He was so prolific a writer of op-eds, books and articles that public-relations expert Edward Bernays, hired in 1929 on a \$15,000 annual retainer, told his client that his first task was to increase the "scarcity value" of his work by not writing so much.

In his book *The Way Out* (1924), Filene wrote that the task of the "liberal business man" was to counter the increasing conservatism of American life. "Very often the conservative defeats the liberal because he employs better machinery and more money in support of his point of view," Filene wrote. "If the liberal minority among business men are to counter the activity of their more numerous conservative associates, they must duplicate the machinery used by the conservative majority. To do this liberal business men must have equally effective staffs of secretaries, experts, and publicity men."

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Filene was an active promoter of liberalism for most of his adult life. He was a passionate supporter of cooperatives, which he thought empowered workers and smoothed the rougher edges of capitalism. In 1919, Filene, along with fellow liberal industrialists John Fahey and William Dennison, created the Co-operative League to promote the cooperative movement. The league did not do very much, but in 1922 the group was renamed the Twentieth Century Fund and began to become more active in its efforts to defend a left wing crushed by Warren G. Harding's decisive victory in the 1920 presidential contest.

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<sup>1</sup> Filene's Basement was split off from Filene's decades ago. In July, the *Boston Globe* reported that Filene's parent, Federated Department Stores, plans to close the original Filene's downtown Boston store and change the surviving Filene's stores into Macy's in 2006.

Historian Christopher Martin, whose biography of Filene is an unpublished 2002 dissertation, writes that the Fund's goal was "an attempt, however vain, to salvage the vestiges of a flagging liberalism."

It should be noted that Filene was a strong believer in the ideas of Julius Rosenwald, who urged his fellow donors to place strict time limits on the foundations they created. In a 1930 article in the *North American Review*, Filene declared that Rosenwald was one of "the ten key men of business" because of his forceful advocacy of foundation term limits.

"America today is cursed by a staggeringly large amount of money controlled by dead men in funds and endowments which no longer have any human excuse for functioning," Filene wrote. "I would hesitate to say how many hundreds of millions of dollars are so tied up."

When the Twentieth Century Fund was created in 1922, Filene stated that a clause in the fund's charter that said that the fund could use the income for its endowment for any purpose whatsoever "would operate to make the Fund perpetual, which is not my wish." Filene declared that after March 30, 1947 (25 years after he donated the stock) the fund's trustees could spend the principal and the income from his gift if they chose, thus spending down the fund's endowment,

As I noted in my monograph *Should Foundations Live Forever?* many foundations created in this era—including not only the Twentieth Century Fund, but also the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, the Commonwealth Fund, and the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation—gave their successors the option to spend down the foundations' endowments if they chose. Not surprisingly, none of these foundations chose to spend themselves out—even when, as in Filene's case, he explicitly stated that it was his wish that the Twentieth Century Fund have a limited life span.

The Twentieth Century Fund spent most of its first decade figuring out what to do with itself and distancing itself from its founder. Increasingly Filene proposed projects that the board voted down—and since Filene had only one vote on the board of trustees, there

was little he could do except sulk. "In creating the Fund," notes historian Martin, "Filene had insisted on guaranteeing its independence, a decision which now left the organization largely unresponsive to his own wishes."



Richard C. Leone, president of the Century Foundation, took a leave of absence to head the transition team for New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine.

The Fund's directors decided the organization's goal was to produce weighty studies of economics and public policy, including research on social insurance and on the national debt. The fund also supported *American Foundations and their Fields*, the first directory of American foundations. (That directory is the distant ancestor of the Foundation Center's annual *Foundation Register*.)

closely with Wagner's chief adviser, Leon Keyserling, on drafting the National Labor Relations Act, which, when passed by Congress in 1935, gave American unions the right to organize and established the National Labor Relations Board to mediate between unions and employers. While Davis was working for the fund and Sen. Wagner, the fund published a hefty report calling for reforms in U.S. labor law. Meanwhile, Edward Filene lobbied his fellow industrialists to support Sen. Wagner's bill.

The Twentieth Century Fund's successful efforts to create U.S. labor law, in Magat's view, showed the fund assuming "an audacious policy-influencing role of a sort from which most foundations later would flinch."

The Wagner Act episode was also highly unusual in the Twentieth Century Fund's history. After Filene's death in 1937, the fund went into an intellectual torpor that would last, well, for the remainder of the twentieth century.

Shortly after Filene's death, the Twentieth Century Fund board announced that it would no longer be a grantmaker, but instead would transform itself into what the *New York Times* called "an institute devoted to economic research and the formation of economic policies"—i.e., a think tank. The Fund—and the subsequent Century Foundation—has largely continued this policy, occasionally making grants and more than occasionally receiving them.

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In one case the Fund engaged in political activism, with the enthusiastic support of Edward Filene. As historian Richard Magat notes, the fund played a substantial role in drafting New Deal labor legislation. In 1934, the fund created a Labor Committee to study U.S. labor law. The Fund paid the salary of William Hammatt Davis, who was then a legislative assistant to Sen. Robert Wagner (D—New York). While on the fund's payroll, Davis wrote memos to Wagner's staff on labor reform, helped organize congressional testimony on labor issues, and worked

Politically, the Twentieth Century Fund remained a bastion of technocratic liberalism, particularly under the leadership of Adolf A. Berle, a Franklin Roosevelt "brains truster" who served as chairman of the fund's board from 1951-1970. "The Fund's approach," noted a 1948 statement, "is that of the social engineer who assembles and considers all of the available information as a problem and then makes the best possible plan for action that time permits."

Politically, notes Berle biographer Jordan A. Schwartz, the Fund's board during this

era “were left-liberals” who had no objection to funding a study of the British welfare state in the late 1940s as part of a covert effort to introduce British socialistic ideas into America. But the mandarins who ran the Twentieth Century Fund took an “above the battle” approach that ensured that their influence would be sharply limited.

In a book commemorating the Fund’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Adolf Berle wrote that members of the fund’s board had served in every administration from Herbert Hoover’s to Richard Nixon’s. Because powerful Republicans and Democrats both served on the board, Berle wrote, “no group was less willing to have the Fund work become part of any power mechanism, commercial or political.... Intellectually, there was and still is constant need to remember that whatever the Twentieth Century Fund produces must be uninfluenced by anyone’s desire to please a political, partisan, or commercial cause.”

But while the fund’s “nonpartisan” reports might elicit cheers in the tony corridors of the Century or the Metropolitan Clubs, they had little overt effect on public policy debates. Certainly, the Fund tried to

get the word out about what it was doing. Its presidents were former journalists: August Heckscher came from the editorial pages of the *New York Herald Tribune*, while his successor, M.J. Rossant, came from the business pages of the *New York Times*. Rossant, in fact, served as *The Economist*’s New York correspondent while he was Fund president.

The Fund strenuously promoted its products. For example, in 1947 the Fund convinced ABC to turn its report *America’s Needs and Resources* into a radio documentary in which popular Disney characters presented the Fund’s findings on what the future would be like. *New York Times* writer Jack Gould lamented that the actor who played Donald Duck, “was almost wholly unintelligible” as he described near-term economic forecasts.

Under the tenure of M.J. Rossant, who served as president of the Fund from 1967-1988, the Fund was best known for being the primary supporter of the National News Council, a press watchdog active between 1973-1984. In addition, Rossant instituted a policy of paying the city of New York

\$10,000 a year (increased to \$25,000) in lieu of property taxes on its Upper East Side headquarters.

It should be noted that on at least two occasions, the Fund strayed from its usual support for liberals. In the mid-1970s Allan Weinstein, then a Smith College historian, wrote *Perjury*, his definitive analysis of the lies of Soviet agent Alger Hiss, while serving as the head of a Twentieth Century Fund task force on privacy issues. However, Weinstein’s work on Hiss was not directly supported by the fund. In the 1980s, the Fund supported the work of Abigail Thernstrom (now a Manhattan Institute fellow) in a book showing the flaws of the Voting Rights Act.

### The Twentieth Century Fund and Political Activism

In 1989, the Twentieth Century Fund picked Richard Leone to be its president, a position he holds today. Leone is highly unusual among think tank or foundation leaders in that he is simultaneously pursuing a fairly active political career while serving as head of a nonprofit.

Leone earned a Ph.D. in political science and briefly taught in the Princeton politics department before moving into real-time politics. In 1974 Leone was appointed State Treasurer of New Jersey, where he instituted a state income tax. Two years later, Leone resigned in protest over New Jersey Governor Brendan Byrne’s decision to allow casinos to enter Atlantic City. Leone has been a formidable opponent of organized gambling ever since, and the Century Foundation under his tenure has published several surveys critiquing the casino industry.

In 1978 Leone ran for the U.S. Senate, but lost to Bill Bradley in the Democratic primary. He hasn’t run for office since, but Leone remains a high-profile Democratic activist. In the 1984 presidential contest, Leone was Walter Mondale’s media adviser, and as a coaching exercise played Ronald Reagan against Mondale in mock presidential debates.

After a few years in investment banking, Leone became Twentieth Century Fund president. In 1990, Leone was named chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a position he held for the next four years, fighting privatization of

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New York area airports and leading the investigation of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. However, Leone remained Twentieth Century Fund president while continuing his busy duties as Port Authority head.

This past November, however, Leone took a two-month leave from the Century Foundation to serve as chief of staff for the transition team for newly elected New Jersey Democratic governor Jon Corzine. Leone expects to return to the Century Foundation in February.

In the 1990s the Twentieth Century Fund slowly evolved. It still continued to publish major books, such as *The New Federalist Papers*, a 1996 tome that argued that American democracy could be improved by a stronger and more intrusive central government. But it was clear that the Fund's time-honored methods were no longer working. In 1996 Twentieth Century Fund resident scholar David Callahan wrote an article for the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy's newsletter in which he argued that liberal foundations "poured money into activist groups and community programs...unconnected to a national ideological vision." He said that the left should be more aggressive in promoting its ideas. "In contrast to the well-funded and politically influential polemic of conservative foundations, most liberal books and magazines do not receive funding." (Callahan ignored the fact that liberal foundations have ten or twenty times as much money than conservative ones.)

### Why Liberals Will Win

Perhaps the most succinct description of the Century Foundation's agenda has been provided by Brandeis University professor and former Clinton labor secretary Robert Reich, who gave a lecture at the foundation in 2004 promoting his book *Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America*. According to the Newark *Star-Ledger*, Reich said liberal "is a perfectly fine term, a noble word. I deliberately used it in the title. It's time for us to make that word respectable again."

According to its 2004 IRS Form 990, the Century Foundation has an endowment of \$65 million and spent \$3.9 million on "policy-oriented studies of inequality and economic

policy, American foreign policy, social policy, and domestic political issues." In addition, it reports receiving grants of \$993,142 from other organizations; the largest of these donations were \$300,000 each from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the New York Community Trust, \$159,000 from the Sagner Family Foundation, and \$101,000 from the Leonard Lieberman Family Foundation.

Other donors appear to have contributed in 2005. The foundation's homeland security website ([homelandsec.org](http://homelandsec.org)), states that the Century Foundation Project on Homeland Security is supported by the MacArthur, Knight, and Robert Wood Johnson foundations as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

In addition, the Century Foundation occasionally makes grants. It is a supporter of *The American Prospect* magazine, subsidizing bi-annual special sections that give the foundation's scholars space to publish longer articles. The magazine (co-founded by Clinton labor department secretary Robert Reich) and the foundation also jointly sponsor conferences.

In everything the Century Foundation publishes, its scholars adopt the modern line of the Democratic Party: reverence for any and all welfare state programs, while reserving skepticism for Bush Administration's homeland security and foreign policy agendas. For example:

*The Democratic Party*. Ruy Teixeira, a joint fellow at the Century Foundation and the Center for American Progress, is best known for his 2002 book, *The Coming Democratic Majority*, in which he and *New Republic* senior editor John B. Judis argued that the Democrats would come back to power in 2004 with a new majority composed of minorities, women, and high-income workers in the high-tech suburbs. After the Republicans won in 2004, Teixeira and Judis argued in the *American Prospect* that while their prediction was wrong, a Democratic majority would emerge if the Democrats could both convert disaffected moderate Republicans in New England and the Midwest to switch parties and come up with a presidential candidate who would create "a comfort level among white middle-class voters."

In another *American Prospect* article, Teixeira argues that Democrats "must relentlessly counterattack" any Republican tax cut proposals. He advises Democrats to pick one popular program—for example, health care or education—and claim that these programs would be decimated if tax cuts pass. The fact that all domestic spending

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programs have substantially increased in the Bush Administration can, of course, be safely ignored. In the vein of his book predicting Democratic victory, Teixeira continues to produce a steady stream of analyses of political, economic, and cultural trends—mostly pointing toward (you guessed it) an emerging Democratic majority.

*Social Security.* The title of a seminar the Century Foundation held this summer in New York City summarizes its views: “I Love ~~Social Security~~—Why You Should Too.” It churns out papers pooh-poohing any substantial social security reform, especially privatization. Most recently, the foundation has seized on perceived problems in Chile’s privatized system as a warning against attempting such a scheme here. It’s better, in the foundation’s eyes, for workers to trust the government than to use Social Security funds to boost the stock market through pensions that workers control.

Century Foundation fellows Bernard Wasow and Greg Anrig, Jr. have a reactionary view of Social Security reform: all change is bad. In “20 Myths About Social Security,” Anrig states that all that is needed to reform Social Security is “a menu of modest benefit cuts and revenue increases” that would not have to be implemented until 2042 at the earliest. In a December op-ed written for the foundation, Anrig said that 2005 was “one of the best ever for Social Security” because Congress never seriously considered President Bush’s proposals for partial privatization.

The Century Foundation has also supported the research of former Social Security Commissioner Robert M. Ball, who argues that all that is needed to preserve Social Security is to force state and local government workers to enter the system, use the federal estate tax to fund Social Security payments, and increase the income limit on which Social Security payments are taxed.

The Century Foundation is working hard to provide intellectual ammunition for those who would block meaningful Social Security reform.

*Education.* One of the Century Foundation’s most recent works on education used the opportunity provided by Florida Supreme Court’s rejection of that state’s voucher program in January to attack Milwaukee’s system. An op-ed by Greg Anrig laments what he calls a lack of “public accountability” when it comes to voucher-supported schools—refusing to believe that the market could force schools to improve themselves in order to win over the competition. In typical liberal fashion, he recommends bureaucracy and testing to remedy the situation—or just scrap the vouchers.

The Century Foundation’s education expert is Richard Kahlenberg, who has argued in at least two books that affirmative action should be preserved, but that instead of

being used to aid minorities, affirmative action schemes should be used to help all low-income households. “While economic affirmative action, properly defined, would produce almost as much racial diversity as using race, it would produce far more economic diversity than racial affirmative action has,” Kahlenberg argued in a 2003 *Washington Post* op-ed.

Kahlenberg opposes Bush Administration proposals for school choice and the No Child Left Behind Act. He argues that because good schools—where parents contribute, students are safe and work hard, and discipline is enforced—“correlate directly with the socioeconomic status of the students,” that No Child Left Behind will be ineffective, because it focuses on test scores instead of making inner-city schools economically diverse and thus better. He also opposes private school choice because vouchers won’t allow private students to attend good public suburban schools. Kahlenberg of course ignores the countless cases of inner-city private schools that produce excellent students because they have strong principals and dedicated teachers.

On January 10, the Century Foundation teamed up with the groups Demos, Campaign for Fiscal Equity, and Alliance for Quality Education to present a symposium on “The Growing Educational Divide,” featuring New York City Councilman Robert Jackson and Kahlenberg, who argued that schools are increasingly economically “segregated.” His work is part of a larger Century Foundation effort to introduce “public school choice,” allowing parents to choose which public schools their children will attend. The foundation published a book on the proposal in 2002 called *Divided We Fail*. It sounds like an introduction of market forces into the educational system, until you realize that one “company”—the government—is running all the schools in question. That’s not much of a choice.

*Foreign Policy.* Here the Century Foundation has reverted to its old strategy of hoping that aging mandarins will lead public policy debates. This July, after hearing a pitch by former Clinton Administration official Jamie Metzler and Charles Andraea, a one-time chief of staff to Sen. Richard Lugar (R—Indiana), the Century Foundation launched the Partnership for a Secure

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America. Former Republican senator Warren Rudman and former Democratic congressman Lee Hamilton lead the coalition, whose members include former Secretaries of State Madeline Albright, Warren Christopher, and Lawrence Eagleburger; former National Security Advisers Samuel Berger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Tony Lake, and Robert “Bud” McFarlane; four former senators; and two former congressmen.

Amid the unobjectionable filler in the Partnership’s mission statement, there are admonitions against unilateralism; an assertion that terrorism “is a political act requiring a political response”; calls for the US and allies to fight terrorism by addressing “global poverty, disease, and underdevelopment in a far more aggressive and comprehensive manner to build a safer and more secure future for all Americans and all people”; and calls for the establishment of a “national requirement process based on a thorough analysis of long-term risks and vulnerabilities” that would allocate “preparedness funds” to local emergency responders—because a Century Foundation recommendation wouldn’t be complete without an embrace of federal bureaucracy. Toward the end of 2005 the Partnership purchased several full-page ads in the *New York Times* promoting its agenda and hosted a conference on the US response to terrorism just before the fourth anniversary of September 11.

“These are people who are very much part of the foreign policy establishment,” Center for the Defense of Democracies president Clifford May told the *Los Angeles Times*. “And the weakness of their position should have become very evident on Sept. 11.”

The Century Foundation is also forming cozy partnerships with members of the international diplomatic and NGO community. On November 30, 2005 it co-hosted a roundtable lunch with Germany’s Friedrich Ebert Foundation (which is affiliated with the Social Democratic Party), called “Afghanistan at a Crossroads.” In attendance were UN officials, academics, representatives of international NGOs (including the liberal Human Rights Watch), and Afghanistan’s former Minister of the Interior. The conference was part of increasing foundation interest in Afghanistan; it recently established a frequently updated

website, AfghanistanWatch.com, which monitors developments in that country’s transition to democracy. While this project has so far been relatively short on recommendations, it is allowing the foundation to establish its credentials as an expert in the field; here, as everywhere else, it will show its hand soon enough.

*Voting.* The Century Foundation has been involved in election reform on a high level for several years now. It was one of the sponsors of the 2001 National Commission

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*“These are people who are very much part of the foreign policy establishment,” Center for the Defense of Democracies president Clifford May said. “And the weakness of their position should have become very evident on Sept. 11.”*

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on Federal Election Reform, chaired by Presidents Carter and Ford, whose final report informed the 2002 Help Americans Vote Act (HAVA). It has continued its involvement, funding a project called ReformElections.org. The foundation’s expert on election reform is Tova Andrea Wang, who, ironically, worked in Jesse Jackson’s 1996 get out the vote effort. Jackson’s group has over the years been the subject of repeated accusations of election-time improprieties. Ms. Wang penned a November 2005 op-ed condemning the recent Carter-Baker Commission on Election Reform’s recommendation of a national ID card to prevent voter fraud; she called it a “modern-day poll tax.” In a year-end roundup of election reform news, Wang called a new Georgia law requiring voters to present photo ID “draconian” and warned that an Arizona law requiring voters to prove their citizenship will leave people “disenfranchised.”

#### Conclusion

In its existence, the Century Foundation has pursued two strategies. As the Twentieth

Century Fund, the organization has produced high-minded books. Most of these publications gather dust in university libraries. The Olin Foundation did more to change public policy by funding one book—Charles Murray’s *Losing Ground*—than the Twentieth Century Fund did in nearly 80 years of grant making.

When the Twentieth Century Fund changed its name, it dramatically transformed itself. The Century Foundation now produces op-eds and policy briefs with feverish energy. It’s certainly doing a much better job of promoting itself and the liberal agenda than it did in the twentieth century.

But in many ways the foundation represents reactionary liberalism, in which the only goal is to preserve the New Deal and the Great Society. The only acceptable changes to be made in Social Security, the foundation’s fellows argue, are to make it costlier and more oppressive. School reform must be blocked by any means necessary. Middle and working-class voters who want lower taxes and more personal freedom must somehow be fooled into voting for Democrats who favor higher taxes and an increasingly intrusive state. Similarly, its outlook on foreign affairs is internationalist, placing much faith in a potentially intrusive centralized bureaucracy.

How influential is the Century Foundation? It’s hard to say. What’s clear, however, is that the Century Foundation is a small but sturdy cog in the liberal intellectual establishment. It has recently broadened its scope and is working harder than ever to influence political discourse. It’s likely that in its current incarnation, the foundation’s fortunes will rise and fall as liberalism waxes and wanes. It’s certainly possible that the bonds between the foundation and the more effective Center for American Progress and other groups will tighten—forming potent combinations of old moneyed respectability and energetic innovation. And one thing is certain: despite its founder’s explicit instructions that it not exist in perpetuity, it’s likely that the Century Foundation will be around for a long, long time.

**FW**

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# PhilanthropyNotes

The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* noted in January that **David Fish** of the IRS's **Exempt Organizations** office discussed an investigation into charity executives' salaries. Some groups, Fish said, mask officers' total salaries by spreading them out among several affiliated organizations. After a quick search, **CRC** found that in 2004 **Ralph Neas** of **People for the American Way** (PFAW) received \$89,625 from the **PFAW Action Fund** and \$210,375 from the **PFAW Foundation**. The IRS 990 forms state Neas works 32 hours per week for the Action Fund and 39 for the Foundation. Busy man, that Ralph Neas.

The *London Times* reported in January that amid rosy reports about the economy, billionaire philanthropist **George Soros** predicted a downturn. The *Times* wrote, "Soros, however, has lost the power to spook markets. Now that his ambitions reach to promoting global democracy rather than merely making a fortune, his pronouncements are not greeted with the same seriousness." Ouch.

Meanwhile, **Soros Fund Management** was said to be in talks with **Paramount** to buy the library of **Dreamworks SKG's** films, which number among them "Gladiator," "American Beauty," and "Shrek." Well, we always knew fiction and fantasy were Soros's strong suit.

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* says there's turmoil in that city's **Martin Luther King Center**. Chief Operating Officer **Dexter King** has allegedly channeled millions, including taxpayer money, into his for-profit firm managing his father's estate while neglecting upkeep of the King Center's buildings (including King's crypt). King's heirs are squabbling over whether to sell the crumbling Center (for \$11 million) to the **National Park Service**. When you look to the government for more efficient management, you know you're in trouble.

The **Council on Foundations** recently announced that it has placed the world's largest operating foundation, the Los Angeles-based **J. Paul Getty Trust** (assets: \$8.6 billion) on probation through February 20, pending an investigation of CEO **Barry Munitz's** wild expenses and his role in the sale of Getty real estate to a close friend. Meanwhile, former **Getty Museum** antiquities curator **Marion True** is on trial in Rome for allegedly trading in looted artifacts. Italian and Greek authorities believe dozens of Getty possessions were looted. Getty just can't catch a break.

There is more bickering over Manhattan's 9-11 memorial. The **World Trade Center Memorial Foundation's** plans to keep unidentified victims' remains in a giant mortuary vessel have been scrapped. Instead, remains will be stored in a private climate-controlled room. Some victims' groups have criticized the change. The empty vessel will still remain the focal point of the "contemplation room." How...empty.

As part of its "**Difficult Dialogues**" initiative, the **Ford Foundation** announced in late 2005 twenty-seven grants of \$100,000 to colleges and universities for "projects that promote campus environments where sensitive subjects can be discussed in a spirit of open scholarly inquiry, academic freedom and with respect for different viewpoints." A hundred thousand can buy almost enough **valium** to accomplish that goal.

The **National Legal and Policy Center** recently wrote to the **Ford Motor Company**, advising it not to support a January conference of the **Rev. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH & Citizen Education Fund**. It cited last summer's conference, at which controversial **Nation of Islam** leader **Louis Farrakhan** spoke and **Harry Belafonte** made anti-Semitic remarks. Ford replied that it does "not condone such behavior. Nor, however, do we have any plans to reconsider our support...." Showering tens of thousands of dollars on a group is a funny way of showing your disapproval.