



Freedom and Foundation

Thomas Reeves

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Freedom and the Foundation is a study in depth of the first and most controversial of the tax-exempt foundations dedicated to research and public education in the field of civil liberties and civil rights: The Fund for the Republic.

The story of its struggle for survival, as Mr. Reeves demonstrates, exemplifies the broader conflict between America's liberal and conservative forces in the early 1950s. The Fund—created in 1952 by the Ford Foundation—was set up to explore possibilities for liberalizing American society at the very time when, under the hysterical goading of Senator Joseph McCarthy, the forces of repression had reduced dissent to a hoarse whisper.

Reeves tells of the mounting criticism when, less than two years after the Fund's launching, the noted educator and thinker Robert Hutchins became its president. He shows how, as the Fund attempted to follow its mandate under the leadership of Hutchins and his vice-president, W.H. Ferry, it encountered vociferous and persistent attack from powerful and entirely predictable sources, and became a magnet for all the political crosscurrents of the day. With a subtle feeling for the atmosphere of the McCarthy era, the author carries the reader into the Fund's first crisis, when it was brought before HUAC by the superpatriotic organizations and its other ultraconservative enemies. He describes the many clashes between Hutchins and his detractors in Congress and the press—such adversaries as Chairman Francis Walter of HUAC and the columnist-commentator Fulton Lewis, Jr.

The account of the Fund's inception and development, of its accomplishments in creating, sponsoring, and disseminating ideas useful to the nation—of its inner conflicts and politicking as well as its struggle to make its way in the outside world—is not only fascinating in itself, but particularly timely in the light of the recent Congressional investigations of the tax-exempt foundations.

Professor Reeves's study is based on the files, reports, and publications of the Fund for the Republic (the first foundation to make its complete files available to scholars), which are now at Princeton University, and on scores of interviews with Fund staff members, partisans, and critics, as well as more than five years of examining the more conventional source material.

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