

**REVITALIZING POLITICS NOW AND THEN: HOWARD
ZINN ON DISSENT, DEMOCRACY, AND EDUCATION**

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This paper presents a discussion of Howard Zinn's intellectual and political ideas. Through the analysis of selections from his immense body of work, several interrelated themes emerge. Drawing more attention to these notions of dissent and democracy is crucial to revitalizing education at all levels and vital to advancing the public discourse towards progressive goals.

Howard's remarkable life and work are summarized best in his own words. His primary concern, he explained, was "the countless small actions of unknown people" that lie at the roots of "those great moments" that enter the historical record—a record that will be profoundly misleading, and seriously disempowering, if it is torn from these roots as it passes through the filters of doctrine and dogma. His life was always closely intertwined with his writings and innumerable talks and interviews. It was devoted, selflessly, to empowerment of the unknown people who brought about great moments. (Chomsky 2010, 2)

Introduction

In life, Howard Zinn was controversial. Upon his passing in 2010, even some of his obituaries were unable to avoid controversy. The prime and sorry example was a brief story on National Public Radio that discussed his work and its context:

Professor, author and political activist Howard Zinn died yesterday. Considered the people's historian, Zinn's book, *A People's History of the United States*, was unabashedly leftist. It celebrated the historical contribution of feminists, workers and people of color when other books did not. It also sold a million copies. (Keys 2010, 3)

However, this was not enough of a reminder to listeners of his achievement.

In trying to balance the perceived bias of it being too liberal, NPR asked David Horowitz, the conservative political pundit who has no academic training in history or political science and who has written multiple screeds against academics, what he thought of Zinn's work:

There is absolutely nothing in Howard Zinn's intellectual output that is worthy of any kind of respect. . . . Zinn represents a fringe mentality which has unfortunately seduced millions of people at this point in time. So he did certainly alter the consciousness of millions of younger people for the worse. (Keys 2010, 11-13)

Beyond the false objectivity inherent in talking to Horowitz and the naïve notion that there must be two sides to every story in the NPR piece, having a rebuttal to an obituary piece was both in bad taste and not the norm at NPR. For example, when conservative icon William F. Buckley died, the extensive coverage NPR had did not have the same type of rejoinders for numerous "controversial" views Buckley had about everything from civil rights to Vietnam. Consequently, many listeners were extremely disturbed by the piece, and they contacted the NPR ombudsman, who agreed that NPR had erred:

Critics are right that NPR was not respectful of Zinn. It would have been better to wait a day and find a more nuanced critic—as the *Washington Post* did two days after Zinn died—than rushing a flawed obituary on air. (Shepard 2010, 29)

NPR was somewhat contrite, but that is not really the point of the story or in relaying it. The point is that the media apparatuses of the country, even "liberal" ones like NPR, actually advance rightist political agendas and policies in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. This is neither a profound fact nor a novel discovery. Nonetheless, it is critical to highlight this point, especially as the notion of rightist media bias concerns the work of Howard Zinn and its effect on the United States' ability to critically understand itself.

Few public intellectuals have achieved the status of Howard Zinn. He was able to integrate social activism, academic inquiry, and popular history geared towards increasing an understanding of the past in a way

that challenged power structures of all kinds. Further, his determination to stand up for the principles of justice and equality in the face of retribution from university administrators and government officials is a model for academics and activists. Specifically, teacher educators can learn several lessons about how to think through our modern social and political predicament from him and how to communicate these lessons to our students.

This paper explores three aspects of Zinn's work that are vital to reviving the progressive discourse, spirit, and activism, all of which are necessary for egalitarian progress in our schools and country. One of these themes is dissent, which will be discussed in the first section of this paper. At present, dissent from the political and educational left is missing from the political debate. Further, the right has co-opted the terms and means of dissent with the "Tea Party" movement. The second theme to be discussed is Zinn's work on democracy. Here, looking to Zinn's writing for inspiration can be a cornerstone of a renewed sense of urgency for social and political change. The field of political debate will be addressed in this section on democracy, including the recent resurgence of the political right that will have implications across state legislatures and school districts around the country. The final section focuses on the theme of education and its implications on Zinn's texts, plays, and speeches.

Zinn and Dissent

Dissent is back on the political stage, but the form of dissent that is ascendant in the present political discourse has been based on a misguided, distorted, and untruthful view of the Barack Obama presidency and Democratic control of Congress. Unfortunately, this unified government has provided innumerable straw men and women to be knocked down by various members of the Tea Party Nation—Glenn Beck and Sarah Palin, to name a few sources of destructive dissent. What is amazing is how quickly things can change, as just a few years ago any dissent against the Bush administration was unspeakable. During that time, Zinn reminded us of the power of dissent:

While some people think that dissent is unpatriotic, I would argue that dissent is the highest form of patriotism. In fact, if patriotism means being true to the principles for which your country is supposed to stand, then certainly the right to dissent

is one of those principles. And if we're exercising that right to dissent, it's a patriotic act. (Zinn 2002, 2)

What should be difficult to understand at present is how dissent from the left during the George W. Bush administration was considered un-patriotic, but dissent from the right under the Obama administration is seen as the pinnacle of patriotism. But it is not difficult to understand when one considers Obama's status as the first African American president and undercurrents of racism in attacks on him and his administration. Hence, the way these dissenters are portrayed in the media illustrates that rightist policies get a pass from the critical eye of the media whereas movements from the left are prone to distortion and manipulation in the public mind. This change allows simplistic and jingoistic answers of the right to refute the complexity of the left's attempts at social progress. Hence, rightist pseudo-dissent can flourish.

What is critical to recall in Zinn's work for this context is that the censorship of dissent can come from a liberal when he or she is advocating rightist militaristic policies. Zinn relayed several important instances of the quashing of dissent:

Lincoln suppressed dissent during the Civil War. In World War I... Wilson, a liberal Democrat, passed legislation just as Bush has passed legislation, the Patriot Act; and in Wilson's time, the Espionage and Sedition Act, which sent 1,000 people to jail. And it was under Wilson that they rounded up thousands of non-citizens and sent them out of the country without due process. I mean, civil liberties were really smashed under Wilson. (Zinn 2002, 6)

The fact that Zinn was able to separate what he thought was ethical from the standard liberal line of supporting one's liberal brethren demonstrates that authentic dissent from injustice has no connection to a political party or label. True dissent is simply confronting the overriding political narrative of the time if you find it to be immoral (Zinn 2002). Hence, Zinn was able to dissociate himself from Wilson and his actions even though Wilson was trying to make the world safe for democracy and other so-called liberal causes. In each of these cases, Zinn urged observers and scholars to question the acts of government, as well as other sources of institutional power, and to dissent from them when they conflict with one's principles.

The distinction between true dissent and pseudo-dissent can be seen in the difference between the recent Tea Party pseudo-dissents against Obama and dissent against the Bush administration. The Tea Partiers' pseudo-dissent comes from a factual misrepresentation of events often fueled by underlying racism. The most insidious example is the so-called birther movement that claims Obama is not a natural born citizen and ineligible for the presidency. However, simply claiming that the president is illegitimate, because one thinks he was not born a U.S. citizen, is not dissent when the facts, evidence, and court decisions state otherwise. Further, when Fox News (and now Donald Trump) continues to cover the story as an open question, one can see in fact that these types of reactions are not forms of dissent, but rather they are forms of political propaganda from the right.

This is in contrast to dissent during the Bush years, where dissent was directed at authentic forms of government misrepresentation and unconstitutional if not illegal policies. The prime example here is the revelations in George W. Bush's autobiography *Decision Points*, where he sanctioned waterboarding which historically has been considered illegal.

In this last example, the connection to Zinn's work on war and ethics is important. Here, it helps to remember the continued relationship between militarism and the censoring of dissent:

So, yes, Bush is not the first. Although this is one of the worst cases that we've had. But still it is typical in American history, and particularly in the 20th century, particularly as the United States has grown in military strength and has engaged in more and more military operations. (Zinn 2002, 10)

Yet in understanding the relevance of Zinn's work to dissent and its educational value, one cannot move past his thoughts about the Bush administration without at least a few more looks. In particular, Zinn was prescient in his view that the pass Bush got for numerous constitutional and legal abuses was due to his inflated popularity (because of 9/11) during the early invasion (or liberation) of Afghanistan and in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq. Zinn contended:

I believe that those numbers that register large degrees of popular support for Bush have been misleading. That is, I think there is an immediate tendency when a nation goes to war, for

the public to rally around. Especially since, when a nation goes to war, the public has no other information given it about the war except what the president gives it. . . . Just as the nation supported the war in Vietnam at first because it got all of its information at first from the government. It's only when other kinds of information begin coming in, and when people start questioning what the government does, and become skeptical and have second thoughts about their support for the government, it's only then that you begin to get more and more dissent. (Zinn 2002, 10)

Of course, more dissent began to grow as the truth emerged from the fog of war. The examples here are legion and, in some cases, they took years to come to light because of intentional misrepresentation by the military or administration. Several of these examples are important to highlight, as they showcase the immense fraud perpetrated upon the American people and world via the Bush administration and its embedded press members: Jessica Lynch, Pat Tillman, Ahmed Chalabi, Curveball, Abu Ghraib, and Valerie Plame. Each of these cases created more and more dissent until Bush's approval numbers dropped, but dissent was still dangerous politically and the right was quite comfortable in calling dissenters names, including communist, anti-American, and terrorist sympathizer. One cannot forget this was the "you are with or against us" era.

Another aspect of Zinn's work is that it is helpful in reviving the spirit of dissent that has gone dormant on the left since Obama's election. Controlling the three branches of the government has made challenging a "liberal" President that much more difficult. Instead of staging counter protests to the Tea Party, the left has largely acquiesced to the centrist, business-minded Democrats. Unfortunately, this was a huge strategic mistake, as well as an ideological cave-in. Precisely because what the Tea Party did has worked in staging protests with numerous bad speakers and ever-worsening grammar on their protest signs. Zinn again provides guidance that the right seemingly took after Obama's election; this is advice the left would do well to heed now:

Yes, there too I have a reputation as a troublemaker. And even there, protest works! Finally, they said, "All right, you can go. You can have an hour or so to speak your mind. But remember, *no agitating!*" They do believe in freedom of speech . . . but within limits . . . *Smiles*. They are liberals. (Zinn 1999, 3)

What this quotation identifies is that the limits of the political discourse are a hazy boundary that separates idealists from political pragmatists. Further, what made dissent unpopular under Bush and now what makes pseudo-dissent popular among the right under Obama is the content of what one is dissenting from in one's political speech. This non-content-neutral aspect of understanding dissent is crucial to see how certain types of political speech as dissent can be promoted by the media and how other forms of speech can be squelched. As the limits of dissent are confined to the safe boundaries of the right, one can quickly identify that an argument for universal health care, for example, would not receive much attention from the media when articulated in a reasoned and thoughtful manner. This becomes an even stronger likelihood when the competing picture from the media is a Tea Partier wearing an American flag shirt and carrying an "Obama is Hitler" sign. What is unfortunate is that the first person would have been seen as unreasonable in calling for universal health care, but the second person would be seen as a member of a political movement that helped change the leadership in the House of Representatives in 2010.

In concluding this section, it is vital to tie Zinn's work and comments on dissent to the public pedagogy that occurs through the media and that affects how young people view the political discourse. Here, Zinn stands as a passionate advocate for reason, facts, and calm persuasive argument, coupled with activism, protest against injustice, and calls for social progress. Continuing to draw from his work to better educate students and pre-service educators to the struggles of previous generations of dissenters is a key to revitalizing the efforts for social justice in a media environment that actively mocks greater economic and political equality as unwelcomed goals of a democratic country. To move towards these goals of egalitarianism in the spirit of Zinn, educators must begin to think outside the traditional bounds of education in schools and look for novel and alternative avenues of education. Further, those scholars with the protections of tenure must vigorously fight the existing power structures within their institutions. Clearly, if these institutions, where there are seats at the table, cannot be changed, then greater societal change is a mere academic trope.

Zinn and Democracy

The taken-for-granted myth of American exceptionalism is so strong that it is difficult for even the most dedicated social studies

teachers or political science professors to break free from the tendency to always see the best in what we do and to view horrific events as historical inevitabilities and collateral damage. The truth is, of course, much messier than the textbook narratives served up in countless classrooms around the country on a daily basis. One of the paramount uses of Zinn's work is seeing this detail of history in ways that humanize the democratic experiment and ground it not in the simplistic answers required on end-of-grade tests, but in ways that remind us of the grander purposes of education, which include engendering a feeling for other individuals in one's own country and around the globe.

The most catastrophic of these events that Zinn detailed was the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima. Zinn painted this grim scene to drive home the point:

The bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. In a few moments, the flesh and bones of 140,000 men, women, and children [were exterminated]. Three days later, a second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, killing perhaps 70,000 instantly. In the next five years, another 130,000 inhabitants of those two cities died of radiation poisoning. (Zinn 2010a, 23)

Yet for Zinn, the mere weight of the numbers was not enough, as he was acutely aware that these numbers can make students lose sight of the personal aspects of the event. Making the connection to the stories of the survivors was the only way to personalize the experience for students in a meaningful way. He continued:

We live in a time where our minds have been so battered by the statistics of death and suffering that figures in the millions leave us numb, and nothing but the personal testimonies of individuals—even if they can only faintly represent the reality—are capable of shaking us out of that numbness. (Zinn 2010a, 23)

What is unfortunate for the present predicament of our country is that learning of these experiences, or even travelling to the sites, does not have a more humanizing effect on our democratic process in either foreign policy or domestic politics. Instead of heeding Eisenhower's warning about the developing military-industrial complex that threatens the core of our democratic principles, the country marches ahead with

a military budget six times higher than that of the next closest country (China). However, it is critically important for educators to make the link that Zinn did for students between the levels of military spending and the threat this poses to democracy on numerous fronts.

A further point from Zinn is that facts are sometimes not enough to make an individual student care about another person from a radically different background and set of experiences. This essential part of education must sometimes be accessed through other means. Here, it is interesting to see Zinn's turn to other creative outlets to express his political and social views. He contended that an emotional response is necessary in trying to persuade those individuals who resist movement towards equality and egalitarian justice:

But would writing for the theater be as satisfying, for someone, like me, whose life and writing had been concentrated on war, law, poverty, injustice, racism? Thinking about it, I concluded that neither form of social struggle could be considered superior. Each had its unique power. Writing historical and political works, I could introduce to my readers ideas and facts that might provoke them to examine anew the world around them, and decide to join the fray. Writing plays would zoom in on a few characters, and by getting the viewers to identify with them emotionally, move the audience in a visceral way something not easily achievable in prosaic works of history and political philosophy. (Zinn 2010b, ix)

This turn to an emotional sensibility towards the plight of others through literary works would be beneficial to our fragile democracy and would showcase a true and authentic perspective from which "values voters" might benefit. Yet, this sense of pragmatic fellow-feeling would likely not appeal to present-day Tea Partiers, who are seemingly adverse to any policy or program that encroaches on their ill-defined conceptions of "freedom" and "liberty" that fundamentally reject notions of promoting the general welfare of the country. More to the point, Tea Partiers' inchoate beliefs strive for simplicity with a dose of conspiracy. They revolve around bad pop history from the likes of David Barton and internet rumors spread through discussion boards and forwarded emails that they take as fact over the complex and nuanced analysis of experts, professors, or other "liberal elites."

In contrast to the political discourse of the present that claims that

Obama is a socialist when he is far from it, Zinn made the case for considering socialism again, but under new terms. In short, Zinn's view on socialism required new branding to have a chance in the corporate-dominated political landscape of the present. Ironically, the Tea Party movement, for all of its significant faults, has tapped into a vein of populism and, as such, opportunities for socialist inroads may not be as remote as Fox News would have one think. Zinn speaks to the notion of socialism here:

The point of recalling all this is to remind us of the powerful appeal of the socialist idea to people alienated from the political system and aware of the growing stark disparities in income and wealth—as so many Americans are today. The word itself—'socialism'—may still carry the distortions of recent experience in bad places usurping the name. But anyone who goes around the country, or reads carefully the public opinion surveys over the past decade, can see that huge numbers of Americans agree on what should be the fundamental elements of a decent society: guaranteed food, housing, medical care for everyone; bread and butter as better guarantees of national security than guns and bombs; democratic control of corporate power; equal rights for all races, genders, and sexual orientations; a recognition of the rights of immigrants as the unrecognized counterparts of our parents and grandparents; the rejection of war and violence as solutions for tyranny and injustice. (Zinn 2004,160)

The problem is in translating what people want when they are polled to what they are told to want at the ballot box (or Diebold voting station). The intervening steps through the media so distort political issues that it is difficult for significant information to creep through the filters to the voters. For representative democracy to function in service to the majority of the people, voters must be informed of the outcomes of the policies their candidates enact. Unfortunately, though, at present the country is stuck in an economic democracy verging plutocracy where the economic interests of the top 10 percent of wage earners are being put ahead of the bottom 90 percent. No statistic from this new gilded age is more telling than the fact that "74 people earned a combined \$38.4 billion last year, or as much as the 19 million lowest-paid American workers, combined" (Gustin 2010, 5). In the face of

such stark inequality, it is hard to imagine how the population of the country keeps from taking action to adjust tax and domestic policies to change this equation. Here again, Zinn's sage commentary provides guidance:

The American system is the most ingenious system of control in world history. With a country so rich in natural resources, talent, and labor power the system can afford to distribute just enough wealth to just enough people to limit discontent to a troublesome minority. It is a country so powerful, so big, so pleasing to so many of its citizens that it can afford to give freedom of dissent to the small number who are not pleased. . . . There is no system of control with more openings, apertures, lee-ways, flexibilities, rewards for the chosen, winning tickets in lotteries. There is none that disperses its controls more complexly through the voting system, the work situation, the church, the family, the school, the mass media—none more successful in mollifying opposition with reforms, isolating people from one another, creating patriotic loyalty. (Zinn 2005, 632)

In the face of this sober assessment, it is difficult to be optimistic about altering this situation. Yet optimism in the face of long odds and powerful foes is one of the greatest lessons Zinn's work can teach present-day activists and public intellectuals. This optimism is of immense worth to our democratic system, and it must be said that part of the reason Zinn was so optimistic was that his generation of scholars and activists succeeded in changing society for the better. The advances of the civil rights era and the opening up of history and literature to include voices that were previously silent are monumental gains that cannot be forgotten even in the progressive pessimism of the present. However, with the passing of Zinn and others of his generation, the left risks losing its way further in not having those individuals who can remind us of the victories for justice and equality. This, of course, makes the necessity of remembering Zinn through his works and films that much more vital to the advancement of progressive causes.

Zinn and Education

The final area in which Zinn's work is helpful to the left is more

directly related to education. The first two themes have macro implications, but this section will focus more on the ways in which Zinn's literature can serve as a guide in teaching students and designing curriculum to meet the challenges created by successive waves of standard-based reforms.

One of the key aspects of Zinn's historical work is the linking of events that had previously been left out of the textbooks or, if included, that were characterized as minor events. Zinn countered this dominant historical narrative by judging the events of the past with the lens of a progressive mindset. Inarguably, Zinn valued the minutia of history. Yet he was also equally concerned with broader trends and what they meant for the people living then and consequences for the present. Zinn was aware that he was fighting against the objectivist trend in history and was happy to confront those who sought non-political historical work geared to mere facts:

There is a certain drumbeat of scolding one hears these days, about the need for students to learn facts. 'Our young people are not being taught facts,' said presidential candidate Robert Dole (and candidates are always so scrupulous about facts) to a gathering of American Legionnaires. I was reminded of the character in Dickens' *Hard Times*, the pedant Gradgrind, who admonished a younger teacher: 'teach nothing but facts, facts, facts.' But there is no such thing as a pure fact, innocent of interpretation. Behind every fact presented to the world—by a teacher, a writer, anyone—is a judgment. The judgment that has been made is that this fact is important, and that other facts, omitted, are not important. (Zinn 2005, 683-84)

The interpretative ethic in Zinn's work is one that must be advanced even as state boards of education and national standards commissions seek to drown out non-conservative views of history.¹ Although this progressive perspective on history and civics may not be popular in many districts, it requires a fight for the foundation of what public education means and what it values. Further, it is at this point one must consider the educational possibilities outside of formal school settings. Due to the increasingly tight control of curriculum and pedagogy, educators must realize the progressive changes they seek might need to be pursued outside of public educational settings.

Zinn's work also helps us to recall the liberal nature of the univer-

sity by noting that it has a vested interest in promoting social and political goals that reflect a respect for justice and a reasoned engagement with the best means of how to democratically govern ourselves. Yet Zinn felt there had been a de-politicization in many academic departments that had all too narrow foci and were unwilling to use their scholarly protections to challenge the power relationships of the status quo. Zinn asserted that the disciplines should be more introspective in the research they produced as well as in their political impact:

Aside from trivial or esoteric inquiry, knowledge is also dissipated on pretentious conceptualizing in the social sciences. A catch-phrase can become a stimulus for endless academic discussion, and for the proliferation of debates which go nowhere into the real world, only round and round in ever smaller circles of scholarly discourse. Schemes and models and systems are invented which have the air of profundity and which advance careers, but hardly anything else. (Zinn 1990, 8)

This call to action requires academics to step out of the cozy comforts of elevated and detached academic debate for a much more radical stance towards their role and the politics that should follow from it. The argument against this view is often based on the problematic notion of objectivity that must be injected into discussions of the political nature of university work. Scholars in recent generations have been pulled away from engaging with the concrete subjects they study for the safe confines of the vaunted ivory tower.

However, in asking these questions, Zinn was not begging the question and certainly did not have a preexisting view of how research should end up when it is undertaken. For him, it was not a question of objectivity, but a question of values:

Rule 2. *Be objective.* The myth of 'objectivity' in teaching and scholarship is based on a common confusion. If to be objective is to be scrupulously careful about reporting accurately what one sees, then of course this is laudable. But accuracy is only a prerequisite. That a metalsmith uses reliable measuring instruments is a condition for doing good work, but does not answer the crucial question: will he now forge a sword or a plowshare with his instruments? That the metalsmith has determined in advance that he prefers a plowshare does not require him

to distort his measurements. That the scholar has decided he prefers peace to war does not require him to distort his facts. Too many scholars abjure a starting set of values because they fail to make the proper distinction between an ultimate set of values and the instruments needed to obtain them. The values may well be subjective (derived from human needs); but the instruments must be objective (accurate). Our values should determine the *questions* we ask in scholarly inquiry, but not the answers. (Zinn 1990, 10)

In point of fact, using the most accurate information to rebut the right's propaganda is the most effective way of defusing their obfuscating and misleading pronouncements in the media and the resulting destructive political dialogue. Moreover, the more accurate the histories and analyses of politics are, the less effective rightist efforts to discredit progressives will be in the mainstream political arena.

Overall, the educational relevance of Zinn's work is tremendous on the levels mentioned, but its strongest form comes simply from having students read (often for the first time) about the hidden history of the United States. This is particularly crucial as the public schools increasingly resegregate and become majority minority in their demographics. The power of having students learn about struggles of the past can often be the catalyst for success in the present.

When Hope is Not Enough

The future many progressives hoped was on the horizon with the election of Barack Obama has failed to materialize. Even though the diverse voices of Simon Critchely, Noam Chomsky, and Slavoj Zizek warned that Obama was not a progressive and merely a pragmatic semi-liberal, there was a tremendous amount of political capital invested in the possibility of his presidency. Unfortunately, expectations that were probably too high from the start have been dashed at the foot of a Zombie-like conservative movement that groans on with anti-tax pledges, political insults, and half-witted tweets. What has become clear is that the conservative movement has once again deftly moved out of the way of populist anger against their policies and errors in governing and reenergized itself.

The implications of this quick turnaround in the direction of the political winds have been felt in state legislatures across the country.

The most prominent example (and one Zinn would have supported) was the protest in Wisconsin over collective bargaining rights. In just a few short weeks, a dormant labor movement had summoned tens of thousands of supporters to protest the actions of Governor Scott Walker. In encapsulated in these events is the dialectic nature of politics in America.

Hence, to confront these conservative forces and support progressive causes, once again it is vital to turn to a scholar and activist like Howard Zinn to help reevaluate where the left and progressives are after the Hope of 2008 has faded away. Zinn's work should remind us that every setback for the left is also an opportunity to demonstrate what we stand for in terms of social justice and equality. At this juncture, one might think that the best that we may be able to achieve is to dig deeper trenches and say this is as far as we are going to be pushed. However, with the spirit of Howard Zinn guiding the way through a call to a new activism and to politically relevant scholarship, we can forge a reenergized path forward for progressives before it is too late.

Notes

1. The changes made by the Texas Board of Education in 2010 to the social studies curriculum were particularly disturbing for their movement to an even more conservative political agenda. Meanwhile, the movement to national standards has had resistance from advocates of local control, but several cycles of standards-based reform, including No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, have resulted in the growth of this trend.

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