Books versus 'The Book': The 1974 Kanawha County Textbook Controversy

Keith Crawford
Newcastle University

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Abstract
In 1974 Kanawha County, West Virginia witnessed one of the most violent textbook wars the USA has seen. The paper chronicles the direction of the dispute identifying key issues, protagonists and ideological positions; this is followed by an analysis of core protestor motivation and intention focusing around the embryonic emergence of Christian fundamentalism and the politics of Conservatism. This is placed within the context of Gramscian notions of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggle (Gramsci 1971), the construction of moral panic (Cohen 1972) and authoritarian populism (Hall 1988) as organising ideas. Finally, the paper reflects upon how the Kanawha incident offered a template for the subsequent development of an articulated Christian fundamentalist and political right-wing counter-hegemonic movement aimed at dominating educational policy agendas in the USA.

Author Biography
Keith Crawford, Newcastle University
Keith Crawford is Professor of Education in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia. Professor Crawford has taught in teacher education for over twenty years; his interests focus upon historical and sociological studies of curriculum construction; social justice and values education; history education and school textbook analysis within the context of the history and citizenship curriculum.

Contact Address:
School of Education,
Newcastle University,
PO Box 127, Brush Road,
Ourimbah,
NSW 2258
Australia
E-mail: keith.Crawford@newcastle.edu.au

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