CONSERVATIVE HERITAGE – THE YES MEN VERSION



A new take on our Classical heritage from The Yes Men.

Louise, Mike, and Andy decide to attend the Heritage Foundation's annual Resource Bank meeting at the Renaissance hotel in Chicago, April 29-30, 2004.

Heritage is the biggest free-market think tank – in fact the biggest think tank period – in Washington. It has a budget of $25 million and provides "talking points" to conservative Congressmen who don't have time to do their own research. Heritage is a kind of "grey eminence" behind Congress, and very actively helps direct U.S. politics.

And what a bunch of radicals these folks are! Like the rare ultra-anarchist, they basically want to “smash the state” – but unlike such anarchists, they’re rich, not so rare, and succeeding.

Heritage is very up-front about these goals. Paul Krugman and others have pointed out that the goal of the Bush administration seems to be to bankrupt the federal government; the Heritage Foundation indeed announces this vision up front: “Too many conservatives lose hope,” writes Heritage president Edwin J. Feulner. “They doubt that the liberal welfare state can be brought to collapse…. In short, they doubt that The Heritage Foundation’s Vision for America can be achieved.” (By “liberal welfare state” he means Social Security, the Dept. of Education, and so on.)

Thursday, April 29



In order to register (free) for the Heritage conference , we've formed a right-wing think tank ($12 for the domain name). We've also registered for (free) table space, so when we arrive at the hotel we immediately go looking for an open table to display our wares: a foot-long Roman warship ($30) and some insane "position papers." We eventually find an empty spot, next to the Cato Institute and not far from a table featuring books like Eco-Imperialism: Green Power, Black Death and How Union Bosses Have Hijacked Our Government.

The event teems with 650 smiling, friendly and blandly-dressed people hired by well-endowed think tanks fighting "socialistic" ideas: the Jesse Helms Institute, the Hoover Institution, the Atlas Foundation (based on the books of Ayn Rand), the Society for the Economic Study of Religion (which, a young

representative tells us, has determined that Pentecostalism is the best religion for a free market, and so sends missionaries to Africa), and so on.