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## **First-Generation Neocons: Topicality of an *Un-American Thought***

### **Abstract**

The research project has two objectives. Firstly, it aims to underline the fundamental distance between the first-generation neoconservatives and their successors; secondly, it would like to demonstrate why their thought is essential to understand the current American crisis and the weakness of liberalism in general. Indeed, the first neocons posed the most formidable theoretical challenge to liberalism since the end of the Second World War, even though they apparently wanted to defend it. This is true especially for Irving Kristol, on which the research will focus. His elitism, attributable to the one of Leo Strauss and therefore of Plato, had the objective of guaranteeing the unity of the political community, responding to the main problem of liberalism: the identity one.

Hence, the study of Leo Strauss will be necessary in order to fully comprehend the elitism of the first neocons, without concealing their distances from the German philosopher. The main concept borrowed from the master was the platonic "noble lie", according to which there should be an elite capable of formulating and reinforcing myths, crucial for the cohesion of the political community.

There were several criticisms concerning neoconservatives' elitism. However, the anti-liberalism of early neoconservative thought is more radical. Whilst a return to the founding liberal values of the United States was advocated, the origin of the relativism and nihilism that characterize the New Left, against which the movement was born, was identified precisely in liberalism.