

## *Roots of Conservatism*

**The Conservative Tradition in European Thought:** an anthology selected and edited by Robert Schuettinger, *New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1970. 385 pp. \$6.95.*

FOR MANY YEARS there has existed a need for an anthology in English as well as for a historical survey which would give a comprehensive view of the entire range of conservative political thought in Europe. Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind from Burke to Eliot* has provided a definitive history of the variety and development of conservative thought in Great Britain and the United States, while Peter Viereck's *Conservatism from John Adams to Churchill* has provided an intentionally abbreviated and introductory coverage to the same areas. In popular studies confined exclusively to American conservative thought, William

F. Buckley Jr.'s *Did You Ever See A Dream Walking?*, is, of course, one of the more recent. With the publication of Robert Schuettinger's anthology, however, the total spectrum of continental European (as well as British) conservative political theory is now available in a one-volume edition with substantial excerpts from thinkers ranging chronologically from Plato and Cicero to Von Hayek. The scholarly value—both as an introductory volume for the layman as well as a classroom text for students—of this anthology is clearly apparent.

What particularly distinguishes this compilation is its wide-ranging variety of selections and the lucid and perceptive introductory essay by the editor. Mr. Schuettinger, currently a professor of political science at Lynchburg College in Virginia, clearly delineates the complex strands of conservative thought since the French Revolution while providing the reader with the relevant ties to the medieval and classical writers represented in the collection. Likewise, he has succinctly summarized the problem of defining the conservative political persuasion, a problem that has plagued both abstract theorists and practical politicians for generations.

"Conservatism is not an ideology or a firm set of doctrines on man and the universe," Schuettinger writes. Rather, he suggests, conservatism is more in the nature of a "disposition"—an attitude, if one prefers. Further, he asserts that modern political conservatism dates from the eighteenth century, specifically that cultural cataclysm, the French Revolution.

Conservatism, as we understand the term today, owes its birth to the French Revolution. It was then the barricades went up and sides were chosen; those who wish to radically alter human society stood on one side and those who wished to preserve it took their places on the other.

A newly articulated conservative philosophy was to be one of the major reactions

to the myriad social, political, and economic conflicts generated by "the follies of the French Revolution."

Schuettinger also argues that contemporary conservatives generally can be characterized by their holding of five principal "dispositions"—in varying degrees, naturally. These attitudes, he believes are more often held by conservatives than by those of liberal persuasion. His hierarchy of conservative principles generally may be summarized as follows:

1. A belief in a divine intent of history and in the duty of man to conform himself to God-given, unchanging laws of morality.
2. A belief in order and stability as the primary requirements of good government, and in the corresponding notion that order and stability benefit from a respect for tradition and from restraint in society.
3. An acceptance of the idea that variety in life ultimately is better than uniformity, and that liberty is more important than equality.
4. An understanding that the good life—not merely life itself—is the preferable goal of man's existence. Thus, such attributes as honor and duty take precedence over personal indulgence.
5. A belief in the definite limits to man's reason; as a result, conservatives tend to be skeptical of abstract principles, of intellectualism, and of grandiose plans of reform.

Obviously, it could be argued that such "dispositions" are not the exclusive property of conservatives; indeed, as Schuettinger notes,

Not all conservatives, of course, hold to these beliefs, while at the same time, many liberals are by no means hostile to them. But conservatives are more likely to stress their importance than do most liberals.

His introductory essay further categorizes and explains the various strands of conservative philosophy by underlying modes of thought—the empirical, the rationalist, and the intuitive—and by political grouping—liberal conservatives, classical liberals (conservative liberals), and antiliberal conservatives (restorationists).

Divided into five sections, his collection offers a variety of views under such general headings as “Man and Society,” in which the writings of Burke, Coleridge, Röpke, Jewkes, von Hayek, and Oakeshott are juxtaposed. Other sections are: “Nature, Law, and History” (selections from Cicero, Hooker, Hegel, and Strauss); “The Distribution of Power” (Plato, Aristotle, De Tocqueville, Disraeli, Mosca, and von Hapsburg); “Liberty, Equality and Authority” (De Maistre, Donoso-Cortes, Acton, and Stephen); and “Contemporary Conservatism in Europe” (De Jouvenel, Seldon, Erhard, and Churchill).

Even the most casual reader will notice here the inclusion of lesser known—but certainly equally important—continental writers such as Don Juan Donoso-Cortes, Marques de Valdegamas (1809-1853) whose restorationist views are clearly represented by a substantial selection from his “Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism, and Socialism.” In one section of this essay, the case for order in society is rigorously defined:

As there is no good except in order, everything not in conformity with order must be evil; nor can there be any evil which does not consist in a subversion of order; therefore, as order is the supreme good, disorder is the supreme evil, because outside of disorder, there can be no evil, and outside of order no good.

The other virtues of this anthology are several: Schuettinger has included selections of considerably greater length than are usually found in such compilations. Finally, the work has a markedly excellent bibliography with commentary which

should prove invaluable to students and to the general scholar seeking to inform himself about the truly wide diversity of conservative political thought.

Reviewed by JERE REAL

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## *Economics and Freedom*

### **Power and Market: Government and the Economy**, by Murray N. Rothbard.

*Menlo Park, California: Institute for Humane Studies, Inc., 1970. 111 + 225 pp. \$6.00.*

WITH THE PUBLICATION in 1962 of *Man, Economy & State*, Murray N. Rothbard entered the front rank of the “Austrian school” of economists as one of the most intrepid and uncompromising champions of economic freedom. Unfortunately, his *magnum opus*—the first systematic treatise of economics in many decades—was published without the final portion in which the author systematically examined various forms of government interference with the market. It is this material—considerably expanded and updated—which we now have in *Power and Market: Government and the Economy*.

The author presents a brilliant classification of government interference with the market within three broad categories. The first and simplest type involves the invader or intervener ordering an individual subject to do or not do certain things when these actions directly involve the individual’s person or property alone. This the author labels *autistic intervention*. Specific examples would include assault, homicide or the compulsory enforcement or prohibition of speech or religious observances. The second category, in which the subject is commanded to make a forced “exchange” with the invader, or to make a “gift” to him, is labelled *binary interference*. Exam-