

have put the Stalins and the Hitlers and the Maos behind us, we need only to remember Cambodia's nightmare and the Boat People to conclude that man's inhumanity to man remains a part of the human condition. And if we are inclined to believe that the world would be a fine place if only the United States would refrain from the exercise of power, we should reflect that the Alarics of our day are even more tyrannical than those of the past, and some day Rome will not stand in their way.

Reviewed by MICHAEL BORDELON

The Biedermeier Right

Conservative Millenarians: The Romantic Experience in Bavaria, by Paul Gottfried, *New York: Fordham University Press, 1979. 176 pp.*

THE MAIN BRANCH of the Wittelsbach dynasty became extinct in 1776 and several of the prince-electors of Bavaria were thereafter vaguely related rulers, not particularly attached to the land, and providing little continuity from one to another. In 1799 Max IV Joseph, a relative from the Palatinate of his predecessor, became prince and thereafter king. Until 1817 he confided the reins of government to a smart, modish and enterprising count of Savoyard extraction, called Joseph Maximilian de Montgelas. Montgelas had been deeply influenced by the rationalist and utopian underground of the 18th century, by all those myriad sects of Masons and Illuminati who hoped to achieve paradise by social change, and he found traditional and uneventful Bavaria a superb testing ground for his ideas. He imposed drastic measures on a stodgy and unenthusiastic society. He abolished the provincial corporate assemblies and replaced them by a uniform bureaucracy. He took actions which effectively paralyzed the functioning

of guilds. He secularized monastic lands and confiscated virtually all cloisters, rounding up the religious, sometimes by force. He packed colleges and other ideological centers with followers of Adam Smith, Christian Wolff, and Kant. He restricted the use of church bells and puritanically limited the number of feast days and the character of festivities and processions. Like many a do-good liberal reformer, he gradually managed to alienate everybody. The church felt it was being severely persecuted. The workers and apprentices felt they were being deprived of their leisure time and fun and games. Tradesmen and handicraftsmen felt threatened by the influx of Jews and particularly North German Protestants that followed the capitalist legislation of "*le premier ministre révolutionnaire*." But the most interesting reaction by far was provided by the intellectual community and that is what Professor Paul Gottfried's book is all about.

Max IV Joseph died in 1825 and was followed by Ludwig I, the great white hope of the left. They ought to have been less sanguine; they should have remembered the crown prince's reluctant association with Napoleon and his active maneuvering for the overthrow of Montgelas once European conditions were ripe for it, after the Congress of Vienna. True, the young monarch proved a most dedicated patron of the arts and filled Munich with resplendent neo-classic public buildings; his planning gives to this day its countenance to the city. (He is by and large a much more interesting and appealing figure than his homonymous grandson, the patron of Wagner and insane legendary hero.) But he disappointed them severely by gradually moving to the right in politics—blatantly so after 1837, when his ministry under Karl von Abel simply restored many of the changes undertaken twenty-five years earlier (particularly in the area of religion, less so in economic policy). The king, who was a robust womanizer (like many Restorers, not least Charles II Stuart), scandalized Europe even in his old age by

his affair with Lola Montez; he called it quits in 1848, spending the last peaceful 20 years of his life on his estates and on the French Riviera, where he also died.

Ludwig's first gesture towards the growing intellectual right was re-establishing in 1826 the Catholic University of Munich, a venerable institution which had been founded in 1472, but had been moved after 1800 to Landshut. This restoration, suggested to the king by Johann Ringseis, was accompanied by some energetic hiring which led to a formidable lineup of conservative romantic-Catholic intellectuals: Schelling, Schubert, Görres, Franz von Baader, Ignaz von Döllinger. They joined a faculty which, even at Landshut, had numbered a few remarkable names, such as Röschlaub, Ast, Zimmer, and particularly the law scholar Karl von Savigny (visiting), and the later Bishop Johann Sailer. For about 15 years this group played an important part in German intellectual life, in cultural journalism (their journal *Eos*—1819-1831—dared to engage in polemical warfare with such publishing giants as the liberal Cotta group), and even in politics.

The ironic thing is that this group had much the same origin as the nationalist party that Montgelas had been promoting. Its background was the Christian-mystic variant of the latter's ideology. Its sources were Rosicrucian, Pietistic or Catholic-Revivalist, often even Theosophist. Böhme, Paracelsus, von Rosenroth, and among the more recent authors Jung-Stilling and Eckhartshausen provided inspiration. The specific feature of the Munich Romanticism as opposed to other centers, such as Jena, Heidelberg, or, in a sense, Berlin and Weimar (and Gottfried has solid merits in drawing our attention to the fact) was its combination of conservative aspirations with Romantic impetus. Let us not forget that at the beginning of the nineteenth-century conservatism was usually paired with eighteenth-century classicist traditions: Metternich was looking back to Montesquieu as his mainstay, and the Cannings and Pitts were certainly

staunch classicists. (Burke was not yet widely known on the Continent, though through such institutional channels as the University of Göttingen or individuals like Friedrich von Gentz he would soon become influential.) The problem for anti-revolutionaries at that point was that plainly the French upheaval had been a consequence of the (classicist) Enlightenment rather than an opposition to it. Thus, no real choice seemed to remain. The only conceivable solution was to modify radically the historical framework of political thinking. In this respect, the Romantic philosophical and historical paradigm proved to be of good service.

If we are to follow M. H. Abrams, the knowledgeable Romantic scholar, not only Novalis, Hölderlin, Schelling, but also Wordsworth, Blake, and Coleridge were indebted to the tripartite biblical plot of Paradise-Fall-Redemption. Romanticism should be understood, according to Abrams, as the secularization of the Christian plot, as the transfer inside history of the transcendent structure of the Bible. It expects a cosmic regeneration inside history, a paradise regained. The exact nature of the new paradise differs from writer to writer and depends upon the definition of the first term: Ancient Greece? The Middle Ages? Happy Polynesia? or rather a state of mind? innocent childhood? or some combination of these? The main strength of what I would call High Romanticism was precisely its tremendous synthetic ability, its yearning for wholeness and integration—which somehow kept all these things together.

For a while only. There came a moment, not too long after the conversion of the French Revolution into the Napoleonic regime (and certainly after 1815) when choices had to be made. Cosmic explosive metamorphosis seemed unlikely, so some kind of more precise objective had to be defined. Paradise became "paradise." By some it is now understood as national union and liberation; by some it is seen as social upheaval and reordering; by some it can be reached only in the peace of

garden, home, and hearth; some think they can achieve it through a system of political anti-revolutionary alliances; others are persuaded that the realm of thought and imagination is solely the seat of salvation from an ever-decaying empirical reality. What these and other attitudes have in common is that they are avenues of retreat. They are all part of the Age of Biedermeier, that baffled and anxiety-ridden period (1815-1848) which was also, I think the golden age of the European bourgeoisie, the time when an attempt to put utopian and transcendent principles to work into everyday and immediate *praxis* was actually undertaken. From the point of view of universal and absolute Romantic claims, this was a retreat or a compromise, a reduction to scale and to partial targets, but from the point of view of the needs and wishes of social reality it was still a very tall order. The Victorian Age begins when such attempts are abandoned in favor of a definitely dualistic view of reality.

Let me then state my only major disagreement with Gottfried's learned and stimulating book. I think he does not take into account this two-phase historical organization of the Romantic wave and that therefore his task is more complicated and his results less clear than they might have been. But in the main he is perfectly right: many key figures of the Romantic movement chose to find in Catholic Medievalism the main model for the ideal past, as well as for the future. He stresses, correctly, the importance of Friedrich Schlegel's 1808 conversion and of his lecturing and editorial activity in Vienna thereafter. (The reader will immediately remember that the last 20 years of Coleridge's career took an almost identical course, while in France, Chateaubriand, a man of the same generation, was pursuing the same lines of thought. Coleridge had been acquainted with some of Schlegel's early work, but probably not the later one, so the parallels are even more impressive.) The other seminal influence was provided by Sailer, a man of great prestige and

charisma, whose main purpose was a social order based upon religious and spiritual awakening. These two provided the Munich faculty with a sense of mission and they legitimized one of the possible specific Biedermeier translations of the High Romantic vision.

The group's theses—to the extent to which a common *démarche intellectuelle* can be detected—are based on the occult hope in the eventual redemptibility of all matter, a proposition of Neo-Platonic origin. (I wish Gottfried could have given more space to Béguin's research on the Romantic theory of dreams from Karl-Philipp Moritz to Troxler and then Carus; these theoreticians, along with those on occult sciences, explain very well the Romantic framework.) If matter itself can overcome the cosmological disaster, the argument runs, there is no motive to doubt a process of return inside history and good reason to expect and demand the city of God on earth. Relatively few walked the paths of Justus Moser, who saw as the answer to revolutionary centralization the emphasis on local diversity, organic support-systems, and intermediary structures. Most preferred sweeping "millenarian" solutions. They were anti-liberal and anti-capitalist, but their practical proposals are surprisingly flexible and moderate. The Belgian constitutional experiment of 1830, which separated state and church, but granted some privileges to the latter, appealed to them. Baader asked for the abolition of excise taxes, for the graduated income tax, and for the establishment of trade unions. Adam Müller criticized Adam Smith. Baader proposed that priests should be entrusted with duties as social advocates in the workers' interest.

In one word, the Bavarian conservatives and their counterparts elsewhere (Mickiewicz, Lamennais, perhaps Charles Kingsley) set the bases for later Christian-Democrat efforts. Gottfried may be partly right when he asserts in a critical tone that they contributed decisively (as Romantics) "to the modern faith in historical change and in secular time." I think it is more im-

portant to emphasize (as Gottfried also does) their concern with the growth of proletarianization, the decrease of the personalist element in political relationships, manipulation of the working people by other social groups—ultimately with the problem of alienation, the great conceptual discovery of the Biedermeier Age.

The Bavarian Romantics may not be the favorite ancestors of a lot of contemporary conservatives. But we have to respect their intellectual daring in the face of formidable odds, their imaginative syntheses, and particularly their willingness to find a philosophical and cultural justification for the conservative position. Theirs was truly a conservatism of the heart, not of the pocket.

Gottfried's merits are by no means trivial. He applies in a personal and creative way the methodology of Eric Voegelin. He provides a historically concrete focus to some very important aspects of Romanticism. He reminds us forcefully of the exceptional wealth and variety of the heritage of humanist conservatism. Gottfried is undoubtedly one of the best intellectual historians now working in American academe and I for one intend to consider very carefully whatever he says.

Reviewed by VIRGIL NEMOIANU

Cavalier and Puritan Revisited

The Rise and Fall of the Plantation South, by Raimondo Luraghi, *New York and London: Franklin Watts (New Viewpoints), 1978. 191 pp. \$12.50.*

THE SOUTH PRESENTS a problem for American conservatives. This is true even though the problem was recognized and a brilliant solution adumbrated in the writings of Russell Kirk early in the modern conservative intellectual movement—a solution which has been ig-

nored. The South is, or should be, conservative. It is the least secular, the most traditional, the most resistant to modern ideologies of any of the major cultural formations that make up America. Yet one suspects that the South has often disappointed mainstream conservatives.

The expectations of conservatives have been, perhaps, somewhat colonialist. In this they have differed little from liberals. Both have felt free to take what they found useful in the South without any obligation to take the whole. Both have tended to find in the South what they wanted or needed at a particular moment—a convenient ally or scapegoat. At various times the mainstream right and left have joined to execrate the South as the center of all national evil. At other times each has based its strategy and hopes on the South. Each has had its Southern heroes and its Southern demons.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, as Raimondo Luraghi might formulate it, the North, seized by economic and ethnic transformations and egalitarian drives which necessitated a new view of the Constitution and the good society, carried its program by a crusade to put down the alleged innovations of the South. Men as diverse as John Brown and John Quincy Adams, Cornelius Vanderbilt and Charles Sumner, Henry David Thoreau and William T. Sherman were united on the necessity of wiping out the pernicious influence of the South—a drag on national upward imperatives. Yet, as soon as the war was won, there began a movement back toward the Southern view of the Constitution, and prescient thinkers began to mourn the national loss involved in the perishing of the aristocratic virtues of the Old South.

More recently, liberals and conservatives both ran against Wallace, while surreptitiously stealing planks from his platform. While there are numerous good reasons for President Carter's unpopularity, one can't help but suspect that he would have an easier time if he were not a Southerner. Neither left nor right trusts him. Liberals