

CONSERVATISM

DREAM
and
REALITY

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With a new introduction by
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The Prospects of Conservatism

Conservatives might have been forgiven, however, at the beginning of 1981 had visions of something far greater than a guerrilla force welled up in their minds; something more nearly akin to a conquering army of righteousness. Ronald Reagan, who had campaigned on a straight conservative Republican line was in the White House, probably the first President in American history who had proudly declared himself a conservative, instead of some variation of liberal or progressive. In Britain Margaret Thatcher, also conservative, seemingly had a tight grasp of the Prime Ministership. In several countries on the Continent, starting perhaps with West Germany, conservative parties were showing distinct signs of political prosperity.

In the United States jubilation was especially marked. For Reagan's election could be reasonably regarded as the capstone of a conservative structure that had been building up for thirty years, one that was not only political in character but also cultural and intellectual, that had come to include in its roster names of prominent intellectuals, journals of national circulation and influence, conservative centers and institutes, long known to liberals but rarely to conservatives. A genuine conservative network existed. Most important perhaps the very word *conservative* had become an accepted symbol in the political discourse of the time.

This was indeed an accomplishment. 'Conservative' and 'conservatism' had never been especially popular in American political thought and writing. Unlike Britain which

had a Conservative Party to offer ready sanction to conservative impulses, America had only its two major parties and an assortment of small, inconsequential parties of movements built around special interests. In none of the latter did 'conservative' figure. As for the Republican and Democratic parties it was a toss-up prior to the New Deal which had the larger number of conservatives, traditionalists and reactionaries. After all, it was an American boast that the genius of American politics had kept the main line parties on the straight and narrow, each a house of many ideological mansions.

Perhaps it was the lack, or at least faintness, of a feudal tradition in this country, replete with divisions of social class, that prevented from coming into being the kinds of sharp ideological divisions which were common in Europe. The numbers of clamant radicals were relatively low and so were those of the professed political right. Ringing changes on 'liberal' and 'progressive' was a much commoner pursuit in this country. Even 'radical' had an acceptance in politics and religion, and certainly in technology and industry, that 'conservative' lacked.

Yet there was no dearth of Americans who believed dependably in the conservative verities: a minimal state, a strong but unobtrusive government, *laissez-faire* in most matters, family, neighborhood, local community, church and other mediating groups to meet most crises, decentralization, localism, and a preference for tradition and experience over rationalist planning, and withal an unconquerable prejudice against redistributionist measures. This was the conservatism of Presidents like Cleveland, Taft, Coolidge, Hoover, Eisenhower, and of such other American statesmen as Robert Taft, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan during the three decades leading to 1980. At the very bottom of the Great Depression, 17,000,000 Americans endorsed pretty much these ideas when they voted for Landon in 1936. But until 1980, the same ideas seemed to be perennial building blocks of another of America's lost causes, like the Old South and populist agrarianism. Goldwater's defeat in 1964 understandably persuaded a great many Americans that political conservatism was ready for a museum.

Nor was there in America a visible and accepted cultural conservatism as there was in Europe, where one could be a firm conservative in politics and a famous poet or novelist, accepted widely as a creative, even radical mind in literary pursuits: like Eliot, Joyce, Yeats, Mauriac, Mann and others. In the U.S. when a Robert Frost, a Faulkner, or Cozzens came along, critics were unprepared, even resentful in the beginning. In Europe a considerable literature testified to the continuing power of themes of race, family, church, class and region in individual lives and to unresolvable conflicts between the claims of authority and the temptations of freedom. Whatever inclination there may have been before the Civil War in America, in the age of Hawthorne and Melville, toward a comparable community of feeling on authority, evil and punishment, largely disappeared afterwards, leaving a climate of individualism and escape from authority, or else its easy conquest.

There was no more of a conservative climate for scholarship, philosophy and letters after the Civil War, when the forces of populism, frontier-radicalism and competition were dominant. By the early twentieth century in the U.S. it was a rare conservative indeed who inhabited the halls of learning in the universities and colleges across the land. Santayana may have been the only important exception, and he departed Harvard early, to spend his life in Europe. In scholarship the formidable learning and insight of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More were known for the most part by their students alone, one of whom, T S. Eliot, was quick to escape from his native America to English tradition and authority.

H. L. Mencken was an unabashed conservative in all important respects. He loathed (and wrote against) socialism, social democracy, and all forms of populism. His general contempt for politicians rose to its greatest heights for liberal-democrats like Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt; by *booboisie* he essentially meant all who followed William Jennings Bryan. Mencken was a firm and enthusiastic believer in the rights of property and social class and of the intrinsic wickedness of any kind of redistribution by political means. That Mencken prospered as social critic up to the

Depression is probably best explained by the fact that polarizations in politics were not great among intellectuals then, and by his deserved reputation for scorn of Christianity. When, after about 1932, political ideology became vital in the cultural community, and when Mencken's abiding conservatism was fully recognized for the first time, he was reduced to ignominy.

Thus when Lionel Trilling made his notable comment in 1950 about the paucity of conservatives in American intellectual life, he spoke from perspicacity; and when he added that such paucity did not mean there were no strong impulses toward conservatism and even reaction, he showed prescience. For even as Trilling spoke, a conservative renaissance was building. Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* had appeared in 1944 and was getting surprising attention. Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences* was published in 1948 to generally favorable reviews in this country and the following year Peter Viereck's *Conservatism Revisited* was published.

In the three years 1950-3 in America a small harvest of conservative writings came off the presses. Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* gave scholarly and timely pedigree to conservatism in England and the United States, demonstrating the key role of Burke in both countries. His book was the subject of a *Time* magazine cover story. So was Eric Voegelin's *The New Science of Politics*, a powerful criticism of the liberal mind in political thought. William F. Buckley, *God and Man at Yale*, also received national attention, as did his founding of the distinctly conservative *National Review* not long after. There were other notable books in this three-year period: Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Lord Acton*, Leo Straus' *Natural Right and History*, John Hallowell's *The Moral Foundations of Democracy* and Daniel Boorstin's *The Genius of American Politics* among them. My *Quest for Community* came out in 1953; I had not particularly written it as a conservative book, but when it was so judged, I did not appeal. By the end of the 1950s the names of Hugh Kenner, Cleanth Brooks, James Burnham and Wilhelm Röpke, were ascendant as scholars and as con-

servatives in politics. So were the names of the economists Mises, Hayek, Haberler, Fellner and Milton Friedman.

This flood of conservative writing had a fitting context – in England and France as well as in the U.S. In England the names of Christopher Dawson, Freya Stark, Malcolm Muggeridge and Michael Oakeshott did not suggest renaissance so much as a steady continuation of a well-established conservative tradition. The same was true of Jacques Ellul, Bertrand de Jouvenel and Raymond Aron in France. All of these authors were well known in America. Conservative journals, led by Buckley's *National Review*, began to appear on the American scene in the 1950s among them *Modern Age* and *The Intercollegiate Review*, the last witness to the gathering conservative movement on college campuses. Henry Regnery proved that a forthrightly conservative publisher of conservative books could be commercially successful. The American Enterprise Institute and The Hoover Institution, founded earlier, came alive in the 1950s and would become models for dozens of other institutes during the next two decades. A few conservative foundations came cautiously on the scene to seek to rival the massive Ford Foundation in the distribution of fellowships and grants. All in all, the conservative renaissance was well under way by the end of the 1950s.

Helping it was the unforeseen religious revival of the decade on the campuses in America. Speakers were demanded – Tillich, Niebuhr, Bishop Sheen, Billy Graham and many others. The impetus came almost exclusively from students, and faculties were generally embarrassed at the time. After all, had it not been conclusively proved that rationalism was sovereign and religion on the way to history's dust bin? Had the underground rumblings of a far greater religious renaissance, that of the evangelicals in the South and South-west, reached the ears of academics and other intellectuals in the 1950s, they would have been made apprehensive indeed. I realize that religion can be the hand maiden of liberalism and radicalism as well as conservatism, but the direction in the 1950s, on and off campuses, was generally conservative.

Two other developments, also fortuitous, gave substantial

aid to the burgeoning conservative cause. I refer to the resurrections of Alexis de Tocqueville and Edmund Burke throughout the decade. Both had languished in this country prior to the Second World War. In seven years of a better than average undergraduate and graduate education at Berkeley in the 1930s, I never once heard Tocqueville referred to and Burke was limited to something called the 'organic school'. But this changed remarkably beginning in the late 1940s. A new edition by Knopf of *Democracy in America* came out in 1945, and its attraction was immediate. Paperback editions and printings of this book and also of *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* were legion by the end of the 1950s. 'As Tocqueville says' came to rival 'as Marx says' in faculty clubs. Predictably, the political left tried to appropriate Tocqueville, finding some kind of Baconian cryptogram no doubt, but Tocqueville's proper linkage to conservatism was nevertheless fully recognized in the 1950s.

Burke's resurrection was less notable and widely felt perhaps but it was impressive. He became known, chiefly through Kirk's *Conservative Mind*, as the founder, the Karl Marx, of Western conservatism, and even his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, once almost abhorred in American academic and intellectual communities, became the object of a considerable number of printings. The 20-year project of his *Collected Letters* by the University of Chicago Press began in the 1950s. An impressive number of anthologies, textbook paperback printings, and scholarly commentaries changed Burke's once lack-luster status in America.

Neo-conservatism was born in and of the 1960s. It cannot be separated from the prior rise of the New Left and the outbreak of the Student Revolution of the decade. Irving Kristol, a central figure in the development, once described a Neo-conservative as a liberal mugged by the Revolution. The New Left, in America at least, was primarily a campus phenomenon in the beginning, and so was Neo-conservatism. From the perspective of this book, a kind of historical cunning must be ascribed to Neo-conservatism, for it was but the latest of a sequence, starting with Burke's *Reflections*, of

reactive relationships between conservatism and turmoil.

It is not surprising that a considerable number of previously liberal and social democratic faculty members should have turned to the political right by the late 1960s. After all, much of the fury of the revolution on the campus was directed, or seemed to be at the time, toward, not conservatives or reactionaries, such as they were, but to liberals. The spectacular rebellions at Berkeley, Cornell, Wisconsin, Harvard, Yale, Michigan, and other major universities were almost without exception rebellions against liberal presidents and predictably liberal faculty senates and committees. Conservative scholars – who were not numerous and may simply have been overlooked – were rarely harrassed by the New Left on the campuses. The most insistent and prolonged campaigns by the Left were preceded by a wide range of indulgences and grants of amnesty, of doctrinal nourishment and proffers of refuge. It was as though the student revolutionists, in Freudian enactment of primordial passion, chose to kill the very fathers in many instances of their movement on campus – those of the faculty who had from the beginning nurtured and protected them.

By the mid-1960s the Student Revolution was sufficiently advanced in America, sufficiently destructive of the academic community – including authority over curriculum and freedom from persecution in classroom and office – as to invite the beginning of a decidedly conservative reaction. Articles began to appear in which words *authority*, *civil order*, *tradition* and *social contract* were prominent.

Thus were born the Neo-conservatives who could mostly be said to have followed the example of Burke in letting a revolution be the precipitating condition of their doctrine. It was the socialist Michael Harrington who gave Neo-conservatism its name and who wanted none of it for himself. From the start the leading figure among Neo-conservatives was Irving Kristol. He had never been in any solid sense a liberal. From youthful Trotskyism he went directly to an eclectic political philosophy that was generally more skeptical than receptive of modernity. He had co-founded with Stephen Spender *Encounter* in 1955 and done a great deal of writing in the years leading up to his co-founding with Daniel Bell of *The Public Interest* in 1965 –

the journal most closely linked to Neo-conservatism, though *Commentary* under Norman Podhoretz and *Encounter* under Melvin Lasky should not be overlooked in this respect.

One must exercise a certain tact in identifying the principal Neo-conservatives of the 1960s and 1970s for not all of them were willing to accept the label, preferring in some cases continuation of the political identity they had known all their lives. But with this qualification in mind, the names of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Nathan Glazer, Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset, Samuel Huntington and James Q. Wilson, were high among the most often-cited of the Neo-conservatives. No matter how stoutly they may today deny accuracy of the Neo-conservative identity given them in those years, in retrospect it is as though by some invisible hand their writings and lectures gave help to the conservatives' cause when it was needed.

The two conservatisms, New and Neo, had important likenesses of idea and judgement. In common was a full-blown antipathy to the New Left and to the 'establishment' liberalism of the Galbraiths and Schlesingers, the Kennedys and McGoverns. There was from the beginning in each conservatism a sophisticated awareness of the real strengths of Soviet Communism in the world and a disposition to counter-attack. In both there is substantial suspicion and distrust of the kind of nationalization and centralization of state and economy that had become a staple in much liberalism and social democracy. Correspondingly, we find a fresh interest in the remaining virtues of localism and regionalism in an increasingly national and international economy in the West; there is a common interest in the mechanisms of the free market, for long somewhat disregarded by economists overwhelmingly Keynesian in perspective, in the role of public judgement in critical issues as compared with that of rationalist-oriented bureaucrats. There was in both sets of ideas a novel respect for Congress and the Judiciary after so many years of liberal adulation of the White House.

There were differences: greater interest by New Conservatives in religious and moral objectives; greater affection among most Neo-conservatives for the aims if not the currently operating procedures of the welfare state. There was

and is broader evidence of a socialist or social democratic subconscious in the Neo- than the New Conservative whose roots tended to be conservative. Nevertheless, these differences accepted, it remains a fact that by 1980 the media often used 'neo-conservative' and 'conservative' interchangeably.

Reagan's victory in 1980 was widely hailed as a conservative triumph, and in a considerable degree it was. For a quarter of a century he had been widely known in America as an apostle of full blown political and economic conservatism. If there was also a noticeable streak of populism – one that would constantly widen in his Presidency – it harmonized well with conservative dogma, as it did in Margaret Thatcher in Britain.

Reagan's triumph, though, was one of a coalition of persuasions, some of which had at very best an uneasy relationship with conservatism of any kind. It was the greatest coalition victory since Franklin Roosevelt's in 1932. Jeane Kirkpatrick gave it the name of the Reagan Phenomenon, likening it to FDR's in its sweep and multiplicity of substance. No one back in the 1930s called FDR's coalition 'Liberal'; not with the Deep South a key part of it. 'Progression' and 'New Deal' were the common labels for FDR's coalition.

It was different from the beginning with the Reagan coalition. *Conservative* was the word for the coalition, for its leading figures, and for each and every act – the only real limit put on the use of the word being the degree of conservative; i.e. 'hard-line', 'pragmatic', and the like. The criteria of these degrees shifted from month to month, but once an individual was labeled at all, he was labeled for good. To the end of his/her days, the label would stick. Reagan was an authentic conservative in the American idiom, but as President he was a good deal more: populist, evangelical, Far Rightist, and so on, by turns and doubtless by calculation.

Reaganite forces were polyglot indeed. The Far Right, veterans of the Goldwater campaign in 1964, were interested in one thing – to capture and hold power; the evangelicals, eager to implement by law, even constitutional amendment,

had such moral goals as the prohibition of abortion, and the opening of public schools to prayers; the libertarians were willing to suffer Reagan's moral and social views for his attitude on taxes; the populists saw in Reagan's charisma the driving force for attainment of an ever-more-direct democracy; partisans of a more aggressive foreign policy and defense build-up; and old-line conservatives who abominated big budgets and bureaucracies, and who were by nature suspicious of not only populists but also the commerce-threatening, budget-expanding enthusiasts for great increases in military expenditures. All of these were pronounced 'conservative'.

Of all the *mis*ascriptions of the word 'conservative' during the last four years, the most amusing, in an historical light, is surely the application of 'conservative' to the last-named. For in America throughout the twentieth century, and including four substantial wars abroad, conservatives had been steadfastly the voices of non-inflationary military budgets, and of an emphasis on trade in the world instead of American nationalism. In the two World Wars, in Korea, and in Viet Nam, the leaders of American entry into war were such renowned liberal-progressives as Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy. In all four episodes conservatives, both in the national government and in the rank and file, were largely hostile to intervention; were isolationists indeed.

The picture is more complex in British history, and I will not generalize. But it is useful to remember that in the 1930s the whole policy of British appeasement was identified with Conservatives. In America things may be changing now, but in the past, unfailingly, liberals, progressives and social democrats have proved more reliable as followers of Wilson, FDR, and Kennedy than have fiscal conservatives. Irving Kristol has written that 'traditional conservatism, in our century at least, will blow the patriotic bugles at appropriate occasions, but it is far less interested in foreign policy than in economics'. Tocqueville noted as one of democracy's weaknesses – in a world of hostile powers – the reluctance of the middle class to abandon commerce and profit for necessary preparation for war.

Liberals and social democrats like death and destruction

no more than do conservatives. But they like some of the accompaniments of large-scale war: the opportunities created for central planning of economy, for pre-emption of legislative functions, and other pursuits dear to the hearts of political rationalists and enthusiasts. President Reagan's deepest soul is not Republican-conservative but New Deal-Second World War Democrat. Thus his well noted preference for citing FDR and Kennedy as noble precedents for his actions rather than Coolidge, Hoover, or even Eisenhower. The word 'revolution' springs lightly from his lips, for anything from tax reform to narcotics prosecution.

Reagan passion for crusades, moral and military, is scarcely American-conservative. Conservatives dislike government on our backs, and Reagan duly echoes this dislike, but he echoes more enthusiastically the Moral Majority's crusade to put more government on our backs, i.e. a moral-inquisitorial government well armed with constitutional amendments, laws and decrees. Moral Majoritarians do not like governmental power less because they cherish Christian morality more – a characteristic they share with those Revolution-supporting clerics in France and England to whom Burke gave the labels of 'political theologians' and 'theological politicians', not, obviously, liking either.

From the traditional conservative's point of view it is fatuous to use the family – as the evangelical crusaders regularly do – as the justification for their tireless crusades to ban abortion categorically, to bring the Department of Justice in on every Baby Doe, to mandate by constitution the imposition of 'voluntary' prayers in the public schools, and so on. From Burke on it has been a conservative precept and a sociological principle since Auguste Comte that the surest way of weakening the family, or any vital social group, is for the government to assume, and then monopolize, the family's historic functions.

So is there open, sometimes bitter, conflict between conservative and populist. Populism, by its history and current ideology, is essentially a radical persuasion, one aimed at a leveling of élite bodies from AT&T to Harvard University. Its utopian dream is the conservative's nightmare: a society in which all constitutional limitations upon the direct power of the people, or any passing majority, are abrogated,

leaving something akin to the mystique of Rousseau's General Will. At the present time, the hated enemies of populists are the Supreme Court and the Federal Reserve Bank.

The Far Right is less interested in Burkean immunities from government power than it is in putting a maximum of governmental power in the hands of those who can be trusted. It is control of power, not diminution of power, that ranks high. Thus when Reagan was elected conservatives hoped for the quick abolition of such government 'monstrosities' as the Department of Energy, the Department of Education, and the two National Endowments of the Arts and Humanities, all creations of the political left. The Far Right in the Reagan Phenomenon saw it differently, however; they saw it as an opportunity for retaining and enjoying the powers. And the Far Right prevailed. It seeks to prevail also in the establishment of a 'national industrial strategy', a government corporation structure in which the conservative dream of free private enterprise would be extinguished.

One of the consequences of the Reagan Phenomenon has been the onset of a compulsive fascination with *authenticity* and *inauthenticity*; this is well known in modern religious and revolutionary history. Nothing was more important to the early Protestant than that his faith, directly in God alone, unmediated by pagan-Roman externalities and distractions, be authentic and be regarded by others as authentic: that is, sincere, complete and unmixed with ulterior motive or ambition. Hypocrisy was for some time the deadliest of sins in the Protestant theodicy.

This intensity of faith, passion for authenticity, passed into religion-related politics in the seventeenth century, notably among the Puritans during the Civil War in England. By the time of the French Revolution the politics of *la patrie* had reached a religious fervor, to be seen among the Jacobins in a constantly growing measure. By the height of the Revolution in 1793-4 the passion for authenticity was almost uncontrollable among the revolutionaries. The Revolution began to devour its own, keeping the guillotine working overtime in the execution of even high officials like Robespierre for the crime of 'hypocrisy' or 'inauthenticity'.

There are no guillotines on Capitol Hill or the Mall in Washington, but there are punishments for the 'inauthentic' and rewards for the 'authentic'. Struggles for the mythical award of The Truest Conservative of the Month, have increased in scope and intensity during the last two years. Suspicions lie everywhere, just as they came to among Jacobins. They may suddenly touch someone thought to be 'pragmatic' instead of 'hard line'; or they may land on the Moral Majoritarian whose conscience forbids his going all the way in the categorical anathema upon abortion; or it might be the Congressmen, previously thought safe, who makes budget deficits more important than a measureless national military defense. It is impossible to know in advance.

If the mirror on the wall of fairy-tale origin were to be made actual in today's Washington, it would be worth creating a state lottery for the variant answers that would come to the question, who is the fairest conservative of them all? It might today be the individual who has just called for War in Central America; tomorrow the most indefatigable picket before absorption hospitals and where Baby Does are born; the next day it might well be the populist instigator of some scheme for fiscal egalitarianism. We cannot be certain. Except of one thing: it will never be the conservative who traces ancestry back through Goldwater, Taft, Cleveland, all the way to John Adams and Edmund Burke.

What, then, is the probable fate of the conservative and his ideology, once the Reagan Phenomenon cracks-up? No political leader, not Ronald Reagan, not FDR, not even a Lloyd George or Churchill could hold together for very long the polyglot assemblage that has made up the Reagan Phenomenon since 1980. The disintegration of the Phenomenon – and it is already under way – will throw each of the highly disparate persuasions back upon its old resources, there to plot no doubt fresh alliances toward yet another coalition of victory under yet another charismatic politician if he can be found.

Traditional conservatism is one of these persuasions; it too will find itself back in something of, though not entirely, its

old position of gadfly, critic, and occasional gatherer of the spoils. But, as far as one can judge, it will not be altogether the same old position. For in truth, conservatism has left discernible prints upon the sand during its 30-year renaissance in America. It has, with the aid of the Neo-conservatives, moved the political spectrum at least somewhat to the right. Its by now widely publicized taunts of liberals and social democrats as bureaucracy-builders and centralizing collectivists have left their mark. Liberals are as quick as conservatives today to declare abhorrence of 'throwing money at' political and social problems. Most important, in a news-saturated society, the labels 'conservative' and 'conservatism', for action and philosophy respectively, are firmly planted.

Nor should we forget the long-held advantage of conservatism in the West: its clear hold upon the symbols and mystiques of *family*, *local community*, *parish*, *neighborhood*, and *mutual-aid* groups of all types. The conservative philosophy was born of Burke's and others' antagonism to the deadly *étatisme* and *individualisme* which had, like pincers, threatened to crush the traditional intermediate groups in the social order. From these verities sprang inevitably a high premium upon the values of localism and decentralization, of the private sector generally, and upon a government concerned with its inherent constitutional responsibilities instead of dozens and hundreds of social and economic entitlements.

The residual strength of a doctrine or creed is often best shown by the tribute paid it, however falsely or hypocritically, by its adversaries. Such conservative words as *family*, *kin*, *neighborhood* and *community* have long held appeal to the political clerisy in the West — evidenced by the frequent use as euphemisms of these words for the state and its commands. In 1984, at the Democratic Convention in San Francisco, Governor Cuomo made use of 'family' some two dozen times; not, however, in reference to the household but to the whole American nation. 'Community' and 'wagon train' were other homely traditionalisms the Governor saw fit to use as fig leaves for the naked public square. Quite apart from symbolic value and even genuine, concrete reference, family, kindred, neighborhood and locality, even region and

race, have a universal historical meaning that is not likely to be entirely eroded away by the acids of modernity.

It is possible that traditional conservatism will be strengthened by what is increasingly being hailed as Welfare Conservatism, a product in considerable measure of the work of the Neo-conservatives. Some conservatives doubtless draw back from the phrase, likening it in their minds to such oxymorons as '*laissez-faire* socialism' or 'authoritarian liberalism'. But the future of the welfare state, barring utter catastrophe in the world, is thoroughly assured by now. Early in the century Sir William Harcourt felt obliged to say, 'We're all socialists now'. We can say much the same of citizens of the welfare state today; we all belong. The fateful inclusion of the middle class and its values and desires in the welfare state, making it today by far the largest beneficiary, meant that real opposition to it was a thing of the past. The assurance of a generous Social Security and Medicare entitlement, and without means-testing, together with annual subsidies to farmers, small businesses, and to the huge educational establishment, the largesse that now extends to substantial aid for college students and to vast bailouts for giant corporations, the creation of large endowments at taxpayer expense for support of the arts, the humanities, and most recently political philosophy, all this and a great deal more make up the dominant reality today of the welfare state. Sadly, even tragically, the epithet 'welfare' or 'welfare state' continues to be fixed in the public mind as the sum of benefits received by the impoverished and disabled; for the truth is, the money going to these groups is but a fraction of the public revenue that does to the middle and upper classes.

Therefore, to become and be known as a Welfare Conservative will not affect current reality much in political campaigns. The great objective of Welfare Conservatives at the moment is establishing a lustrous pedigree; hence the mutilations of history in their futile hope of making Burke, Disraeli and Bismarck their ancestors. They might better be exploring the ways by which they can maintain an identity separate from that of liberals and neo-liberals.

A substantial core of traditional conservatism will continue to exist in both England and the United States. A political faith that is two centuries old does not extinguish

easily. The Renaissance of 1950–80 will be a constant and kindly light for conservative dreams. If it happened once, why not again? Moreover, there is vital need for a politics of the past; that is, a political ideology built around the study as well as evocation of the past. It has yet to be proved that futurism is more than fanciful rhetoric based upon hunches. But the past in all its boundless diversity, is *there*. The new, as art and science as well as a business teaches us, is accomplished by new arrangements of the 'usable past'; as Eliot called it, arrangements which, when made superlatively well, generate novel forces.

There is no necessary antagonism between devotion to past and attention to present. Churchill by his own admission loved the past, disliked the present, and feared the future. He coped adequately, to say the least, as did Disraeli and Bismarck, with the present.

Traditional conservatives have, and will continue to have, a good deal in common with the socialists in the democracies. The socialists too, though for different reasons, reject the present and, in an interesting way, enjoy the past – that is, the special past formed by Marx, by Marx's mental picture of the past, and by the whole past that was occupied so happily until about the Second World War by socialists in the world's intellectual hierarchy. The socialists have, just as do traditional conservatives, a complete and self-sufficient program for all seasons, which is something liberals, who tend to live in hand-and-mouth ideological circumstances, do not and never will have. There were figures in nineteenth-century Europe whose special uses of the moral, esthetic, technological and political pasts make it difficult to place them as traditionalists or radicals. Proudhon was emphatically radical, but he made the patriarchal family and the autonomous village basic to his anarchism. Dostoevsky was traditionalist, but his merciless assaults on modernity and Westernism in Russia were inevitably of service to radicals.

Both sets of traditionalists – Burkean conservatives and Marxian socialists – are compelled to live under the liberal welfare state, which they do not like, though for different reasons, and both ideological groups will yield, as they have for some time now, culture-guerrillas whose most obvious future is that of use of the past in attack on the present.