

 **The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Conservatism**

By Russell Kirk. New York: Devin-Adair. 122 pp. \$2.75

One of the most interesting cultural trends of this decade is the conservative revival. Its first substantial literary product appeared in 1953 when Russell Kirk wrote *The Conservative Mind*, a book which made the ideas of such men as Burke, Adams, Calhoun, Maine, and Lecky come alive. Now, several books later, Professor Kirk brings out a small handbook which, ideally, should have been handed to Woman along with the Nineteenth Amendment when she got the power of the ballot into her possession.

But such a book was not available in 1920. Women voters were showered instead with a spate of lower case liberal literature and George Bernard Shaw got into the act with his *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*. The results have been somewhat less than utopian. Women have voted alongside of their men and politics has gone from bad to worse. One result is that many women are up in arms about the low estate to which the Republic has fallen — as witness the several active women's organizations along the lines of Pro-America.

Men are the cautious sex, on the

average and when it comes to ideas. Being public relations minded, they want to stand in well with their neighbors and business associates. The neighbors and business associates favor free enterprise — with qualifications; they are for limited, constitutional government — with qualifications; and so on. Anyone who comes out flat-footedly for personal rights and limited government, for free enterprise and the market economy, is looked upon as a nonconformist who undermines confidence in Our-Way-of-Life. So the average man tends to play it close to the vest.

But his womenfolk are under no such inhibition. Our *mores* allow woman to hold any ideas she pleases and, if the spirit moves her, to go on the warpath for them. Well, the women are giving forth with war cries, all right. A lot of them do not want any part of the Welfare State; they are alarmed by the socialization which advances no matter which party is in power; they are demanding literature which supplies them with the facts and theories they need to make them skillful expositors of the case for freedom. They will welcome this book. *Guide to Conservatism* spells out the case simply and persuasively, and although it is not the whole story of freedom, it is an important part of that story.

Modern conservatism, as Russell Kirk expounds it, is the political philosophy which arose late in the eighteenth century to confront the fanatic visionaries typified by the French revolutionaries. Its development in the American tradition is characterized by several convictions. Foremost among these is the belief that political problems cannot be rightly understood or resolved apart from moral and religious truths. These fundamental principles are not to be confused with "abstractions," however, which are "absolute political dogmas divorced from practical experience and particular circumstances." The conservative understands that the fundamental principles which undergird a particular culture are not improvised for the occasion; that "our civil social order—the complex of moral habits, political establishments, customary laws, and economic ways — has been erected over many centuries by a painful and laborious process of trial and error."

Thus the conservative sternly sets his face against the planner armed with political power, who would blithely turn this sensitive structure inside out. He resists the planner because he dislikes uniformity; instead he would encourage variety and diversity in society, believing in different rewards for different abilities. The

conservative, although he is not a materialist — and precisely because he is not — believes in private property and a free economy. "What we mean by the phrase 'property rights,'" says Kirk, "is really the right of human beings to possess and acquire property. Property rights are human rights. They are, indeed, among the most important of human rights." And further, "a free economy is essential to the preservation of freedom in general: to intellectual freedom, to civil liberties, to representative government, to freedom of private character."

In the interests of personal liberty and private character the conservative tries to keep political power checked and balanced, limited by constitutions and customs. He encourages voluntary associations and local attachments and the importance of the family. Although he resists innovation for its own sake, he allows for the orderly growth and development of persons and their institutions: "All human institutions alter to some extent from age to age, for slow change is the means of conserving society, just as it is the means for renewing the human body."

This is a pertinent tract for the times, and for the intelligent man as well as his mate.

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## HOW INCA SOCIALISM CAME TO NORTH AMERICA

### Nowhere Was Somewhere

By Arthur E. Morgan. Chapel Hill:  
University of North Carolina  
Press, 1946. 234 pp. \$3.00

Some interesting facts in this book connect the socialism of contemporary North America with that of the Inca Indians during their era of political enslavement.

It seems that one Raphael Hythloday went on three of Amerigo Vespucci's four voyages. On Vespucci's last voyage in 1503, Hythloday stayed to make a trip overland to visit the Peruvian Inca Indians, whose society operated from, roughly, 1100 to 1550.

There Hythloday found what was a highly developed communist society. The Emperor — "Inca" — had absolute power over all persons and property. All land was collectively owned, with the government granting rights to its use for which the tenants were forced to pay a rental tax in the form of labor. So long as they were able to hold these controls, the dictators were able to maintain themselves in power.

The Inca society had no money. Almost no private trading occurred, other than slight amounts of local barter. All general distribution was in the hands of the central government, and every-

body's production was taken over for that purpose. It was gathered into central warehouses and distributed "as needed" without money or price.

Employment and work — even marriage — were strictly controlled by the government, including the place of work and the work gang to which each was assigned. A system of universal military training prevailed and supported their vast military conquests.

A social security system in extreme degree was in operation.

The Incas did not even have a written language. The numerical records of the government were kept by means of knotted cords. They knew nothing of the wheel, the axle, or the arch for building.

Only a simple scale of living prevailed, since ambition had all but disappeared in a system where achievement was not possible. The long success of the Incas' dictatorial communism seems to have been due to their genius in preventing their subjects from wanting much or aspiring to attainment and progress.

Finally, this despotic and far-flung empire suddenly collapsed. Except for the fact that the people's spirit was gone, it would have collapsed sooner — perhaps centuries sooner.

This is the society which fascinated Hythloday and which he