

STEPHEN R. GRAUBARD. *Burke, Disraeli and Churchill*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961. 262 pages. \$5.00.

The intention of the author in this volume is not stated with clarity. He says that to join Burke, Disraeli, and Churchill together as the greatest of the modern British "conservatives" is not so much wrong as it is insufficient; but this proposition is hardly developed with any analytical force, and one is tempted to think of the author as one who simply enjoys writing like a kind of *fin de siècle* Oxfordian. The difficulty may be stated another way: apparently the author thinks of conservatives as a stodgy, undifferentiated, unthinking mass of men who are, indeed, quite unworthy of the heroes of this work. But conservatives think of themselves as greatly various and filled

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with a significant social imagination, and they insist that such creative and complicated men as Burke, Disraeli, and Churchill are precisely the ones who offer leadership to the conservatives of our time. To the conservative, the data presented in this volume is proof that the contemporary English-speaking people can and must turn to such exemplars of conservatism as these. The meaning of ideas is made through historical experience, and today we are making or re-stating the meaning of conservatism, just as this was done by the notable men about whom this book is written.

While the author is seeking neither to bring new material into his research nor to offer a distinguished analytical work, this book does present much for the reader who wishes primarily to follow the careers of Burke, Disraeli, and Churchill. The political activity and writings of Burke are well known, but the life of Disraeli, the politician and the novelist, needs to be recalled to our generation. Though Winston Churchill is yet alive, he is truly a man of a brilliant past. The section on Churchill is the best and most useful segment of the book. Graubard deals with Churchill's career in some detail, and he summarizes his voluminous writings, through which we can live again both history on the large canvass and the sharp and disagreeable negotiations behind the scenes during World War II. Churchill's struggle against President Roosevelt's suspicions of the British almost leads to the conclusion that anti-British feeling was the obverse of pro-Russian, even procommunist sympathy in some circles in Washington. Any study of why we lost the peace must inevitably return to Winston Churchill.

Graubard would have been more clear in his use of ideological terms, such as "conservative," "whig," and "liberal," if he had remembered that most of the modern ideological vocabulary was invented well into the nineteenth century. Likewise, had he distinguished between the European and the American use of "liberal" and "conservative," much would have been clarified, notably why some conservatives in America want to be called "Whigs," just because continental conservatives have really had no history of sympathy for *laissez-faire* "liberal" theories.

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