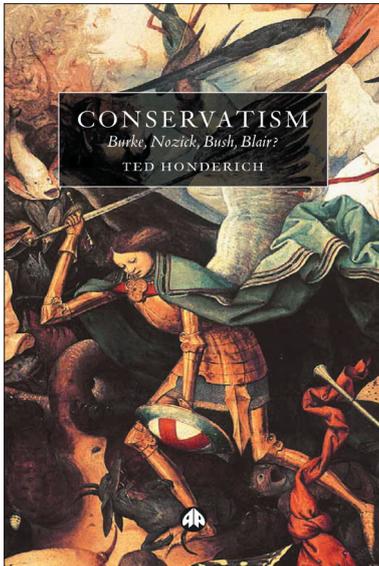




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CONSERVATISM

Burke, Nozick, Bush, Blair?

Ted Honderich

This is the strongest, sharpest, most authoritative and most readable analysis of the political tradition of conservatism that exists. It is resolute and revelatory. The author is the analytic philosopher recognised internationally as Britain's outstanding radical philosopher. The book in this revised edition deals acutely with the problem of whether Britain's New Labour Party is in the conservative tradition. Its analysis of the tradition makes a reasoned judgement possible. It also brings into early view New Labour's place in history.

The distinctions of British and American conservatism are established in seven chapters. The first considers a declaration about eternal values and reform shared by Edmund Burke in his condemnation of the French Revolution and all conservatives since. The second and third chapters, about the right kind of political thinking and human nature, are much concerned with conservative doctrines of incentive and reward. The fourth chapter is about all freedoms, including those of private property. Like the other chapters, it is serious, savage and funny.

This is an inquiry not only into the distinctions that set conservatism apart, but into what underlies and brings them together; the rationale or underlying principle of conservatism. The inquiry is continued through chapters on government, society, and equality, to a final conclusion in the eighth chapter that rests on the book's progress of reasoning. The answer is not that the conservative tradition is selfish.

This is a much enlarged edition of the book first published as *Conservatism* in 1990 in Britain and America. It was widely reviewed, not calmly by reviewers in the tradition it defines, and translated. Each chapter now ends with a sizeable section on New Labour. These prepare the way for conclusions on whether New Labour is a conservatism and on its nature and rationale. The conclusions have been called a philosopher's death knell for a hope.

Ted Honderich has been Grote Professor of the Philosophy of Mind and Logic at University College London, and a visiting professor in New York and Yale. He is the editor of *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, whose first edition sold 100,000 copies. His books on brain and mind, determinism and freedom, and political philosophy are standard works. Pluto has published *Terrorism for Humanity: A Philosophical Inquiry*. A related book *After the Terror* was the subject of national controversy in Germany for its moral support of the Palestinians, and was brought out in two translations by German publishers. Three volumes of his journal papers have lately been published and a new edition of his book on the supposed justifications of punishment is forthcoming from Pluto.

Reviews of the first edition:

"It offers a powerful critique of the major beliefs of modern Conservatism, and shows how much a rigorous philosopher can contribute to understanding the fashionable but deeply ruinous absurdities of his times." Bhikhu Parekh, *New Statesman*

"The whole book must be read. Indeed, only the final page, like a good detective story, brings with it the full philosophical discovery, and one much too rich to be exposed to impatient disclosure." Michael Foot, *the Observer*



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