

# Dissident *Memoirs of a Publisher*

TO MEET Henry Regnery, one would never suspect him of being a revolutionary. He is self-contained, even placid. He does not raise his voice. He is not a sleeve-plucker. But, working out of a small publisher's office in Chicago with little support from the book sellers and only sporadic encouragement from reviewers, he has been one of the more potent movers and shakers in the American conservative movement.

He tells the story of his publishing ventures in an engagingly modest autobiography, *Memoirs of a Dissident Publisher* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 757 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017, 260 pp., \$12.95), that is in thorough keeping with his character. Always honest with himself, he had an affinity for honest men who are finding it difficult to get a forum in a world dominated by the quasi-collectivists who had appropriated the word "liberal" to de-

scribe their illiberal philosophy. He had some money from his father's business, he had the support of his Quaker-bred wife, Eleanor, who believed in his inner light as well as her own, and he retained enough business sense to keep clear of bankruptcy even while doing good for its own sake. With these quiet advantages he picked up authors who, though they scarcely realized it themselves, were just on the verge of capturing new audiences for which the Establishment publishing authorities had no feeling and no use.

The list of conservative and libertarian writers who were either floated or rescued by the Regnery imprint now makes a "Who's Who" of a movement that is coming of age. Regnery published Bill Buckley's *God and Man at Yale* on a tip from Frank Hanighen of *Human Events*, he accepted Russell Kirk's epochal *The Conservative Mind* in its im-

pressive entirety after Knopf had demanded that it be cut to a quarter of its length, and he gave many a dissident in the field of foreign affairs (Freda Utley, William Henry Chamberlin, Charles C. Tansill, George Crocker) his or her head. In between times he did not neglect poetry, belles lettres and religion, publishing books of consequence and taste even though they did not anticipate the apocalypse.

### **Studies in Germany**

In his diffident way Henry Regnery would have you believe that he became a publisher because he was not fit to be anything else. His own record belies his modesty. He decided against an engineering career after two years at Armour Tech, but he continued to pursue a mathematics major at M.I.T. At M.I.T. he met students and teachers who deflected him from the "dull winter of mathematics and physics" to more exciting pursuits in music, art, languages and philosophy. At the behest of a young German friend he spent two years in the German Rhineland, studying at Bonn and listening to all the music that he could absorb. Regnery's forebears, on both his father's and mother's side, had come from the Mosel region near Trier, so Rhineland Germany seemed home to the young student. Hitler had not yet succeeded in Nazifying the region, and

the genocidal purge of the Jews was still a few years away.

The German experience taught Henry Regnery that not all Germans are Prussians, and gave him a special feeling for the opposition to Hitler whose plottings might have ended the war at an early stage if Roosevelt had not insisted on unconditional surrender. Returning home to New Deal America, Regnery studied economics at Harvard under Schumpeter, learning something of "the realities of the world." He began to distrust the fashionable intellectuals who had illusions of their own importance, but he retained enough faith in the New Deal to spend a summer working for Rexford Tugwell's Resettlement Administration.

### **Quaker Influence**

After qualifying for an M.A. at Harvard he took a job with an American Friends Service Committee community project in western Pennsylvania which offered a voluntaristic version of the Tugwell theories. Using funds raised by the Quakers from private foundations, the so-called Penn-Craft community hoped to establish an industry to sustain homesteaders who could no longer find work in the mines or at the abandoned coke ovens. The most advantageous event to come out of Henry Regnery's brief association with Penn-Craft was his meeting

with Eleanor Scattergood, the daughter of a prominent Quaker family. After their marriage, they spent a short time working with the Penn-Craft pioneers, but the time had come, so the young couple felt, for something more permanent. Henry Regnery tried to return to his father's textile business, but soon, as he says, he found himself sliding into publishing "almost imperceptibly."

The young Henry began with pamphlets, an offshoot of his connection with *Human Events*, a publication started in Washington toward the end of the war by Frank Hanighen and Regnery's Quaker friend Felix Morley. One thing led to another, and a collection of Communist documents assembled by Raymond Murphy of the State Department, too voluminous for pamphlet issue, inevitably became a book, *Blueprint for World Conquest*, with an introduction by William Henry Chamberlin. The *Human Events* pamphleteering introduced Regnery to more and more people who did not conform to what he perceived to be the "dominant opinion" of the times, which was all in favor of accommodation with Stalin abroad and an extension of welfarist collectivism at home.

The "dominant opinion" included Henry Morgenthau's plan for turning the German Rhineland and Ruhr into a permanent industrial

waste. Henry Regnery, remembering his own German experience, revolted against that. So the first imprints of a newly formed Henry Regnery Company went on two books by the humanitarian English publisher Victor Gollancz, *In Darkest Germany* and *Our Threatened Values*, and one by the philosopher Max Picard, *Hitler in Our Selves*. A first Regnery catalogue included Hans Rothfel's *The German Opposition to Hitler* and Ernst Juenger's *The Peace*.

### The Flag of Unorthodoxy

Having raised the flag of unorthodoxy, Henry Regnery began to discover that Gollancz's phrase, "our threatened values," applied all over the lot. Pursuing this anti-Morgenthau interests, Regnery published Montgomery Belgion's *Victor's Justice* and Freda Uteley's *The High Cost of Vengeance*. Later he issued Uteley's *The China Story*, but not in time to save mainland China from the Communists. Mortimer Smith's *And Madly Teach*, a book on the dominant educational theories that had inflicted the faulty "look-say" reading methods on a generation of unsuspecting children, became a Regnery best-seller after *Time* magazine had devoted a three-column article to it.

It was only natural that Regnery should take the lead in publishing early World War II "revisionist

books." There was William Henry Chamberlin's *America's Second Crusade*, Charles Tansill's *Back Door to War*, Husband Kimmel's *Admiral Kimmel's Story* and George Crocker's *Roosevelt's Road to Russia*. Regnery says he doubts that publishing the true story of Pearl Harbor or Yalta "will prevent such occurrences in the future." But the truth, he says, "is worthwhile for its own sake." If we can't know what our leaders have done and agreed to in our name, the alternative is "the society described in George Orwell's 1984."

Regnery anticipated Solzshenitsyn by many years with his publication of Elinor Lipper's *Eleven Years in Soviet Prison Camps*. He outraged the Zionists by publishing Alfred M. Lilienthal's *What Price Israel*, even though Lilienthal made plain his "obvious devotion to his Jewish faith."

It was not with a movement in mind that Regnery accepted Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* and Bill Buckley's *God and Man at Yale*, but a movement it became, as the many Regnery titles mentioned in George Nash's *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* attest. In a period of less than two years Regnery issued James J. Kilpatrick's *The Sovereign States*, Felix Morley's *Freedom and Federalism* and James Burnham's *Congress and the American Tradition*, all of which complemented each other.

Regnery has a gift for characterization, and his descriptions and analysis of some of his authors—Konrad Adenauer of West Germany and Roy Campbell, the South African poet, are examples—prove that he could have been a huge success as a critic or journalist if he had not chosen publishing as a career. But publishing was just exactly right for him. It allowed him to indulge his master passion, which was to let honest dissidents have their say. ⊕

**ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC POLICY: THE MICRO VIEW**  
by John C. Goodman and Edwin G. Dolan  
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*Reviewed by Lawrence W. Reed, Assistant Professor of Economics, Northwood Institute, Midland, Michigan*

How refreshing it is to come upon a textbook on public policies which holds those policies up to the light of liberty as a standard for judging their desirability. At a time when many economists cast this yardstick aside with a "Mussolini at least kept the trains running" attitude, two