

CONSERVATISM REVISITED. By Peter Viereck. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1949. 187 pp. \$2.50.

History is Professor Peter Viereck's subject, and in this volume he suggests that it may contain something of value to us in the present social and political crisis in world affairs. He takes us back to 1815, to a Europe just freed from its totalitarian chains, and commencing a century of prosperity and comparative peace which today truly deserves the title of the "good old days." The proposition is presented that the generally prevailing conservative policy which directed European government and diplomacy should be given the credit for this era of progress, and that it is to the so-called "liberal" nationalism which followed that we owe the "balance of power" and the steadily increasing international tension, which in 1914 burst into a conflagration which has still to be quenched.

It is unusual to find "liberalism" the villain of the piece, and "conservatism" its hero, for the latter seems to be in bad odor at present. A United States Senator may pride himself on the safety, commonsense and conservatism of his personal investments, but he will be very careful not to describe his legislative policy in the same terms. He may even think of himself as a conservative, but he will perform the most amazing linguistic acrobatics to prevent his constituents from suspecting it. "Conservative" is definitely an unpopular tag in politics and in political thinking. Why?

Mr. Viereck illustrates his thesis by following the career of the Legitimist Austrian Foreign Minister, Prince Metternich, from the Congress of Vienna until the "liberal" nationalistic *Volkerpolitik* of Father Jahn, Arndt, Fichte, Wagner and others forced him from office, and the Revolution of '48 sent him into exile in England.

Metternich's heraldic motto was "*Kraft im Recht*"—Strength in the Law. He once wrote to a friend, "My constant efforts are directed against ultras of all kinds." He consistently opposed the "liberal" nationalists of '48, whom Hitler so often quoted. He was the enemy of thoughtless destruction, and of fanatic, incestuous love of country. He advocated the international polity of law, and the balanced, gradual advancement under law of human rights and liberties.

The Mt. Holyoke professor and author suggests that once more this unpopular conservatism may be the bitter but effective specific for our political ills. A very interesting and thought-provoking book! —MARSHALL CRANE.