

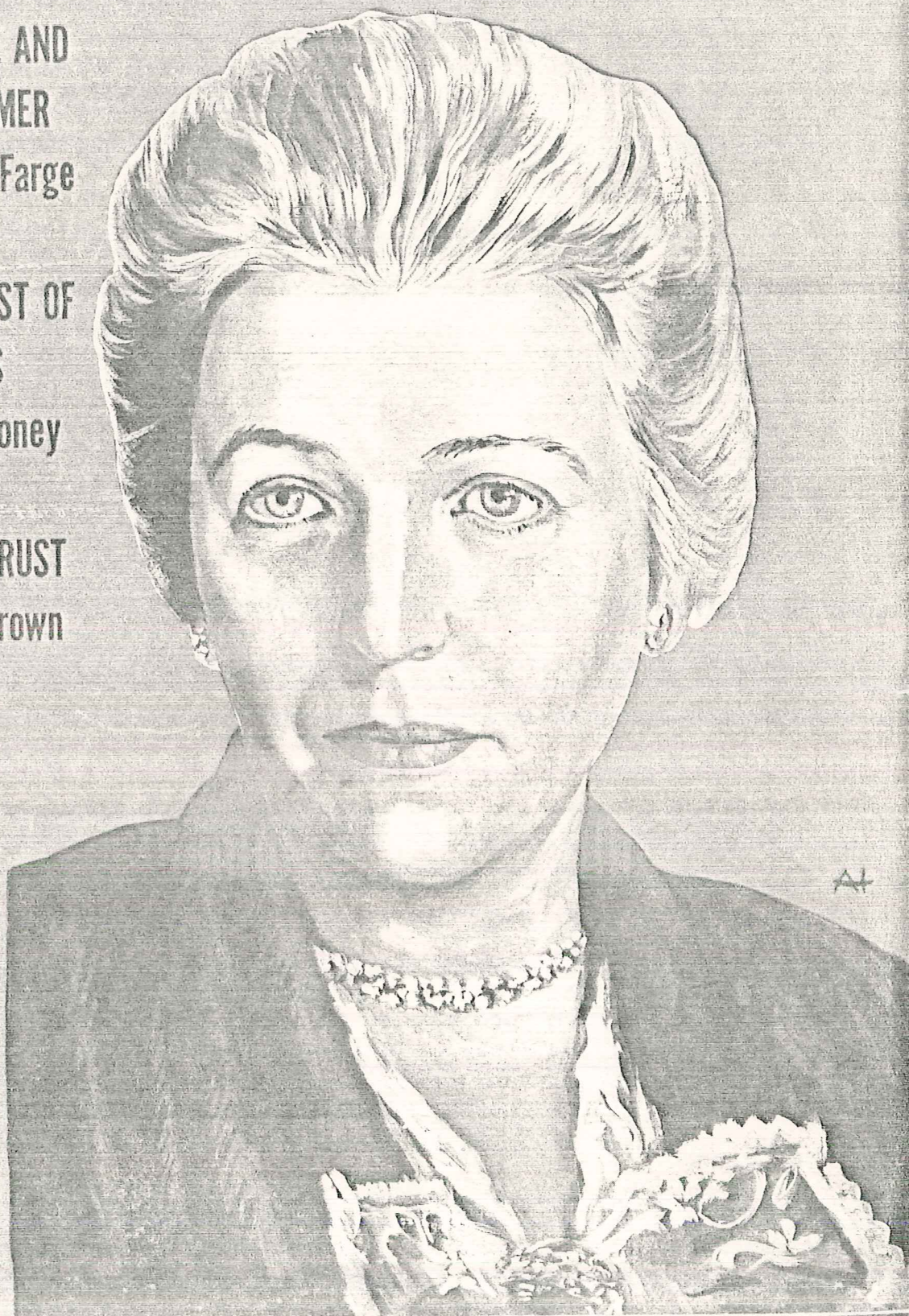
# Saturday Review

NOVEMBER 6, 1954 / 20¢

**MICKEY SPILLANE AND  
HIS BLOODY HAMMER**  
By Christopher La Farge

**THE BOOMING BUST OF  
THE PAPERBACKS**  
By Thomas E. Cooney

**IN BRAINS WE TRUST**  
By John Mason Brown



*Pearl Buck, author of  
"My Several Worlds."  
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## Past in Present

"A Program for Conservatives," by Russell Kirk (Henry Regnery, 325 pp. \$4), is an intellectual rejection of liberalism and a chart for action, spiritual as well as political. Here it is reviewed by Francis G. Wilson, professor of political science at the University of Illinois, author of "The American Political Mind" and other books.

By Francis G. Wilson

A FEW years ago Lionel Trilling insisted "there are no conservative or reactionary ideas in general circulation." Liberalism, he said was "the sole intellectual tradition." Surely, since the emergence of the contemporary defense of conservatism such statements are plainly wrong and outmoded. Russell Kirk's "A Program for Conservatives" is a brilliant contribution to the defense of conservatives and to the rejection of liberalism.

Kirk's program for conservatives is not like one that might be written by a political party convention, that is, a one-two-three list of proposals for immediate legislative enactment. It is a program for the reform of the individual spirit first of all, for a self-conscious organization and buttressing of conservative attitudes, and for the support of many legislative experiments tending toward the restoration of a conservative way of life. Such "a program for conservatives" rests, therefore, on the demonstration of what the conservative values of a restored tradition might be. It raises the question of who are the conservatives, and what are their aims for a future America.

Who are the conservatives? Kirk does not like the intellectual and the ideologist in that invidious sense in which there is "too much ego in his cosmos." Conservatives are not fanatics, nor do they have the enthusiasms of a secular religion. "What they have in common is a similar view of human nature, of the ends of society, and of the most nearly satisfactory methods for seeking the common good." Conservatism is a state of mind, not of the pocketbook. The American conservative character is marked, according to Kirk, by "a belief that order is more than human, which has implanted in man a character of mingled good and evil, susceptible of improvement only by an inner working, not by mundane schemes for perfectibility." A conservative has an affection for variety and complexity; he has confidence in the existence of a justice that is not a mere leveling equal-

ity; he has a suspicion of concentrated power; he has a reliance upon private endeavor and sagacity, together with contempt for the abstract designs of the collectivistic reformer; and he has a feeling that it is unwise to break radically with political prescription. Kirk has no sympathy for what he calls "the conservatism of mediocrity" and "the conservatism of desolation."

Ten problems are presented to the reader as a means of suggesting the principles of the conservative and the means that may be used to achieve, in degree, these ends. The problems are those of mind, heart, social boredom, community, social justice, wants, order, power, loyalty, and tradition. For the mind we need neither Jacobins nor the followers of John Dewey, but belief in a Christian philosophy; for the heart Kirk holds David Riesman's "Lonely Crowd" has no answer since it is cold utilitarianism without imagination, and surely it will be no remedy for the massive social boredom of our time. Community cannot be rediscovered through either *laissez faire* or socialism, but by a restoration of groups, such as the family, the church, the profession, the neighborhood, and local government. Christian social justice must take the place of mechanical equality and there must be a recognition and reward for ability. Not all the wants of men are material, and a sense of a just order does not demand the destruction of class and all inequality; power is dangerous to liberty when it is concentrated, and there is much beyond politics. Finally, loyalty to America needs love in addition to fidelity. "Tradition is the process of handing on beliefs" through life in the family and the church; it is "that body of knowledge which is bound up with prescription and prejudice and authority, the beliefs of a people, as distinguished from scientific knowledge."

Kirk believes there is much to remedy in America. Yet our danger comes more from liberal smugness than from the conservative criticism of institutions. Historical continuity has not been severed beyond repair, and a tradition remains that may be preserved. One thing is clear: this is the great cleavage that stands between liberals and conservatives. Liberals will surely be unhappy in a conservative world, yet the conservative will say this is precisely the way it should be. Liberals have had their chance in times past and they have all but destroyed the sense of community and substituted for it social boredom. The conservative hopes, no doubt, that liberals are becoming top-lofty bores.



## Past Reproached

"My Hero," by Donald Richberg (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 367 pp. \$5), is the biography of an oldtime Progressive who now rues his past. Professor George E. Mowry of the University of California at Los Angeles, who reviews it here, is the author of "Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Era."

By George E. Mowry

UNTIL the start of the Second World War few Americans were more consistent in their support of the progressive-reforming tradition in American life than Donald Richberg. As a young Chicago lawyer in the salad days of the century he interested himself in local reform politics. He soon became an ardent follower of Theodore Roosevelt, but one who could still admire William Jennings Bryan and Woodrow Wilson. By 1916 he was a member of the inner circle of Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party, in 1924 an official of the Progressive Convention that nominated LaFollette, and by 1932 an enthusiastic New Dealer. Subsequently as general counsel for the NRA and an intimate adviser of Franklin Roosevelt, he became known for a time in the press as "the assistant President." Mr. Richberg's earlier years as a public attorney engaged in a long struggle with utility companies and his career in the Twenties as a labor lawyer round out his impressive progressive credentials.

His new book, "My Hero," was written not from Mr. Richberg's many records but rather from his remembrances. Thus it is not a detailed account of the author's life, and consequently does not give us many new insights into the facts of either Progressive or New Deal politics. For this purpose the reader will find a score of other autobiographical words much more fruitful. The book was written, so Mr. Richberg tells us, "to parade across the stage of America 1902-1952 the outstanding leaders of political thought" and to show why "none of the acclaimed heroes of this brief era were able to save their followers from participating in the greatest waste of human life and the greatest destruction of accumulated common wealth ever experienced by mankind." This is a large order, and it is no discredit to Mr. Richberg to question his success. In view of his purpose, however, one could wish that the author had spent more time on foreign affairs.

But, if the author has failed in attaining his stated objective he has provided us with a revealing transit of

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