ARISTOCRATIC LIBERALISM

The Social and Political Thought of Jacob Burckhardt, John Stuart Mill, and Alexis de Tocqueville

Alan S. Kahan

With a new afterword by the author



Contents

Introduction, 3

1. Past and Present: The Eighteenth Century and the Origins of Modernity, 11

The Revolutionary Present, 11

The Enlightenment: The Origins of the Revolution and of Modernity, 15

The French Revolution, 20

The Eighteenth Century, the French Revolution, and Modernity, 31

2. The Spirit of the Majority, 34

Contradiction or Coherence? The Aristocratic Liberal Style of Explanation, 34

The Hegemony of the Middle Class and the Commercial Spirit, 41

Hegemony as Stagnation, 46

Hegemony as Mediocrity, 49

The Rise of the Lower Classes, 54

3. Despotisms: The State and Its Masters, 58

The State, 58

Our Masters: Public Opinion, 65

The Problem of Suffrage, 68

The Hare Plan and the Prussian Constitution, 71

Socialism and the Fear of Socialism, 74

4. Modern Humanism: The Values of Aristocratic Liberalism, 81

Humanism, 81

Modern Humanism and Aristocratic Liberalism, 92

Modern Humanism and the Aristocratic Liberals:

The Values of Aristocratic Liberalism, 98

5. "Working against Time": The Aristocratic Liberal Response to the Challenge of Modernity, 111

The Political Ideal of Aristocratic Liberalism, 111

Social and Economic Attitudes, 115

viii Contents

Optimism and Pessimism, 119

Education, 125

6. Conclusion: Toward a History of European Liberalism, 1830-1870, 135

Aristocratic Liberalism and the Study of Liberalism, 135

The Boundaries of European Liberalism, 1830-1870, 139

Three Misconceptions about Liberalism, 145

Aristocratic Liberalism in Context, 155

Afterword, 167

Notes, 179

Selected Bibliography, 221

Index, 229