Shaping Modern Liberalism

Stettner, Edward A.

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Shaping Modern Liberalism: Herbert Croly and Progressive Thought.

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Herbert Croly, founder of the New Republic, expounded on issues from the nationalization of railroads to the Espionage Act in his search for a middle way between socialism and capitalism. Stettner illustrates how Croly’s political theory influenced the editorial position of one of the leading liberal journals and how his thought in turn was modified in reaction to national and world events, such as presidential elections and World War I. Stettner portrays Croly as a modest and conscientious intellectual who wholeheartedly came to embrace the Progressive movement and consequently helped establish the framework for modern liberalism.

“By far the best study of Herbert Croly as a political and social philosopher. Stettner illuminates the origins, evolution, and expression of Croly’s thought, with insightful reference to Croly’s personal life and involvement in larger affairs. Inasmuch as Stettner succeeds in establishing Croly’s overweening significance as a liberal thinker, he has written a book with exciting contemporary resonance at a time when America and the world are struggling to define the focus of humane politics in the post–Cold War, postsocialist era.”

John Milton Cooper Jr., author of Pivotal Decades: The United States, 1900–1920

“Stettner has written a concise, intelligent, and highly readable study of the thought of American political philosopher and editor Herbert Croly. This book is a skillful and worthy addition to the literature on this important and influential American thinker.”

American Historical Review

Edward A. Stettner was Ralph Emerson and Alice Freeman Palmer Professor of Political Science, Emeritus at Wellesley College. He was the editor of Perspectives on Europe.

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