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Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn: The Western Dilemma: Calvin or Rousseau? Study Guide

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ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN: THE WESTERN DILEMMA: CALVIN OR ROUSSEAU? STUDY GUIDE, 2002 Steven Alan Samson

Outline

I	INTELLECTUAL	SWAY OF	THE TWO.	IOHNS OF	GENEVA
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- A. VACILLATION OF THE WESTERN WORLD BETWEEN THE TWO
 - 1. John Calvin: The Protestant Work Ethic
 - 2. J.-J. Rousseau: The French Revolution and Its Descendants
- B. PROTESTANT REFORMATION AS A CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION
 - 1. Luther's Augustinian Opposition to Modernity
 - a. His Rejection of Renaissance Humanism and Its Revival of Paganism
 - 1) Medieval View: World as a Circle with God as Its Center
 - 2) Renaissance Placed God and Man at the Center
 - b. Reformation as a Reaction against Humanism
 - c. Conservative Adherence to the Gothic Style, to The Old Order, and to Common Law
- II LUTHER AND CALVIN COMPARED
 - A. NEITHER INAUGURATED THE MODERN LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC OUTLOOK
 - 1. Calvin's Attitudes Were Aristocratic and Oligarchical
 - Theory of the Right to Resistance Was Developed by Later Calvinists from Medieval Sources [But Actually before the Edict of Nantes of 1598]
 - 3. Predestination
 - B. THEOCENTRIC DOCTRINAL POSITIONS
 - Adherence to Strict Discipline and Opposition to Catholic Humanism
- III. EIGHTEENTH CENTURY RATIONALISM AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT
 - A. SOURCES IN SCHOLASTICISM AND THE RENAISSANCE
 - 1. Both Emphasize the Power and Glory of Man
 - 2. Both Are Expressions of Human Self-Assertiveness
 - 3. Catastrophic Consequence: the French Revolution
 - B. THE GENIUS OF THAT REVOLUTION TRIUMPHED IN THE REFORMED ORBIT
 - Paradox: The Catholic World, Where It Originated, Was Vaccinated Against the Infection
 - 2. Effects on the Churches of the Reformation
 - a. Schism between Orthodox and Secularized Branches
 - 2. Intrusion of the Secular Spirit Has Created a Semantic Confusion about the Differences between the Catholic and "Protestant" Inclinations
 - C. JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU: SOURCE OF THE CHANGED ATTITUDE
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 - 2. His Contradictory Message:
 - a. Appeal to Man's Innate Goodness
 - b. Collective Concept of Liberty
 - c. Restrictive Political Order
 - 3. Twin Poles of His Thinking
 - a. Totalitarian Concept of the General Will (volunte

general)

- b. Power of Education to Reshape Character
- 4. Antagonism between Classicism and Romanticism
- IV. DILEMMA OF WESTERN MAN
 - A. IN THE OLD WORLD, THE ONLY REAL CHOICE THAT IS AT ISSUE IS OBSCURED
 - The Occupied Tomb of Lenin vs. the Empty Tomb of Christ
 - B. IN THE NEW WORLD, THE TRANSITION FROM CALVIN TO ROUSSEAU STANDS OUT IN STARK RELIEF
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 - a. Protestant Work Ethic
 - b. Messianic Missionary Spirit
 - c. Pluralism Strengthened Religious Zeal
 - 1) Crusading Character of the French and Indian War and the War for Independence
 - [Quebec Act Was Significant for Denying the Right to a Jury Trial in the West]
 - d. Puritanism of American Catholics
 - e. American Spirit: More Medieval than Modern
 - 2. America's Rise as a World Power
 - a. Spanish-American War as a Turning Point
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 - A. DEISM AND FREEMASONRY
 - Incomplete Retreat from Calvin
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 - 1. Political Trend toward Egalitarian Democracy
 - 2. Hostility of Many of the Founders toward Democracy
 - 3. Gradual Democratization of the American Constitution And Society
 - 4. Deification of the Common Man
 - 5. New Gospel of Permissiveness
 - 6. Contrast of Calvinistic and Roussellian Theological Views
 - C. TRANSFER OF THE CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION TO THE ROUSSELLIAN VIEW
 - Secularism Smuggled into Liberal Theology
- VI. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES
 - A. WICKEDNESS OF HUMAN NATURE OVERLOOKED
 - 1. Calvinist and Catholic Views of Original Sin
 - Consequences: "We are left with an enfeebled will, a darkened understanding, and a strong inclination to evil."
 - 3. Contemporary Rejection of Both Views
 - 4. Substitution: The Idyllic Imagination
 - a. Goodness of Majorities
 - b. General Will Allows No Room for Minorities
 - c. Suspicion of Conspiracies by the Few
 - d. Romantic Radical Leftism Originates with the Children of the Privileged Classes
- VII. CONCLUSION
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 - A Fact That Is Recognized through Introspection
 - B. NEO-ROUSSELLIAN PERMISSIVENESS
 - Liberal vs. Illiberal Views End in Total Dissolution of Total Regulation

origins and effects of eighteenth century rationalism and Enlightenment Jean Jacques Rousseau's contradictory message and its influence Calvinistic foundations of the American system and the shift to Rousseau