December 1952

Materials on American National Government (John M. Swarthout & Ernest R. Bartley, 1952)

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boldly planned" (p. 223); the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan (an excellent summary and analysis); the Mutual Defense Assistance program, the Reciprocal Trade Agreements program; and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Professor Mikesell believes that the nation's agricultural program—with its price supports, export subsidies, and import restrictions—"represents the chief area of conflict with America's liberal international commercial policy" (p. 302). While he feels that the domestic program cannot be precipitately abandoned, he indicates that the "conflict" could be "minimized" by international commodity agreements, including perhaps "buffer stocks" and food stamp plans.

In the concluding chapter the author warns of the probability of even more extensive and direct economic controls by the Government if the present international tensions continue or worsen. Such controls would presumably be necessary for the maintenance of a stable economy in the United States. The book closes on the note that many liberal trade and finance policies have had to yield to the necessities of defending the free world, yet the author feels that in the long run the non-Soviet world can remain a collection of free nations "through a voluntary relinquishment of sovereignty over matters of common concern, to international agencies operated by and for a federation of democratic states" (p. 334). Toward such a goal, the leadership of the United States is a primary factor.

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To the best of my knowledge and belief there are no absolute criteria by means of which it is possible to evaluate a book of readings in American government. Working on the assumption that the subjective judgment of the reviewer must be the criterion in any such evaluation, I do not consider myself presumptuous when I say that this selection of readings by Swarthout and Bartley would be a valuable addition to the library of anyone interested in the philosophy and practice of American government.
There have been millions of words written and spoken about American democracy. In theory and practice the government of these United States represents the last major defense of the philosophy of the innate dignity of the individual citizen. An intelligent support of democracy against the criticism of totalitarian aggressors requires a thoughtful consideration and understanding of what is being said for and against and about our government.

It appears highly improbable that any practicing attorney actively engaged in fulfilling his professional responsibilities will have an opportunity to keep pace with all of the significant current material in this field. It seems even less practical to assume that he will have the time or the library facilities necessary to acquaint himself with the basic background material. In this connection, Professors Swarthout and Bartley have made a real contribution by their carefully selected compilation of excerpts from the more significant publications dealing with our national government.

It is obvious that no single volume could contain even a listing of all of the books, articles, speeches, and court decisions pertaining to the evolution of America's political culture. To cull this mass of materials, to select those items which most cogently illustrate the growth and development involved, and to extract those portions of each item which present basic ideas with the greatest economy of verbiage is a task which presents no mean challenge. In my opinion, Swarthout and Bartley have carried out this responsibility in an admirable fashion.

The materials presented in this book seem to emphasize the fact that American government is an actively functioning agency. True, there are basic philosophies which underlie current practices. However, it would be unrealistic to assume that the "man in the street" has any deep or abiding concern with, or understanding of, these philosophical concepts. He is primarily interested in the interrelationships between himself and the agencies of this government. Over ninety percent of the material contained in this book falls in the area of what I would call "practical" or "functional" government. In my judgment this is a most desirable method of presentation.

Members of the legal profession will be interested in the attention which has been given to judicial pronouncements. Some fifty decisions of the Supreme Court have been used to illustrate significant aspects of governmental growth and procedure. The opinion of the Court has been quoted in more or less detail in twenty-four of these cases.
I have been impressed by the fairness with which the authors have attempted to present both sides of controversial issues. Illustrations of this treatment are to be found in the consideration of the questions of civil rights, the abolition of the electoral college, socialized medicine, and the promotion of the welfare state. The reader is permitted to evaluate for himself these fundamental conflicts between sincere but diametrically opposed convictions. In the preface of the book their position is stated succinctly:

"In this book we have tried to strike a balance in all things. There is herein some of the old (as old as Aristotle) and some of the new in political thinking. There is some material that is heavy enough to require a good deal of thought from the most serious student, and a little that is pretty much froth. We have tried to balance case studies with analytical articles and statements of points of view: materials on historical background with materials out of today's political debates. On questions clearly controversial we have attempted to present both sides with relative equality in so far as space, at least, is concerned."

Obviously, the ramifications of American government are so extensive that a high degree of selectivity must enter into the choice of illustrative material. Whether this selection has been "good" or "bad" is a question which will ultimately be answered on the basis of the reader's individual emotionalized reaction. My own reaction to this book is decidedly favorable. I consider the outline to be a logical one. The materials are carefully and fairly selected. The introductory statement at the beginning of each chapter states clearly but briefly what the selected readings in that chapter are intended to present for consideration. The index is sufficiently detailed so that specific topics can be selected easily.

I recommend this book as a valuable aid for those interested in a carefully selected series of readings designed to present American democracy as a vital force in the expanding culture of the modern world.

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