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**A Reader's Guide to Politics**

By Lowell Mellett



—Sketch by Newman Sudduth.

ASKED to write a review of the year's production of books on the subject of politics, I asked in turn for the books. About 30 books were thereupon deposited in my office and I've been looking them over. The result of which is that this review could properly end right here. For apparently almost the only book on politics, as we usually use the term, to come off the press during 1946 was an excellent two-bit handbook by the present writer, who is too modest to say anything more about it.

When most of us think of politics we think of the business that Bob Hannegan and Carroll Reece are engaged in, full time, and that every public official is supposed to be engaged in, at least part time. It is the business of getting yourself or somebody else elected to office. It is a vast and intricate business, filled with fascination for the participants and the onlookers. It runs the gamut of human emotions, from insane delight in victory to numb despair in defeat. Noble purposes contend with cheap ambitions. Truth and falsehood, brave men and cowards, play their separate parts. Women have become involved in a big way and heart throbs abound. It is unceasing battle and, next to war, just about the rawest of human conflicts.

Somebody really should write a book about politics—American domestic politics—but, hardly anybody appears to have done so in the year 1946.

**The Field Has Been Left Wide Open**

The pile of books sent up by the book editor proves the point. Not a single one undertakes to tell either what the Democratic Party has been up to in recent years or what we may expect of the Republican Party if it comes into national power. None exposes the current operations of the Democratic city machines on the one hand or the machinations of Wall Street on the other. Even the political phenomenon of our time, the CIO-PAC, has not been put between covers, although enough has been written about it for the newspapers and periodicals to fill a middle-sized Carnegie library.

The recent congressional campaign had for its burning issues the price of meat, the increasing power of labor organizations and the customary question of whether or not the men in office were rascals who should be turned out. Almost no books were written on those topics. They were written chiefly about foreign affairs and various phases of our foreign policy.

There are some exceptions, of course. In "The Shore Dimly Seen," Gov. Ellis Arnall of Georgia lays down a philosophy of American political life, well buttressed by his own experience. It is eminently well worth reading by anybody interested in the creation of a better pattern of democratic government than that provided by the present confusion of State and Federal powers and purposes.

Wendell Berge's "Economic Freedom for the West" exposes the dangers the author, an Assistant Attorney General, has found in great monopolies that afflict our final frontier, holding back its natural development. His discussion opens up certain real political questions.

**Campaign Material in 'Washington Tapestry'**

Olive Clapper's "Washington Tapestry," amusing and informative, contains some shrewd sidelights on well-known political figures. Her character sketch of Henry Wallace, for example, could be used nicely by his political managers if he should ever be a candidate for office.

Wallace himself produced a couple of books. His "Sixty Million Jobs" had its edge blunted by the rapid appearance of almost that many jobs. If those jobs presently begin to fade away, the book probably will return to its place in the best seller list. "Soviet Asia Mission," contains the famil-

far and not unpopular theme that war with Russia is not inevitable." "American Foreign Policy in

**Recommended**

THE SHORE DIMLY SEEN, by Gov. Ellis Arnall. (Lippincott; \$3.)

ECONOMIC FREEDOM FOR THE WEST, by Wendell Berge. (University of Nebraska Press; \$2.)

WASHINGTON TAPESTRY, by Olive Clapper. (Whittlesey; \$2.75.)

AS HE SAW IT, by Elliott Roosevelt. (Duell; \$3.)

FRONTIERS OF THE POTOMAC, by Jonathan Daniels. (Macmillan; \$2.75.)

the "Making," by Dr. Charles A. Beard (given further discussion on Page 13. See: "In the Light of History," could be used as a campaign document against Franklin D. Roosevelt if that now

accepted statesman had not ended his earthly career. The historian demonstrates to his own satisfaction, and doubtless to that of his many admirers, that Roosevelt's method of making our foreign policy was very devious.

Another volume calculated to increase the confidence of Roosevelt's political opponents is Henry Hazlitt's "Economics in One Lesson," designed to demonstrate a basic fallacy in New Deal thinking.

**Elliott Roosevelt's Remarkable Whodunit**

"As He Saw It," by President Roosevelt's son Elliott, is a remarkable whodunit that gives away the villain too quickly. You are able to guess immediately that Churchill done it. You would find it even easier to put your finger on the culprit if you had first read Louis Adams' "Dinner at the White House." Or Ralph Ingersoll's "Top Secret."

If military men should come to

play a part in American politics comparable to that they take in some other democracies, it will be because too few of us have read Donald Nelson's "Arsenal of Democracy," drawn from his experience as head of the War Production Board. "The lesson taught by these recent years of war is clear," he says. "Our whole economic and social system will be in peril if it is controlled by the military men."

**Many Books About The White House**

Of books about the White House there have been many, but none with serious political implications. This is true of

"Thank you, Mr. President," by Merriam Smith, based on his press conference notebook; "Starling of the White House," by Starling; "I Guarded F. D. R.," by Mike Reilly, and even of the best selling "Frontiers of the Potomac," by Jonathan Daniels.

For those obsessed by fears that Communists may become important politically in this country, Victor Kravchenko's "I Choose Freedom," telling of life in Russia, may be regarded as a salutary warning of the consequences.

The postwar world, whether it shall be one or two worlds, is the theme of a number of books, mostly nonpartisan in the domestic political sense. "One World or None," by a group of such scientists as Einstein, Shapley and their distinguished fellows, presents the threat of the atomic bomb effectively. "Two Worlds," by William B. Ziff, presents the danger of our being caught in the middle between Russia and Great Britain. Since Ziff is convinced that Great Britain can exist only by American charity, and suggests we might better take over some parts of the empire, including England and Canada, he offers a real domestic political issue if anybody takes the idea seriously.

Argument for a world government is presented by Louis Fischer in "The Great Challenge," and by Leland Stowe in "While Time Remains." We must lead the proposed world state, Stowe believes, but he finds us woefully ignorant and indifferent to our responsibility.

Reverting to the meat shortage and related matters, which became so political in November, Aldous Huxley treats the subject from a world viewpoint in "Science, Liberty and Peace." He says, "Scientific and technical means must be found for making it possible for even the most densely populated countries to feed their inhabitants."

Just received is "Manual of Practical Political Action," a loose-leaf book of instructions for anybody wishing to engage in politics. Published by the National Citizens' Political Action Committee, it is the work of the "faculty" of that organization's School of Political Action Techniques. Prepared primarily for the benefit of citizens habitually left of center it should be equally valuable to folks on the right. No detail of political work seems to be missing, but on the chance that something may have been overlooked the loose-leaf format permits additional items to be inserted.



Charles A. Beard.



Elliott Roosevelt.



Henry A. Wallace.

**Christmas Gift Books**

THE LEACOCK ROUNDABOUT. (Dodd, Mead; \$3.50.) A thick volume containing some of Stephen Leacock's best work; 422 pages.

THE SHORTER NOVELS OF STENDHAL. Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff. (Liveright; \$2.49.) "Armance," "The Abbess of Castro," "Vittoria Accoramboni," "The Ceneli," "The Duchess of Palliano" and "Vanina Vanini," for the first time in one volume.

TALES OF HOFFMAN, edited by Christopher Lazare. Illustrated by Richard Lindner. (A.

Wyn; \$7.50.) A modern translation of the famous tales. In a gift-styled volume, cellophane wrapped.

THE MAGIC OF NUMBERS, by Eric Temple Bell. (Whittlesey House; \$3.50.) A history of the numerical system. For the student or the lover of the curious.

RUSSIAN WONDER TALES, by Post Wheeler. With the original Bilibin illustrations in full color. (Beechurst Press; \$3.50.) A new enlarged edition of an old favorite in folk tales. Most attractive.