

Book Reviews

Conrad P. Waligorski, Editor

Rowen, Hobart. *Self-Inflicted Wounds: From LBJ's Guns and Butter to Reagan's Voodoo Economics*. New York: Times Books, 1994. (\$25.00 cloth).

The manner by which politics has affected national economic policy and its consequences for modern America is the subject of a study by Hobart Rowen, long-time economics reporter for *The Washington Post*. He maintains that the solid structural framework and technological superiority which the United States enjoyed following the Second World War perpetuated several decades of economic prosperity. However, over the last three decades, the country's "fundamental economic health became debilitated" (x). Rowen depicts the personnel and dissects the policies responsible for our "slow but steady self-strangulation" (ix), which encompassed six chief executives—two Democrats and four Republicans—serving from 1963 through 1992, though some material on the Clinton presidency is included.

The text is divided into four sections corresponding to the less-than-flattering nouns utilized to describe each period. Section I, titled "blunder," delineates the policies of Lyndon Johnson. Rowen illustrates the contradictory economic strategies employed by the Johnson White House to simultaneously fund the Vietnam War and Great Society initiatives, and how the gold drain adversely influenced the value of the dollar in international markets.

Section II, labeled "mismanagement," analyzes the Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford administrations' economic mistakes. Regarding Nixon's policies, Rowen reviews the decision to separate the value of the dollar from that of gold, wage-and-price controls, and reaction to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' 400 percent increase in the per-barrel price of crude oil imposed in December 1973. The chapters on Gerald Ford explain his team's struggle to combat the 1974-75 recession and their participation and performance in several international economic summits.

Section III, named "drift," details Jimmy Carter's economic record. Rowen portrays how in-fighting among Carter's advisors perpetuated policy flip-flops which stained his reputation at home and abroad. Though other actions and events contributed to his reelection defeat in 1980, Rowen observes that "Carter's worst mistake was his inability to control or at least contain inflation, and that happened because, from the very beginning,

Carter and his aides badly underestimated the power of inflationary forces at work in the economy" (203).

Section IV, referred to as "greed," comprising seven chapters and 167 pages, begins with a chapter on the economic miscues of the Ronald Reagan administration. "Of the many self-inflicted wounds suffered by America in the last thirty years, none was as deep, corrosive, and enduring as the series of huge, chronic federal deficits created by the policies of Ronald Reagan in his eight years in office" (214), according to Rowen. Besides probing budgetary tactics, he untangles the Savings and Loan debacle using an in-depth case study approach. Ensuing chapters cover oil politics, including the 1991 war against Iraq; the ramifications of airline industry deregulation during the 1980s; the response to the Third World debt crisis by the Reagan and Bush administrations; the 1987 stock market collapse; and the development of Japan as an economic superpower and primary competitor to the United States in world markets.

In the final chapter, Rowen recommends several steps for restoring America's economic reputation and accomplishments. These suggestions include focusing more on investment than consumption, coordinating more action with the Group of Seven industrial powers, continuing to fund International Monetary Fund and World Bank projects, abandoning labor-intensive industries, and seeking to share global power by continuing integration of Western nations' economies.

Two other recent books deal with the subject of the present study. In *Presidential Economics* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1988), Herbert Stein, former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors in the Nixon White House, explains national economic policy making from the Herbert Hoover through Ronald Reagan administrations. He offers an extensive, 70-page assessment of contemporary economic problems and proposes numerous solutions. Stein concludes by contending that America "cannot rely mainly on politicians to change the tone of the discussion and practice of economic policy. Others who are concerned, and who do not have political office at stake, will have to take the lead" (376).

In their research on the same topic, *The Modern Presidency and Economic Policy* (Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, 1994), John Fren dreis and Raymond Tatalovich trace the management of the American economy since World War II. They divide the text into four parts, which elaborate on the historical foundations and modern mechanics of macroeconomic policy, including the budget process, Federal Reserve Board and monetary policy, and international economic policy, show how business cycles and public opinion can impact on economic policy; and present a typology of presiden-

tial styles and ratings of chief executives' economic achievements from the Harry Truman to the Clinton administrations.

Though a noteworthy effort, Rowen's book has a few shortcomings. First, the organization of the last section of the study loses the clear format employed previously, that of integrating issues into an inspection of an individual president's tenure. Though it purports to incorporate an evaluation of George Bush's economic attainments, that administration is dealt with peripherally. However, the work does contain a timely inquiry of the Clinton White House's economic conduct toward Japan, as painfully manifested in a June 1995 trade dispute over market access.

A second flaw is the rather superficial concluding chapter. As opposed to Stein's lengthy finale, Rowen spends only seven pages summarizing the outcome of economic decisions implemented by presidents since the 1960s. Some of his ideas for resolving current economic dilemmas, such as abandoning labor-based industries, are impractical, while others, like spending on investments and maintaining our foreign aid and security commitments, are inconsistent with current political preferences.

Despite the aforementioned areas, Rowen's undertaking is a masterpiece of first-hand insights. Rather than the quantitative bent exhibited by Frendreis and Tatalovich, Rowen relies on his experience as a magazine and newspaper business reporter and de-facto political advisor to several presidents and their staffs. There is no substitute for his unique insider perspective and the accumulated knowledge which it has fostered. Perhaps this invaluable orientation is no better illustrated than in his view that "the rest of the world still looks to the American president, not to the prime minister of Japan or the chancellor of Germany, to supply that ineffable quality of personal leadership that it has come to expect only of the United States" (371). In other words, just as politics has been responsible for the litany of economic actions he scrutinizes, so Rowen believes, unlike Stein's speculation, that public officials likewise represent the future promise of sane policies and renewed economic affluence for America.

Samuel B. Hoff
Delaware State University

Milkis, Sidney M. *The President and the Parties*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 404 pp. (\$49.95 cloth).

This volume studies the relationship between executive power and the two-party system. Its subtitle—*The Transformation of the American Party*

System Since the New Deal—means that the New Deal was the realignment to end realignments. Says Milkis: "Prior to the New Deal, none of the programs to which the electorate had subscribed during a realignment had called for a substantial exercise of executive power" (7).

Why? Because FDR conceived of the New Deal as "rights" that warranted protection from partisan struggles, but the New Deal reforms that were intended to liberate the president from the constraints of partisan (patronage) politics served to weaken his institutional basis of popular support through political parities. So, Milkis would concur with students of electoral behavior that a decline of party has occurred though, his focus is institutional change within the executive branch.

The first chapter traces the "roots" of New Deal (anti-party) reforms back to Wilsonian Progressivism. Then follows a discussion of "Whose Party Is It?" that is Roosevelt's efforts to assert leadership over his party through linkages to women, blacks, and unions. But the limits of party government are confronted in chapter 4, with the "conservative coalition" in Congress and Roosevelt's failed 1938 "purge" though, according to Milkis, the purge "strengthen[ed] the President's understanding that his principles and policies could not be too centrally tied to the fate of his party" (97).

Whereupon Roosevelt embarked on administrative reform and the "displacement" of party politics through the "Third New Deal," the story of chapter 5. "In the final analysis, the New Deal Democratic party was organized as a party of administration that would make party politics less important in the future. Once a welfare state was formed, social and economic interests would be directly linked to it, thus diminishing the importance of a party to organize public opinion. Party government, therefore, was not required by Roosevelt's program in the long run . . ." (103). The Reorganization Act of 1939 signalled "partial success" because, according to chapter 6, the survival of the New Deal depended less on reforming the Democratic party than on developing the modern presidency. The New Deal did not simply replace "constitutional government" with an administrative state but rather "an administrative constitution, which was shielded from the uncertainties of public opinion, political parties, and elections" (145).

The New Deal legacy is treated in chapter 7. Though we may think of Truman as a crusty partisan fighter, his 1948 campaign embodied "an institutional coalition that existed independently of the Democratic party" (155). Eisenhower's significance is that he was a "precursor to the conservative embrace of centralized administration" (165) while Kennedy and Johnson promoted their liberal agenda outside the traditional party organization.

LBJ faltered due to Vietnam, chapter 8 reminds us, but the Great Society was the triumph of reformist zeal in the mold of FDR. Johnson "virtually completed efforts that began during the Roosevelt administration to establish a presidential coalition. Johnson drew on political support that . . . had little to do with the Democratic party" (192). The advent of Republicanism is the subject of chapter 9. Nixon attempted to redirect the course of the liberal state and, as such, "was the first to look to the possibility that the modern presidency could be characterized as a two-edged sword, which could cut in a conservative as well as a liberal direction" (225). Again, Nixon operated through the apparatus of executive power, not party politics or realignment.

The backlash to Vietnam and Watergate was a reaction against presidential power, and 1960s and 1970s reforms were efforts to insulate liberal programs from presidential tampering. It seems paradoxical but in the U.S. "administrative centralization has been limited, but virtually all government activity is dominated by the politics of administration" (255). What about the Reagan Revolution? The answer in chapter 10 is that it "did not really challenge the aggrandizement of administrative power" but rather attempted "to extend the benefits of the national polity to those who wished to make new [conservative] uses of, rather than limit, the state" (262-263). This interpretation of the Reagan era may be provocative but will be appreciated as one of the most penetrating observations in a book filled with brilliant insight.

The thesis of chapter 11—Divided Government and the Administrative Constitution—is that the modern executive "was pulled into the vortex of a bitter struggle over the administrative levers of power that had accrued to it"—by Congress (284). Congress wants to redeem its role in the constitutional order—and more—and Milkis sets the record straight. Conservatives no less than liberals have violated our historic commitment to separation of powers: "The efforts of Republicans to compensate for their inability to control Congress by seeking to enhance the powers of the executive and to circumvent legislative restrictions . . . were matched by Democratic initiatives to burden the executive with smothering legislative oversight . . ." (285).

The conclusion asks: Whither the Administrative Republic? NOT. The decline of party was "not the result of ineluctable constitutional forces," Milkis believes, but "a partisan project, one sponsored by the Democratic Party and built on the foundation of the New Deal realignment" (300). He recalls that nearly every party "reform" was promoted by the liberal wing of the Democratic Party while, in addition, the rise of administrative politics weakened party "by exalting the personal responsibility of the president,

thus making collective partisan appeals less meaningful in the eyes of the voters" (301).

The ominous lesson is that, as the executive has grown stronger and the federal government has become more active, presidents lack a footing in representative institutions which foster deliberation and policy choice. Milkis thus joins the eminent ranks of others—Theodore J. Lowi and Jeffrey Tulis—who bemoan the plebiscitary presidency adrift from the mooring of party. *The President and the Parties* is a seminal work, whose thesis will provoke scholarly comment for years to come.

Raymond Tatalovich
Loyola University, Chicago

Ornstein, Norman J., Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J. Malbin. *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1993-1994*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1994. 279 pp. (\$42.95 cloth, \$28.95 paper).

Congress A to Z: a Ready Reference Encyclopedia (2nd edition), Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1993. 547 pp. (\$110 cloth).

If you are weary of sorting through others' research or text books when you are interested in "just the facts," both of these books are for you. They are designed to help students and scholars gain easy access to information or data regarding the Congress that is not otherwise readily available. They clearly succeed in their goal. Both of these books serve as standard reference works that need to be in any reasonable library and available to researchers and students. Having said that, however, if one views these works in just that light he or she may miss interesting and informative reading—at least to the congressional junkie. Most students of American politics already know that these are both invaluable sources of information for research, lecture, and writing purposes, but they may not appreciate the wealth of information that they contain.

The first of these works, *Vital Statistics*, traces its heritage to 1980. The first edition was a modest compilation (just over 100 pages) of information on the Congress. While the basic goals of the original remain and are still reflected in the most recent edition, it has grown to nearly 300 pages through expansion of coverage in a variety of useful ways. The book is organized around eight major topics: members of Congress, elections, campaign finance, committees, congressional staff and operating expenses, workload, budgeting, and voting alignments. Each chapter begins with a

brief substantive introduction summarizing major conclusions to be drawn from the data presentation. The bulk of the book, though, is composed of tables that present data relevant to the Congress over time. Most of the time-series originate in the 1940s or 1950s, but some series are longer and others (e.g., campaign finance) are shorter. This book is so valuable because it continues to present valuable data, cleanly and in a usable manner. This book should be on the shelves of congressional scholars.

The same comment can be made for *Congress A to Z*, but its price makes it unlikely to find its way into very many personal libraries. While this work is quite different from *Vital Statistics*, it shares many of the same merits. *Congress A to Z* is the second edition of the original 1988 encyclopedia. It is considerably updated and is very current. (It tells us how many women are in the 103rd Congress and discusses the work of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, for example.) It accomplishes what one would expect from a work such as this—easy access to a range of concisely presented information. It can help if you need to be reminded what a sequestration is or why we remember Roscoe Conkling. It provides discussions of everything from the legislative process to the power of the purse to unconstitutional legislation. I found it very hard to read this book without constantly interrupting my colleagues with comments like, "Did you know that Andrew Johnson served in the Senate after his presidency?" or "This is interesting. Until the 1880s, most censure or expulsion proceedings were for things like insults, assaults, or treasonous or offensive utterances . . . even dueling. Since then, they tended to be matters of financial misconduct. Most recently there are sexual misconduct issues." Of perhaps greater importance, the entries for most topics are very well done. They are thorough, but to the point, factually correct, and unbiased.

Incidentally, *Congress A to Z* really does go from A to Z. The first entry is the regrettable Abscam Scandal. The Z . . . well, as they say on "Reading Rainbow," you'll just have to check it out yourself.

Obviously both of these works need to be in libraries, but what makes them distinct is that they also need to be "read" by congressional scholars and other Americanists. Anyone who simply assumes that these are reference works to be consulted as needed will miss valuable resources. Spend some time with them; they are both informative and thought provoking.

Gary W. Copeland
University of Oklahoma

Skidmore, David and Hudson, Valerie M., eds. *The Limits of State Autonomy: Societal Groups and Foreign Policy Formulation*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993. 327 pp. (\$42.50 paper).

The contributors to this volume have in common a focus on organized groups within states. As the editors of the volume rightly contend in their introduction, societal influences on foreign policy have been largely ignored. This inattention has been justified with the assumption that citizens, individually or organized in groups, are less likely to influence foreign than domestic policy. The contributors to this volume seek to debunk this notion.

Overall, the book achieves its objectives quite well and presents both theoretical ideas and well-researched case studies. An introductory chapter by the editors sets up a framework for the remaining chapters. However, there is no concluding chapter that summarizes what has been learnt and that provides directions for future research on the impact of societal groups on foreign policy. Such a chapter would have enhanced the comprehensiveness of the book and made its argument more powerful.

Several chapters provide theoretical foundations. The chapter by Müller and Risse-Kappen contends that public opinion sets limits on the "range of options available to the political system" (41). In other words, the domestic political landscape, like the international environment, constrains the policy options realistically available to leaders. Taking such constraints into account necessitates the use of theoretical constructs that cross levels of analysis.

Next, Hudson, Sims, and Thomas present a highly complex theoretical construct. Although I applaud the attempt, I'm not convinced that its apparent reliance on rationality assumptions is appropriate. Their chapter finally calls for an attempt to see domestic political struggles as a dynamic series of moves and countermoves. Capturing such dynamism will be difficult, but would enhance our understanding of the domestic context within which foreign policy decisions are made.

The Van Belle chapter could have benefited from significant expansion of the case studies. As it stands, they appear as an afterthought. The connection between the cases and the abstract ideas is not made very well. This is regrettable, since the cases could have added much to enlighten the conceptual ideas.

The substantive chapters by Friman, Hermann, Rogers, Skidmore, Dorsey, and Meyer are all worth reading. Each presents an innovative case study. Friman's study concerns the international drug trade. His process-tracing of two historical cases prompts new questions about policy successes: he detects an element of deception and recommends that this be

studied further. In addition, he notes that the U.S. drug war has ignored domestic pressures within target countries that may make it hard to achieve compliance or even compromise on this issue from them.

Hermann's study of the Israeli peace movement concludes that societal groups can leave an imprint even if they do not achieve their objectives: they may alter the "normative system" that guides policy making (147). She contends that the case suggests a "widening in the scope of discourse" (146) in Israel and suggests a number of factors that contributed to its emergence.

Rogers shows convincingly that business interests are not always successful in influencing policy. Particularly, she details how African-Americans, who generally have been regarded as having marginal influence in foreign policy making, were able to affect U.S. policy towards South Africa because of the high salience this issue had for them. Business interests were not as unified, nor did the issue have as high a salience for them as it did for the African-American community.

Skidmore's study of the SALT II debate shows that national security policy is not impervious to societal influence attempts. He lists seven factors that played a role in the success of interest groups in this case. He concludes that the presumption that national security issues are beyond influence attempts by societal groups is only warranted under circumstances of extreme threat to the state.

Dorsey and Meyer both show that social movements can have real impact transnationally. While Dorsey's chapter is more conceptual, Meyer makes a convincing case for taking into account the role of peace movements in the recent transformation of the former East bloc. He shows that neither Gorbachev's policies nor Reagan's defense build-up can account for the nature and speed of the transformation. Rather, dissident movements had been strengthened through transnational contacts for some time.

These short descriptions do not do justice to the richness of these case studies. Each represents a detailed case history that is neatly set in the context of an effort to derive propositions about the influence of societal groups on foreign policy decision making. Because each study focuses its efforts somewhat differently, a concluding chapter could have done much to bring these efforts at theory-building together. Yet, despite these small quibbles, *The Limits of State Autonomy* makes a solid case for the study of societal groups and their influence on foreign policy.

Marijke Breuning

Northeast Missouri State University

Thompson, Kenneth W. *Fathers of International Thought: The Legacy of Political Theory*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994. 144 pp. (\$27.50 cloth, 9.95 paper).

This concise book is a "prequel" to Thompson's 1980 publication *Masters of International Thought: Twentieth Century Theorists and the World Crisis*. The writings of sixteen individuals, from the Fifth Century B.C, to the Nineteenth Century A.D., have been examined as to how their general philosophy on politics might be applied to the specific field of international relations. Overall, this is a worthwhile study, differing from many other international relations texts in its emphasis on political theory.

The basic question being probed is how pre-Twentieth Century political philosophers "are relevant to the understanding of international politics." The approach to reaching this understanding is to examine the ideas of the philosophers which are central to understanding the relationship between "states and peoples" and whether sovereignty resides in the individual, the state, or "the wider society." The approach chosen by Thompson is an essential difference between this text and others which deal with the history of ideas in international relations. The other texts examine certain ideas or schools of thought current in international relations. Looking back over history, those texts find the individuals who were among the first to present these ideas and seek the historical development of the specific ideas. However, this text examines the works of major political philosophers and seeks to understand how the central points in their philosophies relate to current issues in international politics. Thus in the former approach Thucydides is almost always included for the dialogues on power politics in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. However, in Thompson's approach Thucydides is not included because Thompson seeks a philosophical inquiry, not a simple historical listing of ideas. This difference in approach makes the text a valuable addition.

While suggested changes to any list of political philosophers covering such a broad period of time could be made, the text covers a wide variety of philosophers, from those found in virtually every text, such as Plato or Machiavelli, to Adam Smith. While nineteen philosophers are the focus of the text, many others are included as Thompson does not feel constrained to limit himself only to those chosen for the text. Both Twentieth Century commentaries and contemporaries of the philosophers are included in the discussion. For all but one of the philosophers Thompson seems to seek the positive contributions which that individual has made or which are reflected in his work. The notable exception is Karl Marx. The problems of the basis of this political philosophy are pointed out in much greater detail than is the

case with the others. Also the negative results of the implementation of his ideas, or at least part of them, are described. Neither of these is done to any great degree for the other philosophers. While this can be somewhat distracting from the other information contained in the chapter on the Nineteenth Century, it is a reflection of our Twentieth Century.

The brevity of the text is both a strength and weakness. For those seeking an introduction to a more general approach tying political philosophy to international relations, the format is excellent. The discussion moves easily through the text and covers a wide range of issues. However, those seeking a more in-depth examination of this relationship will not be satisfied with Thompson's text. Not all issues raised would be adequately resolved for scholars in the field. As an introduction to what important historical figures have had to say concerning basic principles in international relations this book is well worth consideration.

Donald A. Watt
Southern Arkansas University