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**The American Way of Government**



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by

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The  
American  
Way  
of  
Government

NATIONAL, STATE,  
AND LOCAL EDITION

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# Foreword

**I**N THIS WORK I have aimed at describing the principles and operations of the American national government in simple, clear, and direct language. I have also tried to observe certain rules that, to my mind, are of importance in introducing students to the subject. One rule is that the American way of government should not be made to appear divorced from the universal problems of government in history and in other parts of the world; the work makes numerous comparisons among nations, and contains some systematic discussion of the nature of government, of the limits on government, and of other world-wide questions.

A second rule is that, especially in the early portions of the work, *realistic* materials should be given precedence over *legalistic* materials. I do not mean to imply that no legalistic materials are realistic, for some kinds certainly are; I have tried to deal with them at length. Rather, I hoped to avoid conveying the notion that American government is a simple deduction from court decisions and statutes. The structure of every important organization is sketched; however, where the structure points to no significant discovery about the operations of government, it is relegated to a secondary and abbreviated treatment.

A third rule is that detail should be subordinated to meaning. This rule has two aspects: first, the avoidance of unnecessary description of trifles; and, second, the use of *denotative* in preference to *connotative* language, by which in part I mean talking to the subject rather than around it. Terms are defined as sharply as possible. Circuitous references to plain concepts are avoided, so that a post office is a post office and not "the home of the men in gray who carry our letters."

A fourth rule was that historical data should be rationally employed to advance the text, not utilized so as to convert it into a course in American history. I have used historical materials extensively, but I have tried to select that portion of American and world history that leads directly to an understanding of the major structural and behavioral features of American government today.

A fifth rule was to reduce the volume of argumentation and quotation throughout, so that the line of progression would not be lost amidst special disputes and redundant expressions of points of view.

Finally, I sought to treat the subjects of American government objectively, without fear or favor. The essence of politics is human conflict

over ends and means; however, I have tried to reserve my own preferences regarding these subjects, conceding to professors and students their right and necessity to make their choices freely. My guiding ambition was to help students to think clearly and energetically about their government, to hold realistic expectations about its activities, and to form practical demands regarding politics and government.

Two minor rules may be mentioned. Colleagues who have experienced my addiction to footnotes in other writings may wonder at their almost complete absence in these pages; the explanation is that I thought it best to present students with as simple a format as possible. For the same reason, the bibliography, which I have found to be little used by the student save for occasionally selecting an outside reading, is placed in an appendix to the book. Perhaps it is pertinent also at this point to suggest to that rare student who may read a preface that he will find the extensive index useful in providing cross references for topics in the text; the events and principles in American government are so interconnected that many statements can be fully appreciated only in the context of related statements made under a different chapter heading.

I do not know whether to classify the fact that the book has many more illustrations than almost any other text in the field as a major or a minor feature. For those who learn easily from graphic material, it may be a major boon. For the others, my defense is that many of the charts and figures are synopses of information that would require several pages of text to relate; often the long history of an institution or trait is depicted in a simple measured line.

Another feature of the book that requires explanation concerns its treatment of rights and liberties. Often, in other textbooks, a distinct chapter surveys the whole field of rights and liberties. I believe that three types of rights and liberties may be well separated for purposes of exposition: political rights and liberties, which properly fall in the section of the book that describes political activity; judicial rights, which are best dealt with in discussion of the judicial process and the rule of law; and economic rights and liberties, whose analysis occurs appropriately in the chapter that treats of the scope and limits of governmental activity. By this arrangement, rights and liberties are explained closer to their context of thought and action. Furthermore, their different origins and the distinctive forces that enliven them may be more readily separated.

An early reader of the book questioned its emphasis upon various ideas of an economic or social nature. Thus such concepts as "authority," "parity," "law," "money," and "birth rates," and such institutions as "banks," "corporations," and "unions" are explained in detail. Although it may be asserted that these discussions reduce somewhat the attention given to the formal detail of government, I doubt that students in courses in American Government would know of such matters beforehand or could hold up their end of a hundred conversations about American government without understanding them. Therefore, if a student should know a little more political economy and political sociology for reading this text, and a little less of the

details of administrative structure, he would still be more liberally educated in the balance.

A final unique element warrants explanation. Chapter 5 contains the text of the Constitution, with certain annotations. Whatever the good intentions of students, they rarely, in my experience, read the Constitution thoroughly without being coaxed or coerced into it. Its present location is designed to promote the reading of the Constitution at the proper time and with the required stress. The annotations are of a special kind; they are intended to highlight the reading of the Constitution as a document rather than to explain what it means; a number of facts that can best be learned in the process of its reading are tied directly to its text.

My thanks extend to a number of friends who have assisted me in the present work. Foremost among them is Mr. Thomas H. Stevenson, who worked side by side with me from the beginning, contributing greatly to the content and style of the text and reacting vigorously and informatively to my ideas. The book owes a great deal to him. Mrs. Jacqueline Medway solved various troublesome secretarial problems. Mrs. Irma Goldner, Documents Librarian of Stanford University, graciously lent her efficient energies to many inquiries. Others of the Stanford University Libraries were helpful, especially Mr. Joseph Belloli, the Chief Reference and Humanities Librarian. My colleagues, Professors Thomas S. Barclay, Hubert R. Marshall, Robert A. Horn, and Neal Cotter, made useful suggestions, and Professor Donald Castleberry of San Francisco State College allowed me to expound the text to a class at his institution. The names of officials of the government who responded quickly and capably to my requests for information are too many to repeat here, so that a mere salute to them must suffice. Such too must be my greeting and thanks to the colleagues and students of the past for their help—from the present moment back to the time of my first teaching assignment, at Indiana University in East Chicago, Indiana, where, at the age of twenty-one, I was told that I was old enough to teach courses in American government. When it turned out that I was also old enough to fight, I entered the Army one cold morning, fittingly enough with one of my students, who seemed pleased at this chance to discuss the place of buck privates in American government.

Many teachers who may find use for this study know more about American government than I do; wise students may take this as a hint not to set up this text against instructors, but I say it in order to invite comments from my colleagues regarding errors of fact, interpretation, omission, and balance.

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