

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FEDERALISTS: A STUDY IN ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY. By Leonard D. White. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948. Pp. xii, 538. \$6.00.

Leonard D. White was only fifty-seven years old when he published this volume; but he may properly be called the dean of public administration in the United States. He has been a member of the Chicago and the United States Civil Service Commissions, president of the American Political Science Association and of the American Society for Public Administration, and editor-in-chief of the *Public Administration Review*. His numerous writings on the subject include the standard college commentary, which is now in its revised edition.

It is not surprising, therefore, that widespread interest was aroused when it became known that Professor White had decided to write a history of public administration in the United States. The plentiful literature of public administration which the twentieth century had poured forth included no such history. Those political scientists who, despite the pressure of specialization, desired to preserve the integrity of Politics in the sense of Aristotle had begun to wonder whether the tail had not forgotten the very existence of the dog; and in the last decade or so that tail had been public administration. It was decidedly in order for historical research to expose the superficiality of the here-and-now by supplying public administration with a time dimension which would give it perspective and contact with the general stream of American political development; and because of his standing, his experience, his knowledge, and his breadth of vision, Leonard D. White was the man to undertake the task.

The result has been even happier than could have been anticipated. *The Federalists* is the first installment of what may already be called the definitive history of American public administration. It should be received with enthusiasm not only by devotees of that discipline but also by students of general history, of government, of public law, and of constitutional development. Its forty chapters furnish a full account and a thoughtful appraisal of the twelve years of *administration* of the national government by the Federalists under Presidents Washington and John Adams. The book is well documented, and is written almost exclusively from primary sources. At the same time the style is lucid, and even the most technical topics are developed in a manner that is interesting as well as informative.

The chapter headings have a wide range, from "George Washington as an Administrator" to "The Statutory Law of Officers"; from "The Hamilton-Adams Conflict" to "Administrative Powers and Sanctions"; from "Federalist and Republican Theories of Executive Power" to "Administrative Discretion"; from "Government in the Wilderness" to "The Problem of Smuggling." It is evident from several of these titles that the volume makes an important contribution to the history of American administrative law. Of general historical interest is the treatment of such subjects as the relation between Adams and his cabinet, the feud between Jefferson and Hamilton, which is analyzed for the first time from the standpoint of its administrative aspects, the state of the administrative art, and the administrative theory and achievements of the Federalists.

The reader of this volume will be as captivated by incidental points as he is instructed

by the total picture and the broader conclusions. He will discover that administrative bill drafting began, at least in contemplation, in the first year of government under the Constitution;¹ that both "legislative planning" and "government enterprise" were represented in the purchase of two islands off the coast of Georgia "in order to secure a growth of live oaks for ship timbers" for the Navy;² that Hamilton wrote of "efficiency and economy";³ that he got Congress to centralize all purchasing in the Treasury;⁴ that Congress provided, for enforcement of tonnage duties and other requirements, the purely administrative sanction of retention of the ship's register and papers;⁵ and that Tobias Lear, "the great secretary of the period," had a "passion for anonymity."⁶ These are but samples to whet the appetite.

For Washington as an administrator Professor White has justified respect. "His competent performance in administration grew out of two separate aspects of his experience—his life as a plantation manager and his life as a military commander."⁷ "To deliberate maturely, but to execute promptly"⁸ was his motto. "In reaching decisions Washington required all available facts."⁹ "Washington was more clear in principle about the necessity of avoiding detail than he was successful in practice."¹⁰ "He understood good administration to be characterized by integrity, system, energy, reliance on facts, relative freedom from detail, and due responsibility to Congress."¹¹

Hamilton, however, "was the greatest administrative genius of his generation in America, and one of the great administrators of all time."¹² "To Hamilton is due the one outstanding administrative achievement of the Federalist period, an achievement which stood far above the normal capacity of a scattered, rural, eighteenth-century population unaccustomed to large affairs—the organization and management of the fiscal service of the federal government."¹³ "He reserved initiative for himself, and for himself the ultimate official discretion."¹⁴

"The Federalists," concludes Professor White, "developed a body of doctrine which was clear-cut, well considered, consistent in its several parts, and which as a whole formed an intelligent system of theory and practice of public administration."¹⁵ This body of doctrine is summarized with admirable clarity and succinctness; and eleven contributions which the Federalists made to American government are enumerated.

Of course, however, the author points out:

The Federalist concept of public administration was firmly based on a political theory which, although antimonarchical, was not warmly democratic. Federalists accepted the philosophy of government for the people, but not government by the people. In their view, government could only be well conducted if it was in the hands of the superior part of mankind—superior in education, in economic standing, and in native ability.¹⁶

There is no analysis, however, of the paradox that it is the Federalists rather than the Republicans who have furnished to a more democratic, twentieth-century America useful principles of public administration. Perhaps such an analysis will come at the end of the second volume of this history.

That volume will be awaited by many with keen anticipation. The reviewer hopes that in it Professor White will continue the method by which in the first volume he has

¹ P. 57.

⁴ Pp. 361-362.

⁷ P. 101.

¹⁰ P. 106.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ P. 508.

³ P. 161.

⁵ P. 446.

¹¹ Pp. 114-115.

⁸ P. 104.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

² P. 361.

⁶ Pp. 495-496.

⁹ P. 105.

¹² P. 126.

¹⁵ P. 507.

presented a thorough and authoritative treatment of a short period, and hence will produce a study of Republican administration from 1801 to 1828 rather than a less significant survey of public administration throughout the nineteenth century.

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INSIGHTS INTO LABOR ISSUES. Edited by Richard A. Lester and Joseph Shister. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948. Pp. x, 368. \$4.00.

This is a volume of thirteen essays by leading authorities in the field of labor-management relations and labor economics. Reading them has excited me somewhat and has taught me a good deal I hadn't known; but it has also made me feel depressed, since it has revealed to me the huge gaps in my own knowledge. Furthermore, I now realize that to do my job in the law school, I must keep abreast of at least the outstanding contributions in an entirely new field of literature—the periodic output of the industrial-relations centers. But this book offers one consolation—if it may be taken as a precedent—since its appearance suggests that in the future the cream from the annual product of such writing will be competently skimmed off and published between the covers of one fairly small volume. It goes without saying that I don't see how lawyers and students interested in labor-relations law can afford not to read this book. Regardless of what they may think of the various contributors' conclusions, they will acquire a good deal of valuable information and, what is more important, fresh points of view which it is impossible to get otherwise.

It is something of a task to review this book, because to do so fairly requires a baker's dozen of separate reviews. I have tried, therefore, briefly to suggest what these essays have to say, with little or no comment, my object being merely to indicate what the book is about and whether or not it is worth reading.

The first of these essays—"Toward a Theory of Labor-Management Relations"—expresses anxiety over the possibility that the many new industrial-relations institutes may dissipate their resources by not being sure in advance where they are heading, and why. Briefly, it recommends the adoption of hypotheses to guide research in labor-management relations in order to make such research uniform and effective as well as susceptible of being done on a basis of cooperation among scholars in different parts of the country. It then sets forth a framework within which research and special case studies in this field can profitably be conducted; and this over-all framework, in turn, consists of formal subdivisions. The breakdown concerns types of industrial organizations and incidental economic factors such as the nature of products markets and labor markets, as well as of capital requirements and cost conditions. It emphasizes the importance of studying motivations of the parties to labor-management relationships, with particular reference to union political and economic philosophies and varying employer reactions to these notions. Naturally, it touches on the human aspects of the relationships, briefly indicating the applicability of more or less scientific procedure in studying such matters; and in general it focuses attention on developing patterns of collective bargaining. While the authors of this essay create an air of conviction about their main point—that research in this field must be orderly and along preconceived lines—this point itself, and the positive suggestions set forth, are not sufficiently specific to be very enlightening. Although I am in complete agreement with them, I am still not sure just what we are all agreed upon.

Essay number two is a first-rate job of describing and evaluating multi-employer bar-