

*American Diplomacy in the Great Depression* is the kind of book that will evoke admiration and considerable controversy at one and the same time. The controversy, it should be said, will rise not over the author's excellent methods but over some of his interpretations. To this reviewer, for example, it seems that he has given altogether too much weight to the depression as the cause of the collapse of the international political order in the early 1930's. No one would argue that the depression was not momentarily significant; the question is whether other factors were also of major importance. This reviewer would emphasize more than Professor Ferrell did the isolationist traditions and ideals of the American people and especially the essentially mediocre quality of the political leadership of the democracies during this period. It is begging the point somewhat to say (as Professor Ferrell does) that Hoover, Stimson, and others were able men. What the world needed desperately and did not have was great leadership.

Secondly, this reviewer has to enter a word of dissent about the way that the author deals with the Manchurian crisis. His treatment of this matter is really quite excellent on the descriptive level, but he fails to confront what is the most important question that can be asked about American policy during this episode. It is whether Stimson's policy of setting the American government in stern opposition to Japanese imperialism in Manchuria bore any substantial relation to the national interests of the United States. This reviewer is not here suggesting that this or that answer would be correct, only that Professor Ferrell does not really grapple with the problem.

These of course are matters of individual judgment, and such criticisms are quite unimportant in view of the total achievement of this volume. Professor Ferrell's first study on the Kellogg Pact revealed his ability at monographic writing. The present volume shows that he has mastered the techniques of general writing. We can all look forward to his promised third volume on the foreign policy of the first Roosevelt administration.

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*A History of Presidential Elections.* By Eugene H. Roseboom. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957. Pp. vi, 568. Bibliography, index. \$8.50.)

H. L. Mencken once described our presidential elections as quadrennial circuses, and on many occasions the proceedings at the national conventions and the antics of campaigns would seem to justify such a conclusion. Yet presidential elections are necessary in the functioning of our Republic, and they are a vital part of our national history. Moreover, they have been a source of wonder and mystery both to the politician and the scholar. For no one can be absolutely certain what a national convention will do or what way the voters will turn, and likewise no one can be absolutely certain why a candidate has won or lost. This element of uncertainty and guessing has made presidential elections an elusive and exciting game for everyone in the country.

While there has been a profusion of literature about American politics—leaders, campaigns, parties, theories, and so forth—little has

been written in the way of a connected account about the struggles that take place every four years for the presidency. Edward Stanwood's *History of the Presidency*, which comes closest to this, is outdated and has little to say about the elections of the twentieth century. Professor Roseboom's study fills the need of treating our presidential elections as distinguishable and as important events in our national history. His objective is "to present the essential facts about conventions, campaigns, and elections, briefly to assess the effectiveness of Presidents and other important party figures as political leaders, to indicate the more significant Congressional struggles of a political character, and to explain the trends of politics in the social and economic settings of the different periods, with particular attention to change."

This was a formidable task, but Professor Roseboom has done very well indeed, and has produced a very useful volume that will long serve the needs of all those interested in American politics. The book is a convenient summary of the main developments of presidential politics, and in general it reflects the latest and best scholarship on these matters. While the book is a popular account that will have a greater interest and use for the general reader and for the undergraduate, it will be a handy reference for the serious student of American politics. Everyone will enjoy the lively manner in which it has been written, and everyone can profit from the selective bibliography that Professor Roseboom has prepared.

The problem of emphasis and selection was a very difficult one in writing this book, and Professor Roseboom anticipated criticism on this point. Overall he has done very well in solving this problem, but the book might have been even more useful had he given greater attention and care to the really significant and meaningful elections like those of 1800, 1828, 1860, 1912, and 1932. In all of these there was a meaningful division of the parties, and the voters were presented with fundamental differences in political issues and questions. The treatment of these elections in the same way as the other elections is one shortcoming of this book.

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*Created Equal? The Complete Lincoln-Douglas Debates in 1858.* Edited by Paul M. Angle. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. Pp. xxxiii, 422. Frontispiece, appendix, index. \$7.50.)

The title for the centennial edition of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, *Created Equal*, is timely indeed. It immediately brings into focus the position of the Negro in 1958 as well as 1858. Mr. Paul Angle, who edited the volume, feels the arguments of the debaters evolved around three questions: the extension of slavery, the status of the Negro, and the rights of the states to regulate the Negro's status as they saw fit. However, one must admit that all three of the subjects have a common denominator, which is the Negro.