

"Progressive Tradition" sees ideas largely as the product of the social and economic environment and therefore serves as a critical weapon in the reformer's hands by reducing religious, social, and political ideas to defenses of vested interests. The second tradition, appearing in the writings of Samuel Eliot Morison, Ralph Henry Gabriel, and Perry Miller, tends to a greater political conservatism, a respect for tradition, an interest in religion, a belief in the martial virtues, and a scepticism about the perfectibility of man by any process of social reform. Methodologically it is distinguished by an interest in ideas for their own sake and imputes a causal effect to them rather than reducing them to reflections of the environment. Skotheim argues in a short final chapter that these two traditions, after a generation of mutual conflict, have been "converging" since the 1940's as younger men try to borrow from the strengths of both traditions and to apply them carefully to narrow, specialized topics.

In this survey of the fairly short past of intellectual history as a specialized discipline, Skotheim offers many useful insights into the way that such twentieth century events as the two world wars and the rise of totalitarianism have affected historians' judgments of the values and ideals which Americans have held in the past. On the other hand, his emphasis on ideology tends to sort writers into categories which sometimes do far less than full justice to their achievements as historians. The treatment, for example, of Perry Miller, the greatest American intellectual historian, simply must be called inadequate.

Poor writing is the main fault of this useful book. Long quotations are juxtaposed to even longer paraphrases, and key points are repeated page after page with minimal verbal alterations. Sometimes a quotation is exactly repeated within a few pages. (See for instance pp. 206 and 210; 224 and 225). It takes rather too much patience to read through the book. But if one does, he can learn a great deal. It is certainly essential reading for anyone interested in either intellectual history or American historiography.

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Origins of the Common Law. By Arthur R. Hogue. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966. Pp. xii, 276. Glossary, notes, index. \$6.50.)

"Literature about the common law," Hogue states in his Preface, "is usually written by trained lawyers for trained lawyers. There is a place, I believe, for a book which does not assume professional legal training." He has accordingly written a book about English common law as it existed and developed between the accession of Henry II in 1154 and the death of Edward I in 1307; but where necessary, he goes beyond the limits set by these dates. He has viewed the law against the social and economic, political and administrative backgrounds from which it sprang, so that his book is a potpourri of many facets of English history. Some of these, such as the agricultural techniques

employed in medieval England, are of questionable relevance to his main theme.

Although there is no bibliography, it is obvious from the footnotes that Hogue has read widely in the sources and literature of his subject. It is therefore surprising to find no references to Sutherland's important book on *Quo warranto*, to Holt's book and Cam's paper on Magna Carta, and to Galbraith's two volumes on the public records and his book on Domesday. But, as Hogue admits, he has been eclectic in his treatment. What emerges is a clearly written, somewhat repetitious, pulling together of most of the standard works on English common law. If the book is intended for the layman, as the Preface and Glossary suggest, then Hogue has achieved his purpose, although it is difficult for the reviewer to believe that the classic works of Pollock and Maitland and Plucknett "assume professional legal training." If the book is intended for the student, then it would have to be for the student who has never had a thorough course in English medieval history. For one who has had such a course, it would add little to what he should have learned.

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Agents and Merchants: British Colonial Policy and the Origins of the American Revolution, 1763-1775. By Jack M. Sosin. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965. Pp. xvi, 267. Notes, illustrations, selected bibliography, index. \$5.50.)

Agents and Merchants searches the causes of the American Revolution even more closely than did the author's first book, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*. In so doing, it maintains the fine scholarship so characteristic of Sosin's work.

This volume offers perhaps the best defense yet written of British administration from 1763 to 1775. Several historians will disagree with the imperial point of view and argue the case for colonial sovereignty; but this book will force modification of the charges of ignorance or tyranny, or both, often levelled against the men who guided Britain's empire after the Seven Years' War. Indeed, given Sosin's premise that the critical factor in imperial relations after 1763 was the colonial challenge to the mother country's sovereignty, a Britain not only well-informed but eminently reasonable is revealed. So long as the colonies recognized the authority of Parliament, successive ministries compromised with America over specific measures designed to implement that authority.

The author focuses on the relations of colonial agents and merchants trading to America with the various British ministries and examines their influence on ministerial decisions. He finds this lobby securing considerable benefits for the colonists until 1773. After that he sees its influence dwindling. The lobby did not significantly affect ministerial decisions in the last two years of peace.

Before 1773 every administration, even Grenville's, altered its colonial legislation to meet colonial requests. Concessions made de-