

its lack of substantive legislative achievements, the committee exerted significant influence. It helped to create a climate of opinion favorable to the Wagner Act and the NLRB. It materially assisted the CIO in its drive to organize the steel, coal, and automobile industries. Most importantly, it played a crucial role in the transformation of the civil libertarian credo. Before the New Deal, Auerbach writes, "Civil libertarians remained inveterate worshipers at the shrine of Thomas Jefferson and adhered to a tradition that measured individual liberty by government abstinence" (p. 24). At the same time most had a deep commitment to labor unionism. Thus they were faced with a dilemma when the federal government stepped in as the protector of labor's right to organize. Thanks in large part to the La Follette Committee, the author contends, civil libertarians abandoned their traditional antipathy to federal power. "The La Follette Committee's findings foreshadowed a new civil libertarian formula: Federal power, so long the source of libertarian fears, might be needed to counteract local, and private, power, which in fact . . . often acted as the final arbiter of the Bill of Rights" (p. 138).

Auerbach has done thorough research in manuscript collections, government documents, and contemporary newspaper and magazine accounts. The footnotes are where they should be—at the bottom of the page. His prose is fluent, though not scintillating. At times, the reader suspects padding; the heart of his argument was set forth in his article in the December, 1964, issue of the *Journal of American History*.

Although not uncritical of some aspects of the committee's activities Auerbach is on the whole sympathetic. Too much so, this reader would suggest. Thus he excuses the committee's failure to deal with the intimidation of nonunion employees by union members and strikers on the ground of labor's underdog position. The moral dilemma implicit in this argument disturbed a minority in the American Civil Liberties Union at the time, and their strictures against such a double standard is no less pertinent today. Second, the La Follette Committee represented a major step in the transformation of congressional investigations into fishing expeditions for publicity. Not suprisingly, the Dies Un-American Activities Committee was the conservative reaction. Even more dangerous—to this reader's thinking at least—was the abandonment by too many libertarians of their suspicion of the too powerful state. Recent evidence abounds that the welfare state is not an unmixed blessing so far as individual rights and liberties are concerned.

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*The American Legion Story.* By Raymond Moley, Jr. Foreward by J. Edgar Hoover. (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1966. Pp. xv, 443. Illustrations, appendix, index. \$6.95.)

In this history of the American Legion, Raymond Moley, Jr., has made a considerable effort at doing the impossible. This is a kind of history difficult to do well. In the first place it is easy for a history of an organization to become tedious and dull. More important is the

greater difficulty of preparing a satisfactory history of an organization which is so large, which has touched the lives of such a considerable part of the nation's population, and which often has been at the center of controversies which have divided large segments of the population. But on the whole, Moley has done well. This is not to say that the book is not a friendly or a partisan account, for it is—whether from a personal preference for the positions which the legion has taken, or from the natural sympathy of a biographer who, coming to know and understand his subject, comes to be altogether forgiving.

Readers having any personal interest in the legion, or in twentieth-century United States history, will be attracted by the accounts of its founding. Indiana readers will be especially interested in the contest which made Indianapolis the national headquarters.

In its origins the legion developed a policy of non-partisanship. It would learn to fight and lobby for causes and might show voting records of legislators, but it would avoid endorsing parties or candidates and thus avoid the kind of political affiliation which came to be associated with the Grand Army of the Republic in its "bloody shirt" campaigns.

A good deal of study and hard work have gone into the promotion of the legion's views. Through the years it has advocated military preparedness, including an adequate navy, an independent air force, and an army based upon universal military training rather than a large standing army; but it also has been an advocate of peace. In foreign policy it was friendly toward the League of Nations, favored membership in the World Court (at least for a time), and favored the United Nations (but not the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization or the International Labor Organization). It probably was ahead of the rest of the country in abandoning its isolationist position in 1940. Later the legion favored the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty, and foreign military assistance. But then, curiously, it called for the resignation of one of the men chiefly responsible for those landmarks in postwar foreign policy, Dean Acheson. Moreover, the book adds another page to the Yalta myth of unpardonable concessions to the Russians.

One of the most controversial aspects of the legion's public career has been in connection with its attitude toward subversion. In this connection it is noted that the legion was determined not to become involved in vigilante activities, and it had no major part in the "Red Scare" of 1919-1920. But later the legion discredits the State Department as being infested with communists and traitors, sharing with many others the exaggeration of suspicion based upon the established revelations of the Alger Hiss case. Very curiously, however, the name of Joe McCarthy and his assault upon the army is not even mentioned.

As the author says at the outset, "The Legion's story is a human story, an integral part of any full account or appraisal of our country's progress in the twentieth century" (p. 3).