

bility; (3) Taft in Foreign Policy; and (4) The Last, Best Taft.

The author is evidently well aware of the fact that, as stated to this reviewer by one of the leading men in Washington, "Taft was the most brilliant man in the Senate, but he did not have enough patience with the dumbbells." It was this lack of patience rather than the fact that Taft thought more quickly and also more deeply than the average politician of his time that caused him to lose the support of many of the common fry of politicians.

It is just an illustration of the old dictum of James Bryce who, sixty or more years ago, wrote the famous judgment in his *American Commonwealth* asking "Why the best men do not become President?" Recent history has thrown some doubt upon the final worth of this judgment since our Presidents have become national party leaders as well as executives. This goes far to explain not only the failure of Mr. Taft to become Republican candidate for President, but also in contrast the popular appeal of the vibrant and unreliable Franklin Roosevelt.

The Taft Story is a "must" reading for the intelligent citizen of today, irrespective of party, who desires to get at the inner meaning of American politics during the past few years. Its author has done a real public service in writing this book with such remarkable detachment so soon after the death of Mr. Taft.

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BURNHAM, JAMES. *The Web of Subversion*. Pp. 248. New York: John Day Company, 1954. \$3.75.

The subtitle of this book by a well-known expert on Communism is "underground networks in the U. S. Government." Using the published reports of congressional committees as his source material, Mr. Burnham attempts to chart the course of Soviet espionage and infiltration in Washington from the New Deal to the present. *The Web of Subversion* falls short of Burnham's generally high standard; it bears the scars of haste, and it is only moderately accurate as to facts.

On page 29, Burnham states that where men are named who denied charges of subversive activity under oath, "such denials will in each case be noted." An excellent procedure *provided it is consistently followed*. There are seven references to a certain Solomon Adler who appears as an accused Red espionage agent, but there is no allusion to Adler's categorical denial of these charges in published testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Naturally, there is no suggestion here that the omission of the denial was deliberate. It is suggested that when a man chooses to write about a subject which touches on the honor and reputation of his fellows, he has the duty to take the trouble to ascertain the truth.

Yet, on the whole, the story is factual and clearly told. It is a story that has been dinned into American ears for the past six years until the public has become thoroughly indoctrinated as to the power of the Communist underground. In fact, the current tendency is to project the dangers of the 1940's into the present and for the public to falsely assume that the Government is still caught in a vast web of treason. Burnham's view is that we have only cut a few filaments of the web, that we have merely eradicated "several advanced and exposed echelons." The evidence he offers for this conclusion is unconvincing. Thus he states that the McCarthy Committee discovered two Communist cells at Fort Monmouth and in the Government Printing Office, "both of which were still in existence when the hearings took place" in 1953. If this is true, it is strange that Senator McCarthy was too modest to make any such claim in the 1953 Report of his Committee. Moreover, the evidence which Burnham cites in his reference note does not substantiate his charge. It is high time to put the entire question of the extent and character of current Communist penetration of American security-sensitive areas in the hands of a study group of the stature and capacity of the Canadian Royal Commission.

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