Clarion Review

Political Science

A Question of Balance: Towards a Better Britain

Malcolm Morrison
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★★☆☆☆

In his debut book, *A Question of Balance: Towards a Better Britain*, retired Englishman Malcolm Morrison presents what he views as the ills of UK society, along with his suggestions for solutions. He emphasizes the need for disciplined equanimity in policy delivery, instead of sharp swings to the far right or the far left. If the English government ran more judiciously, Morrison opines, his country would be better off.

Morrison divides the book into three sections. Part one examines various governing styles and general concepts falling under sub-chapterheads like Dictatorship versus Democracy, and Control versus Freedom, for example. After a brief description of the governing philosophy he intends to contrast, Morrison closes each section with a reminder that elements of both approaches should be practiced in order for any society to function well. Part two is specific to the UK, illustrating the challenges of, and presenting fixes for, issues germane to the island nation. In this section, he reiterates the need for consideration of all sides of the issues. Morrison concludes with his thoughts on the freedoms needed for sound societies, e.g. Freedom from Fear, Freedom of Choice, and the like. He closes with a short exhortation where he agitates for reform.

Lucidly written, *A Question of Balance* is a quick read and will be particularly useful for those who want a primer on the choices and challenges facing today's democracies. Those seeking more than a superficial overview of these issues should look elsewhere.

The author makes no mention of his credentials or sources for his ideas. In the preface, he writes, "I do not claim originality for many of the opinions propounded, or suggestions set forth in this book…Most of the thoughts have been distilling over several years—gleaned from books, television programmes and discussions with…friends." Yet, except for the occasional

quote from a well-known philosopher, Morrison does not cite specific books, TV shows, or acknowledge his acquaintances by name. Readers do learn that Morrison is retired, but not where he worked or went to school.

Morrison weakens some of his boldest ideas by framing them in rhetorical questions instead of bold statements. And, those readers unfamiliar with British politics and slang may find themselves bewildered at times due to the fact that not all terms and expressions are defined, but then this book's best audience is clearly British. For readers on this side of the Atlantic, *A Question of Balance* offers a worthwhile comparison between the British and American government.

Jill Allen