

Eminent Disdain: The Triumph of Cynicism over Integrity in 21st Century America

Bromwell Ault

(October 2009)

Softcover \$21.95 (307pp)

978-1-4490-2001-9

Looking back over the past decade presents a picture of the United States that is troubling at best. It was a time of both international and domestic crisis-and also a time, according to Bromwell Ault, when the government generally accomplished little to solve the country's most pressing problems. More than that, the decade saw "the triumph of cynicism over integrity," Ault writes.

In this eloquently written book, Ault, a retired businessman who founded the Center for Public Conscience, offers a well-researched overview of many of America's current challenges, including immigration, the Iraq war, the national debt, global warming, and healthcare. It is a lot to tackle, but Ault discusses the stark reality of each issue with clarity.

In his three chapters on immigration, Ault observes that "with notably few exceptions Congress' actions in the immigration issue have been largely ones of political self-service." He backs up this claim with substantive examples of the government's failure to deal with the impact of immigration. Ault discusses the "cost of multilingualism," as well as the impact of immigration on national security, the environment, and public health. He says there have been two constants in the immigration issue since 1965: "first, that polls have consistently indicated that a majority of the American public favors reducing immigration, and, secondly, that this preference is strongly opposed by the powerful, well-financed and organized supporters of open borders and high immigrant admissions."

Ault's assessment of healthcare is particularly interesting in light of the country's current focus on reform. In the book's last two chapters, he offers a lucid explanation of a complex problem, pointing to the business and political forces that have impeded change. The author writes, "it is a source of national shame that our government cannot see and solve this problem in a way that will produce the health care results that other smaller and less wealthy countries expect and have in place." Ault details a "different legislative procedure" that he believes could facilitate healthcare reform.

The author believes the most pressing issue we face is the national debt. "Our inability to deal with it in a realistic way is sadly symptomatic of the way our government has come to treat a host of other issues..." Ault writes, "by hype, avoidance, rhetoric and something-for-everybody spending, but little accomplishment or advancement of the national purpose."

While Ault conveys a sense of moral outrage throughout *Eminent Disdain*, it is his passion for integrity and responsibility that results in a notable book.

(January 20, 2010)

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