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POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Radical Party An Idea for America
David Sebastian Aschinberg
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Two Stars (out of Five)

This well-organized book attempts to lay out the reasons for a viable third party in the United States.

David Sebastian Aschinberg, a Chicago attorney, has written *The Radical Party An Idea for America*, which he calls the core beliefs for a third political party in the United States for "reasonable progressives." The author should be applauded for attempting to make a serious contribution to political discussions now raging in the United States.

The book is well organized, with the first half devoted to social issues and the second to foreign policy. Each chapter addresses a particular issue such as education, health care, or the economy.

The Radical Party is replete with ideas that likely will engender prolonged and intense debate. When it comes to education reform, Aschinberg focuses on the problems of inner-city schools. To combat violence, he would install retired police officers in each school. There would be mandatory random monthly drug testing for every student: "Students have absolutely no right to be on drugs while in school, therefore there is no right being violated by testing them." Aschinberg also proposes summer boot camps for kids who are failing physically.

The second half of the text is devoted to foreign policy, and the writer continues his simple, direct approach. He asserts that after the attacks on 9/11, the United States should have given the Taliban an ultimatum: either deliver up Bin Laden and the rest of Al-Qaeda "within a reasonable amount of time" or we drop a nuclear bomb on Kabul. Bluffing is OK in diplomacy, says Aschinberg, but, dropping the bomb would have been better than going to war in Afghanistan.

Fact-checking errors diminish the strength of the arguments and dedication to accuracy, both important attributes in political discussions. In the chapter on health care, Aschinberg states, "I am guessing here but lawyers probably outnumber doctors more than 100 to 1 in this

country." He should not guess. A quick Internet search indicates there were 624,434 doctors in the United States spending a majority of their time in direct patient care in 2008. The US Census Bureau reports that at about that same time there were 837,140 practicing attorneys in this country. The American Bar Association sets that number around 1,145,000.

Likewise, in the chapter on religion, Aschinberg states, "Billy Graham was the most powerful preacher in this country before he died." Billy Graham, age ninety-five, is still alive.

Aschinberg asserts up front that he has written this book in a simple, straightforward style so that even thirteen-year-olds can understand it. And he has accomplished that goal; he is most certainly forceful in supporting his core beliefs with argument. That said, there are no references to independent studies or research to support his conclusions or observations.

The breadth of the issues discussed in *The Radical Party* makes for a thought-provoking contribution to our political discourse.

John Senger