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POLITICAL SCIENCE

Tolerance is No Virtue: Ignorance Appreciation and the Human Story
Shirley Osborne of Montserrat
978-1-4259-3394-4
Four Stars (out of Five)

"God and country are an unbeatable team.
They break all records for oppression and bloodshed."
— Luis Buñuel

This world can no longer afford to ignore the results of oppression and xenophobia. What is the extent of racism classism sexism homophobia and religious bigotry and how can they be countered? Ambitiously tackling a large subject Shirley Osborne argues that an attitude of "tolerance" alone represents too much disengagement to solve our problems. Instead she proposes the more proactive sentiment of "appreciation." Osborne enriches her text with poignant quotations drawn from an outstanding variety of sources; from genocidal monsters to heroes of human progress. She is clearly a broadly-read capable thinker. *Tolerance Is No Virtue* shows a real desire to get to the root causes of dysfunction in a way reminiscent of Hannah Arendt's classic *The Origin of Totalitarianism*. The author points out that there is much to gain beyond the minimum standard of not persecuting others. A richer life is open through the preservation and nurturing of diversity. "Tolerance" says Frank Moor Colby "is nine parts apathy to one part brotherly love."

Shirley Osborne was raised on the Leeward Island of Montserrat the daughter of a two-time head of government. She has studied and worked in London and New York taking part in social action including an anti-hate campaign on American MTV. Her writing has appeared in Caribbean newspapers.

"I no longer believe that our species has been evolving into better beings." This statement on humanity comes in the opening chapter. Through the bulk of the book Osborne catalogs an encyclopedic array of appalling abuses and moral failures and asks the question: Can the most active oppressors turn over a new leaf? When she presents her prescription in the closing chapters it sounds hopeful yet perhaps a bit unrealistic. Osborne has made a nearly airtight case for the pessimists who don't expect a better world ahead but she is to be commended for proposing a thoughtful solution. She insists each person has an imperative and a

duty to learn greater respect for differences have concern for those of other status groups and develop interest in that which is new or unusual.

Tolerance Is No Virtue makes statistical assertions and details historical circumstances without specific citations. To do so is a personal choice with a positive consequence of smoother readability. However one more step in scholarship would have shored up claims of fact.

A serious work on intolerance is bound to ruffle feathers in some quarters. It may also give direction to those who wish to improve their own surroundings and the scope of the public debate but are unsure of how to act effectively. This book is a recommended read for the socially concerned.