



'*The International Civil Service*' (Its origins, Its nature, Its evolution) commissioned by the World Federation of United Nations Associations, Geneva and published by M/s. A. W. Sythoff, Leyden, Oceana Publications Inc., Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. 1963 (Price Dfl. 39.90 clothbound).

This book is an excellent and illuminating study on the subject as the one by Professor Georges Langrod, Director of Research at the 'Centre National de la recherche scientifique', Paris, ought to have been. His mature mind, wide research and long experience is reflected through each page of the book.

Professor Langrod has eminently succeeded in idolising the international civil service and in projecting its missionary role in international life, as probably no other contemporary writer has. His book is a master blending of international civil service practice that has thus far emerged and its philosophy and theory which nourishes the practice and is nourished by it.

In a world divided into hostile and mutually suspecting camps and armed with nuclear weapons ready to go off with the push of a button, the very survival of the peoples which compose it, is at stake. The role that the international civil servants and their chief are destined to play in such a climate makes a fascinating reading.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part deals with its genesis, sketching the history of the forerunners of the present international civil service from the earliest times through the period of the alliances, international unions and true international co-operation. The second chapter deals with the early history of the administrator and the secretariat. The function appeared first, and then was created the organ to perform that function. The flexibility which international administrators enjoy in the absence of rules of reference, the autonomy of the secretariat and its stability and the peculiar virtues and qualities of the international civil servants as compared with services within a state, have been discussed.

The second part covers 'the nature' of the service. The servicing functions (self administration) and the primary functions of the organisation have been distinguished and compared with similar functions on the national plane. This difference calls for more stringent standards to which the international civil servant must conform *viz.*, devotion to public interest, possession of political sense, political impartiality, loyalty to the public administration, discretion, profes-



sional secrecy and professional knowledge etc. The independent status of the international civil servant has certain important psychological, legal and administrative consequences. Their international outlook, their legal status, security of tenure with an Administrative Tribunal to guarantee the same, their recruitment and conditions of service with a view to ensure stability, continuity and impartiality and at the same time guaranteeing as equitable a geographical distribution as feasible—these are problems that have been dealt with by the author with perfection in their proper historical perspective. Regional distribution of posts must not be allowed to disturb the essential criteria or hierarchy of values. The Secretary-General must exercise his exclusive competence to appoint all his staff by making as direct a recruitment on grounds of merit as possible without depending on the governments to sponsor candidates.

The 'evolution' of the international civil service to its present form through various stages, which forms the central theme of the book is discussed in Part III. During the pioneering period of the League of Nations, the role of Sir Eric Drummond, its first secretary-general, the Noblemaise Report of 1921 which conformed to the 'minimalist' view, the crisis of 1929-31 when the privileges of the great powers in matters of recruitment were attacked on the one hand and the powers of the Secretary-General on the other, the report of the Committee of Thirteen of 1932 and the following debates, the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, are all landmarks in the history of the international civil service which have been chronologically featured. The I.L.O. has been treated under a separate chapter since it forms a particularly instructive example of the successful operation of a functional organization from its very inception in 1919. The United Nations covers the remaining chapters in this part. The origins of the United Nations, an appreciation of the work the preparatory commission which provided the basic outline of the structure and functions of the secretariat, the role of Trygve Lie, the first Secretary-General of the U. N. who at times sacrificed administrative principles to political expediencies, have been critically examined. The author observes that though Trygve Lie deliberately rejected the minimalist view, he could not go to the opposite extreme. He was in favour of a middle way, of compromises, of approaching problems in a pragmatic manner with his mind always open to the requirements of international politics.



How the secretariat and the United Nations were steered clearly through the Korean crisis and the Soviet boycott and the crisis following the wave of McCarthyism in the U.S.A. and the attempt of the U.S.A. to screen all their citizens serving in the U.N. Secretariat, through the clever leadership of the two Secretaries-General forms an intriguing narration and pinpoints the influence and impact which the towering personality of a Secretary-General like that of Dag Hammarskjold, can bring to bear during a period of great crisis. As to internal rules the crisis ended up by amending the statute of the Administrative Tribunal of the United Nations and providing for a review of its decisions by the International Court of Justice through advisory opinion in exceptional circumstances.

Dag Hammarskjold had been the idol of the author as the chief of the secretariat and his role as an administrator, politician and theorist has been eulogized by Professor Langrod. Another admirer has said of him, "There is no man of our time who has left a greater imprint on the organization, to which he entirely devoted himself and his exceptional gifts."

The Congo crisis and his accidental death in September, 1961, brought forth the problem of his replacement. The 'troika' plan submitted by the U.S.S.R. was got over with great difficulty and U. Thant was appointed as the acting Secretary-General. As a compromise eight under-secretaries were appointed (two of the Western block, two of the Eastern block and four of the uncommitted countries). It was left to the acting Secretary-General as to how he was to consult his colleagues. Here again, the contribution of U. Thant as the head of the international civil service has been succinctly assessed.

Part IV is captioned as 'Final Considerations'. The role of the international civil service in the present world and prospects for the future have been examined. A separate chapter has been added on the role of the chief in public administration and the contributions of the various Secretaries-General under the League and the U. N. have been assessed. The pros and cons of the 'troika' plan have been examined again in great detail. No one can possibly disagree with what the author has concluded as an impartial judge, "a corporate executive would increase the already enormous difficulties of international administrative action and would create inextricable political complications. Sooner or later, the result would be stagnation, since the time for immediate action is not the time for discussions for principles."



Professor Langrod who obviously has immense faith in the potentialities of the international civil service declares, "there can be no doubt that mankind would be threatened with chaos if it ceased to exist."

A comprehensive bibliography and a subject index has been added at the end of the book which will prove to be of immense help to the future researchers in the field. There are useful and compendious notes at the end of each chapter. These notes as distinguished from the footnotes add to the value and authority of the monograph.

The rendering of the English translation, also, from the original French has been flawlessly done by Mr. F. G. Berthoud. The English reader is led through the book with an unflagging interest. The get up and print of the book is excellent.

The reader would, however, have expected a similar comparative and critical treatment of the administrative staff of the specialized agencies and all other international governmental organizations too since that is as much a part of the international civil service as the U. N. Secretariat itself. Absence of an elaborate discussion from the point of view of public administration (organisation) is also striking. But the author is quite conscious of these limitations which are imposed by 'the limited scope of the present work and by practical considerations'. It may well be hoped that subsequent works by the author himself and by others will fill up these gaps.

There is a lot in the book to be learnt by the statesman also, whose obligation it is to rise above national interests to help in the institutionalisation of the international civil service in the true sense of the word.

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