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Book Notes

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BOOK NOTES

DIARY OF A D.A. By Martin M. Frank. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1960. Pp. 274. \$3.95.

The office of public prosecutor, whether it be called district attorney, state's attorney, or county prosecutor, is a peculiarly American phenomenon, born of a time when men learned in the law were hard to find in the infant United States. The occupant of this office wields an astonishing amount of power. His duties are not restricted to courtroom appearances; he also serves as the advisor and confidant of the grand jury and often will work closely with law enforcement agencies in the investigation of crime. The discharge of these responsibilities in the setting of our nation's largest metropolis is the subject of this entertaining study by Martin Frank. The title is perhaps misleading. This volume is not a collection of random thoughts recorded day by day, but rather a series of reflections on the organization and operation of an urban prosecutor's office. The author recounts the stories of a number of cases with which he was connected, but he devotes other chapters—probably the more interesting ones—to the history of the office, sketches of its organization, explanations of the techniques devised by an able staff, and a description of the close cooperation which is possible between the public prosecutor and the police.

The author, who is now on the bench of the Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court, draws on sixteen years experience as an assistant district attorney in the Bronx for his material. His style of writing is admirably readable, his choice of illustrative material adept. The one objection which might be voiced to the volume is the arrangement of the chapters, which at times seem to have been juxtaposed almost at random. Perhaps the author intended to woo the reader's interest by presenting the history of two criminal investigations and their outcome in the early pages of the book. Nonetheless it is a bit disturbing to find most of the historical material postponed until the third chapter.

This shortcoming is, however, a minor one; the overall quality of the presentation more than atones for it. All told, *Diary of a D.A.* is a welcome combination of entertainment and information, which should prove absorbing both to the lawyer and the layman.

ISLAMIC LAW IN THE MODERN WORLD. By J.N.D. Anderson. New York: New York University Press, 1959. Pp. xx, 106. \$2.75.

It has become commonplace in the last two or three decades to speak of the shrinking of the modern world. The influence of this shrinking on the legal profession in the United States is only beginning to be felt, but its existence is clearly indicated both by the addition of courses in international and comparative law in the nation's law schools and by the recent debates in the American Bar Association over the proper function of International tribunals and American participation in them. Many American lawyers are at least conversant with the legal systems of the nations of the British Commonwealth. A very few are acquainted with the law of the Civil Law countries on the Continent and in South America. Rare indeed is the American lawyer who knows anything at all concerning the practice of law in the Islamic countries. *Islamic Law in the Modern World*, which is based on a series of lectures given at New York University, provides a stimulating introduction to this unfamiliar world.

Within the space of a hundred pages it would be impossible to give a thorough treatment of even a single phase of any major legal system, and the apparent purpose of this volume is not to attempt that impossible task, but rather to provide the reader with enough background so that lengthier and more technical discussions will be made more understandable. The volume commences with a discussion of the contrast between Islamic and Western conceptions of the function and subject matter of law, pointing out the religious base on which law in the Middle East is largely rested. Later chapters deal with the development of Islamic law in recent years and with particular applications of it, especially in the area of family law.

J.N.D. Anderson is one of the foremost Western scholars in the field of Oriental law. He has taught in the area while at the University of London, and speaks from experience, having lived over a decade in the Middle East. Persons who find the present volume interesting may also wish to read his earlier work, *Islamic Law in Africa*, written in 1954. Lawyers will find his scholarship impeccable and his language well chosen.