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European Political Parties: A Handbook. by Stanley Henig

International Guide to Electoral Statistics, Volume I: National Elections in Western Europe.

by Stein Rokkan ; Jean Meyriat

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## Book Reviews

*European Political Parties: A Handbook*, ed. Stanley Henig. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969. Pp. 565. \$13.50.

*International Guide to Electoral Statistics, Volume 1: National Elections in Western Europe*, ed. Stein Rokkan and Jean Meyriat. The Hague: Mouton, 1969. Pp. vi, 351. \$15.00.

These works differ greatly in coverage, style, and utility as reference works for the student of comparative politics. While the *International Guide to Electoral Statistics* is a valuable compendium of information and data of interest to serious scholars, *European Political Parties* turns out to be something much less—and much more—than a “handbook” of parties as suggested in its subtitle.

Henig identifies two purposes to be served by *European Political Parties*: “First, it sets out to supply the essential material for any comparative considerations relating to West European political parties. Second, it tries to estimate their activities to help fulfill essential roles in the process of European integration” (p. 20). The first of these purposes sounds like the proper objective of a handbook, but the second seems more the goal of an original study.

In pursuit of its purposes, *European Political Parties* covers fifteen countries in chapters by different authors: Austria (Pulzer), Belgium and Luxembourg (Hill), France (Steed), Germany (Morgan), Ireland (Chubb), Italy (Allum), the Netherlands (Baehr), the five countries of Scandinavia (Andren), Switzerland (Hughes), and the United Kingdom (Henig). As might be expected, parties in the five Scandinavian countries are treated less extensively than those elsewhere, except in Luxembourg, which only rated a one page Appendix to the chapter on Belgium.

In his “Introduction,” Henig states that the chapter will present “a structural-functional consideration of each major party” (p. 15). Apart from brief mentions of party functions by some authors, only Andren explicitly discusses parties in terms of input and output functions. But one should not really expect to find structural-functional abstractions in a basic reference work, and *European Political Parties* cannot be faulted as a handbook for failing to be as analytical as Henig promises.

A more serious problem in its usefulness for reference is the relatively unstructured presentation. Only Allum’s chapter on Italy follows a consistent and explicit set of headings, treating each party under “His-

tory and Strategy," "Structure," "Membership," "Party Officials," "National Leaders and Parliamentarians," "Electoral Support," "Financial Support," and "Power Analysis." The lack of comprehensiveness and comparability in topic headings across chapters and parties does not mean that specific information is absent, only that it is difficult to find. But structure aside, the quality of all chapters is generally very high, with each providing a relatively concise yet thorough account of party politics in the countries studied. Some chapters, like Steed's on France, are especially informative and excel at unravelling party entanglements.

As a handbook on European political parties, the book falls short of what *could* be done, although it is probably the best that *has* been done in recent years, replacing Neumann's *Modern Political Parties* (1956) as a convenient source of information on Europe for students of comparative politics. Moreover, it offers something for students of international relations and foreign policy as well. Henig apparently insisted that each chapter contain a section on the parties' "international links," including their activities in European supranational organizations. Although some authors seem uninterested in this aspect of their assignment, treating it most perfunctorily, the basic information is there, supplemented by Forsyth's chapter on the "European Assemblies," which focuses on the European Parliament for the Common Market countries, and an Appendix on the parties' international links with the Socialist, Christian Democrat, and Liberal organizations.

Henig hoped to estimate the degree to which national parties adjusted their activities while adapting to the process of European integration. Perhaps contrary to his expectations, most of the authors conclude that the parties' international links have little consequence for national party politics. If, from the standpoint of parties research, the parties' international links have had little explanatory power, from the standpoint of integration research, their international links may be more important. Forsyth's report of voting in the European Parliament shows more cohesion within cross-national party groupings than within many national groups. It may well be that Henig is correct in his expectations but that the international forces may not have developed sufficiently to produce the national adjustments. Parties scholars as well as students of foreign policy and international relations would do well to keep attuned to developments in international linkages among political parties, and Henig's book provides a good assessment of the present situation.

The *International Guide to Electoral Statistics, Volume 1*, is the first of three planned under the auspices of the International Committee for Social Sciences Documentation. The second volume will cover the Commonwealth countries, the U.S., Israel, Japan, Turkey, and the Philippines; the third will treat Latin America. No timetable is

stated for the appearance of the companion volumes, and—in view of the history behind *Volume 1*—one should not expect them soon, for authors' assignments for *Volume 1* were made as early as 1961.

Two reasons cited for the delay in publishing the first number of this long-awaited series were the reliance on voluntary cooperation in the absence of funds to remunerate contributors and the insistence that all chapters conform to a highly structured "standard list of contents" established by the Committee. It is to the great credit of Rokkan and Meyriat that they did not trade off their insistence on standardization in return for quicker publication. As a result, the book's coverage is quite even and virtually complete for national elections in the fourteen major countries of Western Europe with a history of competitive party politics.

The chapters on Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Britain are in English; those on Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, and Switzerland are in French. All provide a detailed tabular chronology of the electoral system, descriptions of data sources for each period by several subcategories of sources, and bibliographies of electoral analyses organized by each electoral era. Additionally, each chapter contains one or more tables reporting results of national elections or referenda beginning in the late 1800's or early 1900's and extending into the 1960's. I wish that the standardized tabular format for "electoral chronology" had required both estimates of the proportion of the population enfranchised under the various electoral laws and estimates of the total eligible electorate in absolute numbers. This information is provided within the text for some countries (e. g., Sweden and Britain), but it is not readily available for most others.

Rokkan and Meyriat ask that their *Guide* be judged for its inventory of national electoral data resources and its review of analyses already conducted. In this light, it is surely the best work available to the English reader with a working knowledge of French. Serious students of parties and elections are likely to find this volume of special use for its descriptions of electoral systems and suffrage expansion over time, for its selective bibliographies, and, of course, for the basic election data.

The joint review of *European Political Parties* and the *International Guide to Electoral Statistics* afforded an opportunity for systematic checking of the reliability of comparable electoral data reported in both volumes. Although the Henig book largely limits its election coverage to the postwar period, it often covers more recent elections (e. g., 1967 and 1968) than the *Guide*, which usually carries results only to 1965 or 1966. It was comforting to find that—excepting data for France—the figures reported in both sources for the same elections were (1) in basic agreement on raw votes cast for the parties, give

or take some thousands; (2) in almost exact agreement on the percentages of the votes won by the parties, plus or minus some tenths of a percentage point; and (3) in virtually perfect agreement on the numbers of seats won by each party—excepting for a likely printing error on page 160 of the *Guide*, which gives 53 seats to “other parties” rather than 63.

The results for France were generally *not* in agreement because of understandable problems in defining party groupings and because of differences in handling overseas deputies—both normal problems troubling the study of French politics. The slight differences encountered in the other sets of figures were actually reassuring from a reliability standpoint, for their overall correspondence cannot be due simply to reliance on the same sources. These findings suggest that both volumes rate high in accuracy, perhaps the most important requirement of reference works.

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*French Politicians and Elections: 1951-1969*, by Philip M. Williams.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970. Pp. 313. \$11.50.

*French Socialists in Search of a Role, 1965-1967*, by Harvey G. Simmons.

Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970. Pp. 313. \$9.75.

*France: The Politics of Continuity and Change*, by Lowell G. Noonan.

New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970. Pp. 528. \$3.95.

*Politics in France*, by Pierre Avril. Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1969. Pp. 304. \$1.95.

These four books on French politics vary greatly in character. Professor Noonan has written the most comprehensive paperback survey textbook on French politics in English. M. Avril's book is the English translation of his general interpretive essay on the nature of French politics, *Le Gouvernement de France*. Professor Williams has brought together in one volume his articles on a common theme, most of which have been published elsewhere previously. Professor Simmons has revised for book publication his doctoral dissertation on the French socialist party from 1956 to 1967 with a 1969 postscript. The Simmons books, therefore, is the most important as a contribution to political science scholarship and deserves the most attention.