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Recommended Citation

H&S Reports, Vol. 07, (1970 summer), p. 11

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THE EDITORS' BOOK SHELF

The Wall Street Lawyer: Professional Organization Man? by Erwin O. Smigel. Indiana University Press, 1969, 386 pages, clothbound \$8.50, paperback \$2.95.

Those redoubtable bastions of conservatism, the Wall Street law firms, are not as impervious to change as they may sometimes seem. This conclusion, based on ably documented evidence, runs throughout Professor Smigel's new study of this genus of the legal profession.

The first edition of his book, published in 1964, had been well reviewed by lawyers themselves and established the author as an authority, not of the law, but of how lawyers organize themselves and the impact of their organizations on the attorney himself. Professor Smigel is chairman of New York University's department of sociology.

The Wall Street law firms are of widespread interest in H&S, not only because clients throughout this country and abroad retain them from time to time, but also because they are the prototypes of large firms in other cities. While New York has eleven firms with 100 or more attorneys, there are nine firms that big elsewhere, including three in Houston and two in Chicago.

For the most promising young lawyers fresh out of law school, the large, prestigious Wall Street firm is still the place to go, according to Professor Smigel. It is not simply a matter of money; many young lawyers today are concerned with civil rights, for doing something in a social sense. To attract and hold such concerned people, Smigel finds, "The large firms are giving time off in which to work with the black and unrepresented."

According to Smigel, the most socially significant change in Wall Street law firms is the tremendous lessening

of discrimination—especially toward Jews. He cites one firm in which today one-fourth of the partners are Jewish, where in 1957 there were no Jewish partners at all. Negro law school graduates are in great demand, but they are difficult to find.

The author observes a trend toward democratization of staff, along with a paradoxical formalization of administration. Formalization is seen in increasing division of labor; with growth and complexity comes specialization and committees. Democratization is evidenced in the fact that it takes less time to become a partner now, and the junior associate has more client contact than before. Personality is not considered as important as it once was. One partner told the author, "You no longer have to be gorgeous."

Evidently the Wall Street lawyers have toned up their flexibility, or what Dr. Alexis Carrel, the prolific writer on medicine, once called the "adaptive functions," so as to be in trim for the ferment forecast for the 1970s.

Up the Organization: How to Stop the Corporation from Stifling People and Strangling Profits, by Robert Townsend. Knopf, 1970, 202 pages, \$5.95.

A winner has earned the right to be critical of the routine way many others play the game in which he has excelled. Robert Townsend is an imaginative old pro in business management, proved by his record as chairman and chief executive officer of Avis Rent A Car, and elsewhere in the corporate world. He is critical with a vengeance, and his humor carries a sting.

This book is a collection of short, specific items of advice, principles, warnings and rules—many of them exaggerated and irreverent. On the positive side, the author states specifically what company managers should do in order to develop an efficient outfit in which people pursue their ego and development needs in harmony with company goals. A humanist, he believes that people want to work and achieve; he rejects the old notion that most employees must be whipped, threatened and conned.

To liberate the energies of everyone in the organization, he would do away with many wasteful trappings that merely inflate stuffed shirts, such as reserved parking spaces and posh stationery. He would cut down the vast salary gap dividing the top dogs from

the rest of the pack who do the work. He would throw out rigid policy manuals and rigidity of working hours. In general, he would free energetic, intelligent people to do their best without being shackled by organization rules written for unmotivated wage-slaves.

Up the Organization has become a best-seller because it says what thousands of people have sensed should be said about big organizationitis, and because it comes from a man who has made it in business management. A healthily subversive book.

King: A Critical Biography, by David L. Lewis. Praeger, 1970, 460 pages, \$7.95.

A man truly "overtaken by events," Martin Luther King in his short and tragic career epitomized the great issues of mid-century America. He had all the credentials for the idealist-leader best equipped to cope with chaos: magnetism, intellectuality and a formidable talent for stirring the masses with words. This biography, blessedly free of the preachiness and self-serving bias typical of the rash of new books on "the cause," is invaluable equally as a profile of King and as a straightforward history of the civil rights movement.

A new minister with a new congregation, King became a champion of black rights almost by accident. In the first landmark struggle of the movement, King was elected to head the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955, selected because he was a newcomer to town and consequently unknown as a troublemaker to the white establishment. From then on he was swept up by events, a procession of headlines: the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, Albany, Birmingham, St. Augustine, Selma and the March to Montgomery, the March on Washington, Chicago and the first inroads on Northern type segregation. In the process, of course, he did make enemies, arousing the ire of black militants, who considered him too timid; frightening the timid black middle class, which considered him too rash; arousing the jealousy of other leaders of civil rights organizations.

It is a measure of the book's worth that King and his associates are presented as human beings with human frailties and not as Christlike messiahs as propagandized by an uncritical banner waver. This is a down-to-earth portrait that enhances its subject. □