

politics of the 1920's

politics of the 1920's was a transformative era marked by significant shifts in governance, policy, and social dynamics in the United States. The decade, often referred to as the Roaring Twenties, showcased a blend of conservatism and progressivism in political thought, influenced heavily by post-World War I realities and rapid economic growth. This period witnessed the dominance of Republican administrations, the influence of isolationist foreign policies, and the rise of significant social issues such as Prohibition and women's suffrage. The politics of the 1920's also reflected the tensions between traditional values and modernist movements, which shaped legislation and public discourse. Understanding this decade's political landscape involves exploring key administrations, major legislative acts, social reforms, and the evolving role of America on the world stage. The following sections provide an in-depth examination of these elements and their impact on the trajectory of American politics.

- Republican Dominance and Presidential Leadership
- Domestic Policies and Social Issues
- Foreign Policy and International Relations
- Economic Policies and Regulatory Environment
- Social Movements and Political Challenges

Republican Dominance and Presidential Leadership

The politics of the 1920's was largely defined by the Republican Party's control of the executive branch and Congress. This decade saw three Republican presidents: Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover. Their administrations emphasized pro-business policies, limited government intervention, and a return to "normalcy" following the upheaval of World War I.

Warren G. Harding's Administration

Warren G. Harding, elected in 1920, campaigned on a platform promising a return to normalcy, focusing on stability and economic growth. His presidency was marked by efforts to reduce taxes and government spending. However, Harding's term was overshadowed by scandals such as the Teapot Dome affair, which revealed corruption in his administration and impacted public trust in

government.

Calvin Coolidge's Leadership Style

Calvin Coolidge assumed the presidency after Harding's death in 1923 and was known for his quiet, laissez-faire approach to governance. Coolidge championed limited government, fiscal conservatism, and business-friendly policies. His administration is often credited with fostering economic prosperity during the decade by supporting minimal regulation and low taxes.

Herbert Hoover's Early Presidency

Herbert Hoover, elected in 1928, initially continued the Republican approach of promoting business and economic growth. However, his presidency soon confronted the onset of the Great Depression, which began in 1929. Although his early policies aimed at voluntary cooperation between government and business, the economic collapse exposed limitations in the administration's approach.

Domestic Policies and Social Issues

Domestic politics in the 1920s revolved around significant social changes and contentious policy debates. The decade was characterized by the enforcement of Prohibition, the expansion of women's rights, and the struggle between traditional values and modern social trends.

Prohibition and Its Political Impact

One of the most defining domestic policies was Prohibition, enacted through the 18th Amendment and enforced by the Volstead Act. This legislation banned the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages. Prohibition deeply influenced the politics of the 1920's by fostering organized crime, challenging law enforcement, and sparking debates about individual rights and government overreach.

Women's Suffrage and Political Participation

The ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920 granted women the right to vote, significantly altering the political landscape. Women's increased participation in elections encouraged political parties to address issues relevant to female voters and led to a gradual shift in policy priorities. Despite this progress, women still faced barriers to full political representation during the decade.

Racial and Ethnic Tensions

The 1920s also saw heightened racial and ethnic tensions, including the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and restrictive immigration laws like the Immigration Act of 1924. These developments reflected widespread nativism and racial discrimination, influencing political discourse and legislation throughout the decade.

Foreign Policy and International Relations

The politics of the 1920's were heavily influenced by the United States' approach to international affairs in the aftermath of World War I. Isolationism dominated foreign policy, with a focus on avoiding entanglement in European conflicts while promoting peace through diplomacy.

Isolationism and the League of Nations

Despite President Woodrow Wilson's advocacy for the League of Nations, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, signaling a retreat from international commitments. The 1920s saw a firm U.S. policy of isolationism, avoiding involvement in European alliances and conflicts, which shaped diplomatic decisions throughout the decade.

Disarmament Conferences

Several international disarmament efforts took place during the 1920s, including the Washington Naval Conference (1921-1922). The United States led initiatives to limit naval armaments and reduce the risk of future wars. These efforts reflected a broader desire to maintain peace and stability without direct military involvement overseas.

Economic Diplomacy and Trade

While politically isolationist, the U.S. expanded its economic influence through trade and investment abroad. The 1920s saw increased focus on promoting American business interests internationally, often through protective tariffs and bilateral agreements aimed at fostering favorable trade conditions.

Economic Policies and Regulatory Environment

The decade's politics were closely tied to economic policies that favored growth, business expansion, and limited government interference. These policies contributed to the prosperity of the Roaring Twenties but also laid

the groundwork for future economic challenges.

Taxation and Government Spending

Republican administrations of the 1920s implemented significant tax cuts, particularly for higher income brackets and corporations. The goal was to stimulate investment and economic activity. Government spending was generally restrained, reflecting a conservative approach to fiscal management.

Regulation and Business Environment

The politics of the 1920's favored minimal regulation of industries, reflecting a belief in free-market principles. Agencies responsible for oversight were often underfunded or lacked enforcement power, which some critics argue contributed to speculative excesses in the stock market and other sectors.

Labor Relations and Policies

Labor unions faced challenges during the 1920s, with political support largely favoring business interests. Government policies tended to limit union power and strike activity, which affected worker rights and wages during this period of rapid industrial growth.

Social Movements and Political Challenges

The 1920s presented a complex social and political landscape marked by emerging movements and ongoing challenges. These dynamics influenced legislation and the broader political climate.

The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan experienced a resurgence in the 1920s, expanding its membership and political influence beyond the South. The Klan promoted white supremacy, anti-immigrant sentiment, and traditional Protestant values, impacting local and national politics.

Labor Unrest and Radicalism

While the 1920s are often remembered for prosperity, the decade also witnessed labor unrest and the growth of radical political ideas. Socialist and communist movements gained some traction, prompting government responses aimed at suppressing perceived subversive activities.

The Scopes Trial and Cultural Conflicts

The Scopes "Monkey" Trial of 1925 epitomized the cultural and political tensions between modernist and traditionalist viewpoints, particularly regarding science and religion in public education. This event highlighted broader debates about the direction of American society and governance during the decade.

- Republican leadership shaped conservative domestic and economic policies.
- Prohibition and women's suffrage significantly influenced social policy.
- Isolationism defined foreign relations and international diplomacy.
- Economic policies favored business growth with minimal regulation.
- Social movements reflected cultural conflicts and political challenges.

Frequently Asked Questions

What were the key political themes of the 1920s in the United States?

The key political themes of the 1920s in the United States included a focus on economic growth and business prosperity, isolationism in foreign policy, limited government intervention, and the rise of conservative politics under presidents like Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge.

How did the politics of the 1920s reflect the social changes of the decade?

Politics in the 1920s reflected social changes such as the push for Prohibition, the women's suffrage movement culminating in the 19th Amendment, and the rise of nativism and immigration restrictions, showing a tension between modernism and traditionalism.

What was the impact of Prohibition on the politics of the 1920s?

Prohibition, established by the 18th Amendment, significantly influenced 1920s politics by fueling organized crime, prompting debates over government enforcement, and ultimately leading to political movements advocating for its repeal in the early 1930s.

How did the 1920s political climate affect immigration policies in the United States?

The 1920s political climate led to restrictive immigration policies, such as the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924, which limited immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe and virtually excluded Asians, reflecting nativist and xenophobic sentiments.

What role did the League of Nations play in 1920s politics?

The United States, under 1920s leadership, notably rejected joining the League of Nations, reflecting the era's isolationist policies and reluctance to engage in international alliances after World War I.

Who were the prominent political figures of the 1920s and what were their contributions?

Prominent political figures included Presidents Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover, who promoted pro-business policies, limited government intervention, and isolationism, shaping the conservative political landscape of the decade.

How did the political scandals of the 1920s affect public trust in government?

Political scandals such as the Teapot Dome scandal undermined public trust in government by exposing corruption and cronyism within the Harding administration, leading to increased calls for government reform and transparency.

What was the significance of the 1920 presidential election?

The 1920 presidential election was significant as it marked a shift toward conservative, pro-business leadership with Warren G. Harding's victory, reflecting public desire for a 'return to normalcy' after World War I and progressive reforms.

Additional Resources

1. The Roaring Twenties: Politics and Power in Postwar America

This book explores the political landscape of the 1920s United States, highlighting the shift towards conservatism and the rise of business influence in government. It analyzes key political figures, legislation, and the impact of World War I on domestic policies. The book also delves into the

tension between progressivism and traditional values during this transformative decade.

2. Red Scare and Reaction: The Politics of Fear in the 1920s

Focusing on the Red Scare, this book examines how fear of communism shaped American politics during the 1920s. It discusses government actions such as the Palmer Raids, immigration restrictions, and the broader cultural backlash against radicalism. The work provides insight into how these events influenced civil liberties and political discourse.

3. Prohibition and Politics: The 18th Amendment's Impact on America

This title investigates the political motivations behind Prohibition and its consequences throughout the 1920s. It covers the role of temperance movements, enforcement challenges, and the rise of organized crime. The book also evaluates how Prohibition affected elections, policy-making, and public opinion.

4. The Harding Administration: Scandals and Conservatism in the 1920s

A detailed account of President Warren G. Harding's tenure, focusing on the political scandals that defined his administration, including the Teapot Dome scandal. It also discusses Harding's conservative policies and their effects on the nation's economy and governance. The book sheds light on the complexities of leadership during a turbulent political era.

5. Women and Politics in the 1920s: The New Voters and Their Influence

This book explores the political awakening and participation of women following the ratification of the 19th Amendment. It highlights key female political figures, movements, and the changing role of women in shaping policy and public life. The narrative captures the challenges and achievements of women in this pivotal decade.

6. Isolationism and International Relations: America's Political Stance in the 1920s

Examining the United States' foreign policy, this book details the era's strong isolationist tendencies. It covers significant treaties, such as the Washington Naval Conference, and debates surrounding America's role on the world stage. The work provides context for the political decisions that shaped international relations during the decade.

7. The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan: Politics and Racism in the 1920s

This title analyzes the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and its influence on local and national politics. It discusses the Klan's platform, political strategies, and the social climate that allowed its growth. The book also addresses the broader implications for civil rights and political power structures.

8. Labor Movements and Political Struggles in the 1920s

Focusing on labor unrest and union activities, this book explores the political challenges faced by workers during the 1920s. It covers significant strikes, government responses, and the decline of organized labor's influence. The narrative highlights the intersection of economics, politics,

and social change in this era.

9. *The Jazz Age and Political Culture: Social Change and Governance*

This work connects the cultural phenomena of the Jazz Age with the political atmosphere of the 1920s. It examines how shifts in social norms, entertainment, and youth culture influenced political attitudes and policies. The book provides a comprehensive view of how culture and politics intertwined during this vibrant decade.

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politics of the 1920 s: Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany, 1840-1920

Woodruff D. Smith, 1991-06-20 Examining the ways in which politics and ideology stimulate and shape changes in human science, this book focuses on the cultural sciences in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Germany. The book argues that many of the most important theoretical directions in German cultural science had their origins in a process by which a general pattern of social scientific thinking, one that was closely connected to political liberalism and dominant in Germany (and elsewhere) before the mid-nineteenth century, fragmented in the face of the political troubles of German liberalism after that time. Some liberal social scientists who wanted to repair both liberalism and the liberal theoretical pattern, and others who wanted to replace them with something more conservative, turned to the concept of culture as the focus of their intellectual endeavors. Later generations of intellectuals repeated the process, motivated in large part by the experiences of liberalism as a political movement in the German Empire. Within this framework, the book discusses the formation of diffusionism in German anthropology, Friedrich Ratzel's theory of Lebensraum, folk psychology, historical economics, and cultural history. It also relates these developments to German imperialism, the rise of radical nationalism, and the upheaval in German social science at the turn of the century.

politics of the 1920 s: The Politics of Culture in Soviet Azerbaijan, 1920-40

Audrey Altstadt, 2016-06-23 The early Soviet Union's nationalities policy involved the formation of many national republics, within which nation building and modernization were undertaken for the benefit of backward peoples. This book, in considering how such policies were implemented in Azerbaijan, argues that the Soviet policies were in fact a form of imperialism, with nation building and modernization imposed firmly along Soviet lines. The book demonstrates that in Azerbaijan, and more widely among western Turkic peoples, the Volga and Crimean Tatars, there were before the onset of Soviet rule, well developed, forward looking, secular, national movements, which were not at all backward and were different from the Soviets. The book shows how in the period 1920 to 1940 the two different visions competed with each other, with eventually the pre-Soviet vision of Azerbaijani culture losing out, and the Soviet version dominating in a new Soviet Azerbaijani culture. The book examines the details of this Sovietization of culture: in language policy and the change of the alphabet, in education, higher education and in literature. The book concludes by exploring how pre-Soviet Azerbaijani culture survived to a degree underground, and how it was partially rehabilitated after the death of Stalin and more fully in the late Soviet period.

politics of the 1920 s: French Canadians in Massachusetts Politics, 1885-1915 Ronald Arthur Petrin, 1990 Emigrating from Quebec to New England in large numbers after the Civil War, French Canadians became by 1900 the largest non-English-speaking ethnic group in Massachusetts. This study reevaluates the political behavior of French Canadians in Massachusetts from 1885 to 1915 and analyzes the complex relationship between ethnicity and politics.

politics of the 1920 s: Private Politics and Public Voices Nikki Brown, 2006-12-28 This political history of middle-class African American women during World War I focuses on their patriotic activity and social work. Nearly 200,000 African American men joined the Allied forces in France. At home, black clubwomen raised more than \$125 million in wartime donations and assembled comfort kits for black soldiers, with chocolate, cigarettes, socks, a bible, and writing materials. Given the hostile racial climate of the day, why did black women make considerable financial contributions to the American and Allied war effort? Brown argues that black women approached the war from the nexus of the private sphere of home and family and the public sphere of community and labor activism. Their activism supported their communities and was fueled by a personal attachment to black soldiers and black families. *Private Politics and Public Voices* follows their lives after the war, when they carried their debates about race relations into public political activism.

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politics of the 1920 s: *The Women's Joint Congressional Committee and the Politics of Maternalism, 1920-30* Jan Wilson, 2010-10-01 The rise and fall of a feminist reform powerhouse Jan Doolittle Wilson offers the first comprehensive history of the umbrella organization founded by former suffrage leaders in order to coordinate activities around women's reform. Encompassing nearly every major national women's organization of its time, the Women's Joint Congressional Committee (WJCC) evolved into a powerful lobbying force for the legislative agendas of more than twelve million women. Critics and supporters alike came to recognize it as the most powerful lobby in Washington. Examining the WJCC's most consequential and contentious campaigns, Wilson traces how the group's strategies, rhetoric, and success generated congressional and grassroots support for their far-reaching, progressive reforms. But the committee's early achievements sparked a reaction by big business that challenged and ultimately limited the programs these women envisioned. Using the WJCC as a lens, Wilson analyzes women's political culture during the 1920s. She also sheds new light on the initially successful ways women lobbied for social legislation, the limitations of that process for pursuing class-based reforms, and the enormous difficulties the women soon faced in trying to expand public responsibility for social welfare. A volume in the series *Women in American History*, edited by Anne Firor Scott, Susan Armitage, Susan K. Cahn, and Deborah Gray White

politics of the 1920 s: Youth Movements and Generational Politics, 19th-21st Centuries Richard G. Braungart, Margaret M. Braungart, 2023-04-11 *Youth Movements and Generational Politics, 19th-21st Centuries* by Richard and Margaret Braungart is a collection of 19 of their previously published research articles on youthful political activism, generational conflict and social change. After assessing 1960s' student groups on the political left, right and center, generations of youth movement activity are identified in each world region—from the first student movement in Germany in 1815 to the global surge in youth unrest and demonstrations in the 21st century. Representing more than 50 years of research, youth movements and generational politics are explored from historical, generational and global perspectives. As a collection, these articles are theoretically grounded, empirically based, interdisciplinary and comparative. Exploring youth movements at individual, group, societal and international levels, a variety of methodological approaches for studying youth activism are illustrated. In a concluding chapter, the Braungarts update youth movement activity in the 21st century and discuss how their previous decades of

international research informs the global rise in youthful mobilization over politics. The trends and changes in youth unrest and generational politics are assessed now and into the future.

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Michael Kazin, Rebecca Edwards, Adam Rothman, 2011-08-08 An essential guide to U.S. politics, from the founding to today With 150 accessible articles written by more than 130 leading experts, this essential reference provides authoritative introductions to some of the most important and talked-about topics in American history and politics, from the founding to today. Abridged from the acclaimed Princeton Encyclopedia of American Political History, this is the only single-volume encyclopedia that provides comprehensive coverage of both the traditional topics of U.S. political history and the broader forces that shape American politics—including economics, religion, social movements, race, class, and gender. Fully indexed and cross-referenced, each entry provides crucial context, expert analysis, informed perspectives, and suggestions for further reading. Contributors include Dean Baker, Lewis Gould, Alex Keyssar, James Kloppenberg, Patricia Nelson Limerick, Lisa McGirr, Jack Rakove, Nick Salvatore, Stephen Skowronek, Jeremi Suri, Julian Zelizer, and many more. Entries cover: Key political periods, from the founding to today Political institutions, major parties, and founding documents The broader forces that shape U.S. politics, from economics, religion, and social movements to race, class, and gender Ideas, philosophies, and movements The political history and influence of geographic regions

politics of the 1920 s: Upheaval in the Balkans: Venizelos and Politics, 1888-1920

Dimitris Michalopoulos, 2014-09-30 Scientific Study from the year 2014 in the subject History - Miscellaneous, , language: English, abstract: Eleutherios Venizelos (1864-1936) is an emblematic figure in the History of Modern Greece, for he is regarded as the champion of parliamentary democracy and of Greek irredentism - in short, a great statesman. Even the 1922 Greek Catastrophe in Asia Minor is ascribed to his political foes, who, were accordingly executed in November 1922. That is why it is a difficult and dangerous task to sort out the truth from the relevant myth. No amazement is to be expressed by that. In fact, whenever politics and History are intermixed, History suffers at the hands of politics and not politics at the hands of History. Consequently, discovering the truth implies reconsideration of History and perhaps coping with the Future on a basis quite different from the one hitherto. Still, voluntarily or not, this is the very mission of this book.

politics of the 1920 s: Politics, Society, and the Klan in Alabama, 1915-1949

Glenn Feldman, 1999-09-24 This first book-length examination of the Klan in Alabama represents exhaustive research that challenges traditional interpretations. The Ku Klux Klan has wielded considerable power both as a terrorist group and as a political force. Usually viewed as appearing in distinct incarnations, the Klans of the 20th century are now shown by Glenn Feldman to have a greater degree of continuity than has been previously suspected. Victims of Klan terrorism continued to be aliens, foreigners, or outsiders in Alabama: the freed slave during Reconstruction, the 1920s Catholic or Jew, the 1930s labor organizer or Communist, and the returning black veteran of World War II were all considered a threat to the dominant white culture. Feldman offers new insights into this qualified continuity among Klans of different eras, showing that the group remained active during the 1930s and 1940s when it was presumed dormant, with elements of the Reconstruction syndrome carrying over to the smaller Klan of the civil rights era. In addition, Feldman takes a critical look at opposition to Klan activities by southern elites. He particularly shows how opponents during the Great Depression and war years saw the Klan as an impediment to attracting outside capital and federal relief or as a magnet for federal action that would jeopardize traditional forms of racial and social control. Other critics voiced concerns about negative national publicity, and others deplored the violence and terrorism. This in-depth examination of the Klan in a single state, which features rare photographs, provides a means of understanding the order's development throughout the South. Feldman's book represents definitive research into the history of the Klan and makes a major contribution to our understanding of both that organization and the history of Alabama.

politics of the 1920 s: The Global 1920s Richard Carr, Bradley W. Hart, 2016-01-29 The 1920s

is often recognised as a decade of fascism, flappers and film. Covering the political, economic and social developments of the 1920s throughout the world, *The Global 1920s* takes an international and cross-cultural perspective on the critical changes and conditions that prevailed from roughly 1919 to 1930. With twelve chapters on themes including international diplomacy and the imperial powers, film and music, art and literature, women and society, democracy, fascism, and science and technology, this book explores both the 'big' questions of capitalism, class and communism on the one hand and the everyday experience of citizens around the globe on the other. Utilising archival sources throughout, it concludes with an extensive discussion of the circumstances surrounding the 1929 stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression, the effects of which were felt worldwide. Covering topics from the oil boom in South America to the start of civil war in China, employment advances and setbacks for women across the globe, and the advent of radio and air travel, the authors provide a concise yet comprehensive overview of this turbulent decade. Containing illustrations and a selection of discussion questions at the end of each chapter, this book is valuable reading for students of the 1920s in global history.

politics of the 1920 s: *The Private Roots of Public Action* Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba, 2009-07-01 Why, after several generations of suffrage and a revival of the women's movement in the late 1960s, do women continue to be less politically active than men? *The Private Roots of Public Action* is the most comprehensive study of this puzzle of unequal participation.

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politics of the 1920 s: *Understanding Racist Activism* Kathleen M. Blee, 2017-07-20 White supremacist groups are highly secretive, so their public propaganda tells us little about their operations or the people they attract. To understand the world of organized racism it is necessary to study it from the inside by talking to their members and observing their groups. Doing so reveals a disturbing picture of how fairly ordinary white people learn to embrace the vicious ideas and dangerous agendas of white supremacy. This book takes the reader inside organized racism, revealing the kind of women and men who join groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan or neo-Nazi skinheads, and what they do in those groups. The volume collects significant published works from renowned scholar Kathleen M. Blee's work on racist activism, alongside new essays on the theories, methods, and approaches of studying racist activism. Discussing topics such as emotional issues in research, the place of violence and hate in white supremacy, and how women are involved in racial terrorism, Blee makes use of a range of sources, including oral histories, ethnographic observations, and interviews, to shape her findings. Written by the pioneer and leading scholar of women in racist activism, this volume is essential reading for students, scholars, and general readers interested in the areas of social movements, politics, race studies, and American history.

politics of the 1920 s: *Birth Control Politics in the United States, 1916-1945* Carole Ruth McCann, 1994 In a disturbing behind-the-scenes history of the early achievements of Margaret Sanger's American birth control movement, Carole R. McCann scrutinizes the movement's compromises as well as its successes.

politics of the 1920 s: *Violence and Nationalist Politics in Derry City, 1920-1923* Ronan Gallagher, 2003 This book concentrates on three critical years in the development of Derry, when the corporation was controlled by a nationalist Sinn Féin majority. In January 1920 the city elected its first nationalist mayor and corporation since the 1600s. The book recounts the life of this corporation and the subsequent violence and destruction, as the city sought to define its position within the national struggle for independence. Particular attention is paid to 1920 when, for a brief

moment, the city came to the brink of civil war. The book also examines the day-to-day operation of the corporation (particularly the ambitious Banagher water scheme) as well as the circumstances the corporation found itself in nationally, when Sinn Fein accepted a truce with the British in 1921.--BOOK JACKET.Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

politics of the 1920 s: Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India William Gould, 2004-04-15 In this book William Gould explores what is arguably one of the most important and controversial themes in twentieth-century Indian history and politics: the nature of Hindu nationalism as an ideology and political language. Rather than concentrating on the main institutions of the Hindu Right in India as other studies have done, the author uses a variety of historical sources to analyse how Hindu nationalism affected the supposedly secularist Congress in the key state of Uttar Pradesh. In this way, the author offers an alternative assessment of how these languages and ideologies transformed the relationship between Congress and north Indian Muslims. The book makes a major contribution to historical analyses of the critical last two decades before Partition and Independence in 1947, which will be of value to scholars interested in historical and contemporary Hindu nationalism, and to students researching the final stages of colonial power in India.

politics of the 1920 s: *Postwar Politics in Japan, 1945-1955* Junnosuke Masumi, 1985

politics of the 1920 s: *The Special Prosecutor in American Politics* Katy Jean Harriger, 2000 The federal special prosecutor: unprincipled abuser of power or staunch defender of the law? As Katy Harriger shows, the special prosecutor was a hotly debated and controversial subject throughout much of its existence. This was especially true, she argues, during the lengthy, expensive, and highly-politicized investigations of Lawrence Walsh and Kenneth Starr into allegations concerning Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. Harriger offers the most complete assessment available of the use of special prosecutors in the post-Watergate era. She analyzes the independent counsel's role within the framework of the separation of powers, explaining how each has interacted with other key players in the political and legal system and showing how those relationships have affected the prosecutor's ability to conduct investigations. Harriger's previous edition focused on the legacy of Watergate but was published before Walsh's Iran-Contra investigations were concluded. Her new study adds substantially more information on Iran-Contra, provides a clearheaded appraisal of Starr's sensationalized Whitewater-Lewinsky investigations, examines a number of senior-level cabinet probes, and critiques and clarifies the role of Attorney General Janet Reno in these latter matters. A completely new chapter compares Iran-Contra and Whitewater-Lewinsky to explore the limits of the law in the special prosecutor's efforts. In this new edition, Harriger includes 20 new interviews with Washington insiders--including one with Kenneth Starr--and covers the debates that led to both the reauthorization of the independent counsel statute in 1994 and its demise in 1999. She then examines the pros and cons of the office and offers constructive suggestions for improvement should it be revived. For students, scholars, and concerned citizens, her book takes us well beyond frenzied media hype and partisan politics to provide a timely reminder about the crucial role of separation of powers in our system of governance.

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