

# Michigan Law Review

---

Volume 53 | Issue 7

---

1955

## Halle: Civilization and Foreign Policy

James W. Beatty S.Ed.  
*University of Michigan Law School*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mlr>



Part of the [Comparative and Foreign Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Society Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

James W. Beatty S.Ed., *Halle: Civilization and Foreign Policy*, 53 MICH. L. REV. 1026 (1955).  
Available at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mlr/vol53/iss7/24>

This Book Reviews is brought to you for free and open access by the Michigan Law Review at University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Michigan Law Review by an authorized editor of University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [mlaw.repository@umich.edu](mailto:mlaw.repository@umich.edu).

CIVILIZATION AND FOREIGN POLICY. By *Louis J. Halle*. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1955. Pp. xxviii, 277. \$3.75.

THE AMERICAN TRADITION IN FOREIGN POLICY. By *Frank Tannebaum*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1955. Pp. xiv, 178. \$3.50.

While in the age in which we live theoreticians are sometimes considered mere vestiges of long past and more leisurely years, and while today we seem more and more willing to leave the solution of our problems to "practical men," in many instances there is still a need of general principles, guides by which men and nations may conduct themselves. In *Civilization and Foreign Policy* and *The American Tradition in Foreign Policy* such principles and their necessity in the area of international relations are ably expounded respectively by Mr. Halle and Mr. Tannenbaum.

*Civilization and Foreign Policy* is probably better described as enlightening than as informative. It is not filled with statistics on national resources, estimates of comparative military strength, etc., but the reader is provided with the basis for a greater insight into international affairs, mainly through the author's perception of the forces which shape national policies. The approach is partly historical, but only for the purpose of analogy. For the most part the conclusions drawn are based on the natural reactions of men and nations to the activities of others. Such nebulous matters as the source of power (basically defined as the ability to get one's own way whether by threat or use of physical force or by consent) and its effects in their international significance are presented with insight and clarity.

From his analysis Mr. Halle draws no simple solution to the anxieties and tensions which have gripped the world for most of the twentieth century. He only suggests a theory or underlying principle with which we can meet the problems which "will continue to remain with us, although undergoing those constant, slow churning transformations that characterize the general movement of history." He points out with great persuasiveness the fallacies inherent in a United States policy of complete isolation or complete dominion and suggests as a broad theoretical conclusion that whatever we do must be consistent with our national dedication to human freedom and dignity. Within the broad outline Mr. Halle suggests that our survival as a nation is dependent upon our ability to cooperate with other nations on the basis of consent and free choice to present a united opposition to those who would destroy those ideals to which we are dedicated. While the avowed purpose of this book is to present a theory of foreign policy, the author has not ignored the fact that to insure its application, the United States and its allies must remain militarily strong and that this may entail material sacrifices on the part of all of us for years to come.

While the approach in *The American Tradition in Foreign Policy* is somewhat different, it also is designed to illustrate the basic principles of American foreign policy. Its primary objective is to extol the worthwhile qualities of the theory of the "co-ordinate state," and in doing this it is expressly Mr. Tannenbaum's purpose to rebut the theory of "power politics" and "balance of power" espoused by such notable advocates as George F. Kennan.

Briefly, the idea of the "co-ordinate state" is one of *equality*—a position of equal dignity for all nations in international relations without regard to "wealth, power, size, population, or culture." This book has two major themes which are designed to point out the desirability of a foreign policy based on an abiding belief in the "co-ordinate state." The first is that the continued existence of any organization, coalition, federation, union, etc. depends on the adoption of the theory. The other is that the philosophy of the "co-ordinate state" is not only responsible for the successes which the United States has had in world affairs (and its temporary abandonment for the failures), but it is so ingrained in us as a nation and as a people that the alternative philosophy of *realpolitik* is not even feasible.

Briefly but persuasively, the author points out that involuntary unions such as Hitler's German Empire, which were based on imperialism and power politics, generally lacked the stability necessary to survive. Mr. Tannenbaum also presents a picture of the "co-ordinate state" in action, as it has been used both in the formulation of the United States and by the United States in its relationships with other nations. He explains how it was necessary for the theory to be adopted by way of an equal vote in the Senate before the smaller original states would agree to our present union, and how the policy of admitting other states with equal rights has been a continued recognition of this basic concept.

The major portion of the book, however, is devoted to a historical, though not heavily documented, look at the foreign policy of the United States. From Mr. Tannenbaum's point of view the picture is one of fairly consistent applica-

tion of a belief in sovereign equality, consistent in that it motivated such major policies as the Monroe Doctrine, the Open Door and Good Neighbor policies, and Wilson's Fourteen Points. The author suggests with great force that because of this country's almost venerable "dedication to equality" the adoption of the science of realpolitik would be a repudiation of our heritage. It would, in short, be an abandonment of "the faith we have lived by."

While the viewpoint of Mr. Kennan and other "realists" is based on the proposition that the world position of the United States has been so transformed in the last fifty years that the policies and philosophies of yesteryear are now obsolete and ineffective, it is also their position that the alternative which they suggest, a balance of power or division of the world into spheres of influence, is inevitable and that this is so because history indicates that such development has constantly occurred. Thus, the controversy is reduced to one of interpretation of history. And even though Mr. Kennan's view draws support from European history, it draws none and is in fact contradicted by our own experience. This is the crux of Mr. Tannenbaum's argument, that a policy which is followed by the United States must be consistent with our own development and that we have developed as a nation irrevocably committed to the concept of the "co-ordinate state."

These two books, since they deal with the theories and fundamental principles of foreign affairs, are of necessity partly historical. Mr. Halle has made admirable use of simple analogies and commonly known historical illustrations so as to render his book both interesting and illuminating. The thoughts, though well expressed, are profound and must be carefully considered, by one not familiar with the theoretical aspects of foreign policy, if their full significance is to be appreciated. Mr. Tannenbaum, although dealing also with the theories of foreign policy, deals far less with abstractions. His work has been made more concrete by documentation. For this reason it should be even more helpful to the neophyte in the study of the problems of foreign affairs. Although not intentionally, to a certain extent this book supplements Mr. Halle's. The latter, largely through reasoning and solution of hypothetical problems, concludes that the United States *must* follow a policy which is consistent with our national heritage. Mr. Tannenbaum fully agrees and points out in some detail just what our national heritage is.

Because of the opportunities of lawyers, both as individuals and as a profession, to shape public opinion and because of their high degree of participation in governmental activities, a fundamental insight into the underlying principles of international relations is most desirable. The knowledge gained from these two books will aid in developing such insight into the significance of the day-to-day international occurrences which constantly come to the attention of the public through the various news media. Both books are worth reading for the person who desires such fundamental knowledge of the most important problems which face our nation and our world today.