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Wörterbuch für Recht, Wirtschaft und Politik mit erläuternden und rechtsvergleichenden Kommentaren

Teil I Englisch-Deutsch, 3. völlig neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage, München: C. H. Beck/New York: Matthew Bender & Company, Inc., 1985, pp lxxii, 985, DM 285,—

The dissimilarities between the Continental and Common Law systems have always made translation of legal texts from German into English, and vice versa, a particularly demanding task. It is therefore much to be welcomed that an updated new edition of this dictionary has now been produced, by collaboration of lawyers from Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Frequent lack of conceptual congruence between the relevant terminologies in particular makes word-for-word equivalents often impossible to achieve, and the succinct explanations provided with many entries will surely enhance the understanding on the part of the user as will the numerous footnotes appended to the dictionary proper, where legislation in which entries occur can be identified, together with additional explanatory matter. The plethora of acronyms in modern legal, economic and political jargon will be made less confusing by the extensive list of English-language abbreviations (However, if ›NUM‹ and ›N.U.R.‹, why not ›NUPE‹?).

Occasional imprecisions and omissions are inevitable in a work of this size. This writer noticed some in the field of government procurement: ›Contract‹ (p 162) is not the same as ›Submission‹ or ›Ausschreibung‹, ›Auftragsvergebung‹ (ibid) is now dated usage, and ›to let‹ has not been included in the sense of ›awarding‹ a contract.

More importantly, and perhaps due to extending coverage to ›political terms‹, a vast amount of generic and commonly used vocabulary has been included, thus considerably swelling the format of the book. A user able to deal with technical material is unlikely to require a special dictionary to ascertain the meaning of English names of countries and nationalities (yet, they're all there – from ›Afghan/Afghanistan‹ to ›Zambia/Zambian‹) or of, eg. ›decide‹/›entscheiden‹, ›liberalism‹/›Liberalismus‹, ›success‹/›Erfolg‹ etc. Perhaps trimming the body of entries down to the genuinely technical or out-of-the-way expressions would have enabled the publisher to offer a reference book equally helpful to the user but less dauntingly priced than the latest edition of this admirable work.

Wolfgang Kessler