

proach to the subject. The author should have analyzed Democratic voting patterns in Congress more rigorously; he makes perceptive comments on particular pieces of legislation but attempts no overall interpretation. Despite some passing remarks in the first chapter on constituency, Gambill neglects not only the rank and file but the relationship of national issues to state and local ones. Might the Democrats, for example, have more effectively exploited the ethnic and cultural divisions of the era? Although this book contains much new information, there is still need for a solid, interpretative history of the northern Democrats during Reconstruction.

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Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922. By David Alan Corbin. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981. Pp. xix, 294. Notes, illustrations, bibliographical essay, selected bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$24.95; paperbound, \$12.50.)

For years American labor history was the preserve of institutional historians. The focus was on the rise of trade unions and their presumed role in dominating the goals and consciousness of American workers, developments which were hailed as another variant of the theme of progress in American history. The last decade, however, has produced a revolution in historical scholarship on American labor. Historians have demonstrated that American workers have been more than narrowly focused toilers who followed the dictates of their union leaders and simply sought wage increases and job security. The most important insight emerging from the broader view of the American worker has been the social and cultural context in which workers shaped their thought and protest. Studies have shown them attempting to achieve social justice and equality, control of the work place, and even family stability.

David Alan Corbin's excellent study of southern West Virginia miners and their widespread protest in the years after 1880 provides another dimension to the expanding definition of working-class culture in America. Corbin's miners marched on government officials and fought protracted battles with state police not just as a response to simple economic problems but ultimately because they tired of the confinement of their company towns and felt that in America people should be treated

with more dignity. These miners were not rampaging radicals or social revolutionaries but advocates of human versus purely economic values. They espoused what Corbin labels "Americanism," a call for "liberty, equality, and dignity" to all people and freedom from the "absolutism of the coal companies" (p. 241). Corbin's miners, in other words, were culture-bearing individuals shaped by long traditions of justice and the harsh realities of the company town as well as economic hardship.

Corbin is particularly penetrating when he analyzes the role of religion in mining enclaves. He rightly notes the strong religious tradition that all men, whether they were southern whites, blacks, or European immigrants, brought to the mining camps. He also deftly points out that miners soon recognized that company-controlled churches could not satisfy their spiritual needs, especially when most preachers admonished men against joining unions. In West Virginia the workers' solution was to transfer their religious fervor and economic discontent to the one institution which gave them an outlet—the United Mine Workers of America.

This is certainly the stuff of provocative and insightful history. Corbin's account contributes mightily to the dawning realization that culture and class were far from mutually exclusive in industrial America.

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Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920. By Mari Jo Buhle. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981. Pp. xix, 344. Notes, illustrations, index. \$21.95.)

In *Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920*, Mari Jo Buhle traces the history of the American socialist women's movement from its German-American origins in the 1870s to its collapse during the World War and Red Scare. This comprehensive and meticulously researched treatment will become the definitive work on the subject.

The history of the socialist women's movement as recounted by Buhle is the story of the recurrent tension between class consciousness and gender consciousness. These themes emerge through the "interplay of two parallel traditions, immigrant and native-born, with wholly different modes of organization and world views" (p. xiii). German-American women, part of a tradition that glorified women's place in the home and subordinated the women's question to the class struggle, made the women's auxiliary their distinctive contribution to the un-