

valuable; as an account of how ordinary people rushed and staggered and slipped into the future, it is wonderful.

One could wish for more pictures, for more leisurely analysis of precisely how the object under consideration sheds new light on current debates about the period, but the fault lies with the compact format of the series (on *Everyday Life in America*) of which the present book is the fourth volume. The reader can only hope that Schlereth will return to his subject soon, on a broader canvas.

KARAL ANN MARLING teaches American culture and popular culture at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Among her recent books are *Blue Ribbon: A Social and Pictorial History of the Minnesota State Fair* (1990) and (with John Wetenhall) *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero* (1991).

A New Deal for the American People. By Roger Biles. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991. Pp. 274. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. Clothbound, \$28.50; paperbound, \$12.00.)

New Deal scholarship has undergone an interesting change since the 1960s when the New Left indicted it for failing, as Barton J. Bernstein put it, "to transform American society." Recent scholarship has taken a more realistic turn, and younger scholars, who have produced several fine monographs in recent years, have tended to be far less critical. Unlike the New Left revisionists they are evaluating the New Deal in the framework of an extremely conservative American society that would not have tolerated radical change. As Roger Biles notes in his introduction, there is now "an emerging consensus regarding the limitations of New Deal reform and an understanding of the realities of politics and the resistance to change in local and state politics" (p. 3). *A New Deal for the American People* "mirrors that consensus" (p. 3). The author breaks no new ground in this well-written account of the successes, failures, and limitations of the New Deal. Instead, making use of a prodigious command of secondary sources, he provides a well-written, scholarly overview of the new scholarship.

Biles's chapter on the relief program is particularly illustrative of the innate conservatism of the American people and their political system. It is easy to condemn the New Deal for doing too little, but many of the states were unwilling to do anything. At the height of the depression six states refused to cooperate with the federal relief program, and Harry Hopkins was forced to federalize their operations. In 1937 nine states, including Indiana, "contributed nothing for relief but paid some administrative costs" (p. 112). With millions out of work in 1935 polls indicated that 60 percent of the American people thought relief spending was too high. One of the most important legacies of the New Deal was the formation of relief agencies by state and local governments. These agencies,

imperfect as they were and are, are now a vital part of the safety net for the poor and the unemployed.

Biles agrees with the New Left revisionists that the New Deal was neither radical nor revolutionary: "The New Deals' great achievement was the application of just enough change to preserve the American political economy" (p. 230). He is more willing, however, to give it credit for what it actually accomplished; namely, that it "provided sustenance for millions of people and hope for many more" (p. 226).

CHARLES J. TULL is professor of history, Indiana University, South Bend. He is currently writing a history of the United States Shipping Board in World War I.

Trapped By Success: The Eisenhower Administration and Vietnam, 1953–1961. By David L. Anderson. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991. Pp. xv, 276. Notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00.)

The Vietnam Wars, 1945–1990. By Marilyn B. Young. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991. Pp. xiii, 386. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.00.)

Since the end of the Vietnam War scholars have produced hundreds of books about that conflict; David L. Anderson and Marilyn B. Young have now added two more fine books to the library.

Anderson aims to examine the role of the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration in the origins of what became a massive American war in the 1960s. The topic has been covered before, especially two of the most important events of 1954—the French defeat at Dienbienphu and the subsequent Geneva Conference that ended French involvement, divided Vietnam into two nations, and invited the United States to increase its involvement in the new nation of South Vietnam. Anderson's study carefully covers those events and then moves beyond to detail the last half of the 1950s. The author benefited from the opening in 1987 of State Department documents concerning the second Eisenhower administration.

Anderson challenges previous commentators who have stated that the Eisenhower administration was prudent in foreign affairs and instead finds those officials a rather unsophisticated group whose views on world events were shaped by the conflict with the Soviet Union, or a "simple we-they equation" (p. 22). The administration's policy in southeast Asia discounted issues important to local inhabitants—nationalism and the desire for social and economic justice—and concentrated on stopping communism. United States officials disliked Ho Chi Minh, the French, and South Vietnam's premier, Ngo Dinh Diem, but in each case they were unable to find alternatives or create a realistic policy in Vietnam. The