

What sort of social and political thinker was Beard? He was certainly a complex thinker and one hard to classify. His greatest influence on historical thinking has probably not been either his relativism or his revisionism but his basic interpretation of American history—partly modified toward the end of his life—as a struggle between business and Populism, industrialism and agrarianism; thus he created an oversimplified bipolarization of American politics and society which the textbooks have not yet completely discarded. This influence has been far greater than any of his social or political thinking. Charles A. Beard was a scholar who was also a reformer and moralist with an almost romantic belief in democracy—a man whose reformism and moralism colored his history. He tried nobly but ultimately failed to construct a viable social and political philosophy for a difficult and dangerous age.

DePauw University

Clifton J. Phillips

Eugene V. Debs: Socialist for President. By H. Wayne Morgan. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1962. Pp. x, 257. Illustrations, bibliographical essay, notes, index. \$5.75.)

The organizational structure of a political biography does not allow an author much opportunity to use his imagination. So it is not surprising that the study of Eugene V. Debs by H. Wayne Morgan settles into the familiar grooves. The early career of Debs receives scant attention; his character and personal life are explored only at points where they illuminate his political behavior; and the biography comes to a focus on his five campaigns for the presidency. The author provides a wealth of detail on the successive efforts of Debs to reach the White House and has made the most of the available source material to document the narrative. Although the search for the breezy transitional phrase sometimes involves the author in questionable generalizations such as "Presidential campaigns are by definition exciting" (p. 47), style is one of the strong points of the book.

The biography nevertheless betrays a certain lack of depth which is not wholly the fault of Morgan. Debs appears to have been a rather commonplace crusader with little to recommend him except a sentimental attachment to the common man and an engaging platform manner. One gets the feeling that if he had been born farther west, he would have served a term as a Populist senator and never have been heard of again. Without intending to detract from the stature of Debs, the author points out repeatedly that Debs had no interest in Socialist theory and resisted involvement in doctrinal quarrels and organizational problems. Unfortunately, the author is not much more concerned about such matters than Debs, so he compresses the narrative into an account of five presidential campaigns that turn out to be depressingly similar. There are the same transcontinental tours, the same enthusiastic crowds, the same struggles of faithful Socialists to raise money. If anything varied between 1900 and 1912, including the issues, Morgan has kept it a dark secret. Only the 1920 campaign, which Debs waged from the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, constitutes a break in the pattern. Even within this discouraging framework, the author might have dealt

with some points that he ignores. One wonders, for example, why Debs attracted such huge audiences and so few votes. Perhaps he was a curiosity like a circus performer, or perhaps voters otherwise attracted shied away from identification with the Socialist label.

Whatever the answer, it raises the larger problem of why both Debs and the Socialist party failed. The author deals with these issues only tangentially. He distinguishes between conservatives and radicals in the Socialist movement but nowhere makes a systematic analysis of the doctrinal and tactical disagreements behind their split. The omission seems to reflect the view that the reader will already know about the shadings within the Marxist spectrum and take the initiative in relating personal quarrels to doctrinal positions. Even if the optimism of the author about his readers is justified, this study of Debs would benefit by more attention to Socialist platforms and the strategy behind them. A few words about the structure of the Socialist party would also strengthen the presentation. No doubt readers can draw some inferences from scattered assertions that Socialists charged admission to their rallies. They can probably guess from cryptic statements about membership that the party was committed to the idea of a dues-paying rank and file. These characteristics of Marxist parties, as well as others that might be mentioned, have a bearing on the reaction of the American voter to Debs.

The treatment of the Socialist party is still more telegraphic and murky when the author examines its relation to other aspects of the labor movement. He may be correct when he asserts that "many AFL members were socialists or sympathizers" (p. 60), but this kind of generalization is novel enough to warrant more extensive defense either in the text or footnotes. The uneasy relationship between the I.W.W. and the Socialists could also be amplified profitably as well as the factional tangles which followed in the wake of World War I and the Russian Revolution.

Finally, a mild expression of dissent must be made to the prevailing tendency to write about parties and their candidates as if neither existed except for the six months preceding a presidential election. Ordinarily the campaign is the climax of developments that have jelled during the long interval when voter interest lags. To overlook the continuity of party activity is to miss important factors that contribute to election strategy. These shortcomings should not discourage anyone from reading Morgan's biography of Debs, but it is a pity when a researcher does not share his accumulated insights more fully with his readers.

Purdue University

George H. Mayer

La Vie Agricole et Rurale dans l'État d'Indiana à l'Époque Pionnière.
By Geneviève d'Haucourt. Sorbonne, École Pratique des Hautes Études. *Le Monde d'Outre-mer Passé et Présent*, Première Série, Études, XII. (Paris: Mouton & Company, 1961. Pp. 410. Bibliography, maps, graphs, illustrations. Paperbound, 45 NF.)

Miss d'Haucourt's book is the twelfth of the *Études* sponsored by the École Pratique des Hautes Études of the Sorbonne. Besides the *Études*, three other series have also been issued by this institution under