

William Jennings Bryan: A Profile. Edited by Paul W. Glad. *American Profiles.* Edited by Aida DiPace Donald. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968. Pp. xxi, 251. Notes, bibliographical note. \$5.95.)

Plagued by assassinations and civil unrest and beset by the great, seemingly irreconcilable issues of racism, war, foreign intervention, and imperialism, 1968 was a year of trial for the American nation. Perhaps this is why William Jennings Bryan no longer seems to present the same archaic and irrelevant figure of a decade or two ago. His voice once commanded the allegiance of multitudes when he spoke out on issues as sensitive and turbulent as those which scar the political landscape today. For the generation of writers who pandered to Wilsonian idealism he was a figure of fun to be derided and abused. So it is probably no accident that the 1960s have been a bumper decade for Bryan studies. Paolo Colleta, Paul Glad, Norman Pollack, Stanley Jones, Lawrence Levine, and Ray Ginger, among others, have written books which, if not always unstinting in their praise of the Commoner, indicate a new willingness, shared by few earlier writers, to take him seriously. In the post-Wilsonian world of Lyndon Johnson it has become increasingly apparent that many of those windmills against which historians once set Bryan ajousting were really dragons after all.

This little volume is an excellent way for the student and general reader to get at both Bryans: the one who evokes contempt and the one who commands respect (or at least attention). It is a cross section of some of the best historical writing on Bryan, covering every important phase of his public career. One of the chief advantages in having so many varying points of view brought together is the complexity that is revealed behind the facade of simple pieties in Bryan's rhetoric. In the past this simplicity has reduced more than one sophisticate to helplessness before he ever began to write and left him nothing in which to dip his pen but vitriol disguised as irony.

Even the specialist will find useful the contrasts revealed by the juxtaposition of differing viewpoints. Indeed, the effect is sometimes startling. Richard Hofstadter's famous essay from *The American Political Tradition*, once considered so brilliant and innovative, now seems curiously barren. Glad excluded writers like Paxton Hibben and H. L. Mencken because they treated Bryan as an object of ridicule. Yet in some respects the Hofstadter essay seems like an updated version of Hibben and Mencken. Hofstadter portrayed Bryan as an imbecilic and vulgar figure unable "to hold steadily to a line of principle"; the irony plays around his head like subdued heat lightning. If the reader searches for some sympathetic understanding of the voice which once moved masses of men, he will find it only in Hofstadter's implied view that the masses themselves were imbecilic and vulgar.

The book has no index, which is a crime against civilized discourse, but one often perpetrated by editors of anthologies. Also, a reviewer might quarrel with some of the selections. For instance, the John T. Scopes' reminiscence reprinted from the *Reader's Digest* is too frothy to serve with such solid

scholarly fare. But Glad has put together a volume which is exactly what it claims to be: a profile both of Bryan and of the enduring ambiguity of his relationship with historians.

Loyola University, Chicago

James Penick, Jr.

Congressional Insurgents and the Party System, 1909-1916. By James Holt. *Harvard Historical Monographs*, LX. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967. Pp. viii, 188. Notes, bibliography, index. \$5.50.)

Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914. By Allen F. Davis. *Urban Life in America* Series. Edited by Richard C. Wade. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. Pp. xviii, 322. Note on sources, notes, index. \$7.50.)

James Holt's book is an inconclusive survey of the difficulties of the Republican insurgents at the beginning of this century. The author attempts to explain the political independence of such figures as Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, George Norris of Nebraska, and Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana. His view of party cohesiveness and discipline, which may well come from his own New Zealand origins, leads Holt to conclude, in one case, that "La Follette must surely rank as one of the greatest fragmenters of the epoch" (p. 150) without allowing him to see the continuous process of "fragmentation" and re-formation of coalitions that the insurgents helped reinforce in the American party system.

A scattering of very interesting insights makes the book valuable as, for instance, the recognition that most of the insurgents came from one party, "safe," Republican states, which helps explain their Republicanism, their initial party regularity, and their growing frustration with parties as their own desires for reform and their personal ambitions increased. But as a "study of the insurgents' role in the party system" (p. viii) the book is limited by Holt's almost exclusive concern with the insurgents' inability to control a party organization or a party program. The book argues that, failing to control, the insurgents were forced into party regularity, political individualism without influence on parties, or fruitless political fragmentation. It ignores insurgent influence on party leaders, the fluidity the insurgents introduced into the constituent coalitions of the parties, and the effects of the reactions of party leaders to insurgent independence.

Allen Davis' *Spearheads for Reform*, an effort to assess "the impact of settlement workers on the reform movements of the progressive era" (p. xi), is a much more successful book. Davis begins by persuasively chiding some eminent historians of the progressive era for oversimplifying the motives of reformers. He concentrates his own efforts on small groups and individuals, making the complexity of their actions and motives amply clear. He makes a subtle comparison of turn-of-the-century reformers and present young reformers which helps the reader catch something of the enthusiasm of the