

This is not strictly true for what develops from the book concerning the subject is already well known and documented. Quarles also fails to indicate whether there has been any black criticism of Brown.

Nevertheless, while the book presents only one view of its subject, anyone wishing to make a balanced assessment of Brown's place in history will have to consult this volume. It is a valuable supplement to the revival of interest in Brown which has been underway since Stephen B. Oates' *To Purge This Land With Blood* in 1970. Little attention has been paid to what blacks thought of Brown. It should be clear from the range of black opinion offered here that whatever white America chose to think of Brown, black America knew he was no madman, but a brother, a symbol of what white America should have been.

*University of Arizona, Tucson*

Lee Scott Theisen

*Labor and Socialism in America: The Gompers Era.* By William M. Dick. National University Publication Series in American Studies. Edited by James P. Shenton. (Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, 1972. Pp. 211. Notes, bibliography, index. \$10.95.)

The author of this book is presumably a Briton, with academic connections to the Universities of Edinburgh, Oregon, and Toronto; he now teaches at Scarborough College in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. It was his purpose to determine whether the "cliché" that the American trade union movement was "a reflection of the dominant middle class psyche of the nation" actually characterized the "era of Samuel Gompers" (p. 183). In his examination he has used the outline of the history of the American Federation of Labor between 1886 and 1924 as it revolved around Gompers and which has been provided American historians by John R. Commons, Selig Perlman, Philip Taft, and their associates and students. Within this outline Dick has sought to find the influence of socialism—of whatever persuasion—upon the AFL and particularly upon Gompers. He has also made some comparisons with British trade union experiences.

Not surprisingly, since Gompers himself boasted of it, Dick has found that Gompers had a highly sophisticated

knowledge of socialism and of its importance and methodology in western nations. But the author also suggests strongly and develops the idea cogently that the AFL and organized labor, as reflected in the public statements of Gompers, of other leaders, and of the labor press, did not reveal the "business union" mentality nor the "pressure group" unionism of the present day. Instead, these statements reveal that organized labor constituted a class movement with broad social aims—which the author appears to equate with socialism. They also indicate an appreciation of the value of "revisionist socialism"—a European term which Americans might translate freely into "political party action to secure legislation," a type of action of which the AFL disapproved.

All this makes an interesting intellectual exercise for students of American labor history and of the Progressive era. At the same time this reviewer is not convinced by the author's reasoning. Terms such as "class movements" and "broad social aims" have been a part of the American political—and labor—dialect since the Workingmen's Platform was developed in the 1820s; their use reveals no sympathy with socialism. Moreover, nothing in Gompers' utterances concerning class movements and broad social aims reveals sympathy for socialism. Gompers was a labor politician with all the chameleon qualities of most politicians. His statements were made to fit his audiences and ranged from sympathy for mass movements to sympathy for corporation executives. Favorable responses to Gompers' statements from a few socialist leaders were also political; they were intended to keep relations with the AFL and workingmen on a friendly basis. Gompers cannot be measured properly by his statements; he must be measured by his deeds.

*Temple University, Philadelphia*

Joseph G. Rayback

*Business in American Life: A History.* By Thomas C. Cochran. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972. Pp. x, 402. Notes, bibliographical guide, index. \$12.50.)

In this path breaking volume Thomas Cochran set himself a gigantic task. In his provocative introduction he notes that general histories of the United States have traditionally