

numbers of consumer conscious progressives had not made precisely the same indictment at the time. Can one safely assume that only one group of actors created the legacy of an entire period in which debates were often fierce?

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*Failure of a Dream? Essays in the History of American Socialism.* Edited by John H. M. Laslett and Seymour Martin Lipset. (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974. Pp. xiii, 754. Notes, index. Cloth-bound, \$12.95; paperbound, \$5.95.)

During the last decade there has been a revival of interest in the history of American socialism. Motivated in part by their own involvement in the social conflict of recent years, younger historians have questioned the basic assumptions of earlier interpretations. In 1952 Daniel Bell found in socialism a chiliastic movement ill suited for the politics of a modern industrial society, while in 1967 James Weinstein discovered a Marxian political party viable within the American tradition. *Failure of a Dream?* reproduces some of the major writings of this debate and furthers discussion with the inclusion of new material. Each major essay in the collection is accompanied by a critical comment by another scholar, which in turn is followed by a reply from the first author. Thus the book has a verve and vitality unusual in collected essays, as intellectual opponents such as John Laslett and Phillip Foner, Steven Thernstrom and Seymour Martin Lipset confront each other directly.

The essays are grouped around two major themes, which are initially explored in an introductory exchange between the editors. The first account points to various internal weaknesses in the movement itself—in ideology, leadership, and tactics—and examines how in the specific historical context of pre-World War I America these factors contributed to socialism's failure. The second approach explores the idea that the American movement would have remained weak regardless of the strategy of the party, for American culture itself usurped the millennial promise of socialism.

*Failure of a Dream?* is a valuable collection for both the general reader and the serious student and is especially use-

ful for the classroom. Its discussion of American culture and values and its more specific examination of the questions of social mobility, trade unionism, and agrarianism contribute to a better understanding of socialism and American social history in general.

In viewing the collection as a whole, however, one is startled by the omission of any discussion of religion beyond Marc Karson's sterile treatment of Catholic antisocialism or Bell's dismissal of the movement as too religious. Since little is available in published form, this is not simply an oversight of the editors; yet, American culture has been deeply influenced by religious thinking, and the period of socialism's promise and greatest strength coincided almost exactly with a major religious revival. The spiritual crisis that accompanied industrialization evoked, as Timothy L. Smith has suggested, a public commitment to christian values greater than at any time between the Civil War and World War II. These feelings influenced the socialist movement and were one important source of its opposition to emerging corporate society. That Eugene Debs had a portrait of Christ, and not Marx, in his prison cell at Atlanta was not simply a personal peculiarity but was representative of many in the party. Further study of the relationship between a self defined Marxist movement and religious thought is needed and would perhaps provide additional clarity for many of the debates in this collection.

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*A History of Iowa.* By Leland L. Sage. (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1974. Pp. xii, 376. Maps, figures, tables, illustrations, notes, index. \$9.95.)

Iowans have been less successful in developing a comprehensive historical literature dealing with their state than have some of their midwestern neighbors. Opinions differ as to whether this is attributable to the division of resources between two official historical agencies, the natural perversity of the Hawkeye, so lovingly delineated by Meredith Wilson, or still other reasons. But it is a fact that eras in which outstanding progress has been made in collecting manuscripts, developing library resources, and encouraging the