

Progressivism in America: A Study of the Era from Theodore Roosevelt to Woodrow Wilson. By Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr. (New York: New Viewpoints, 1974. Pp. x, 308. Bibliographical essay, index. \$10.00.)

In this volume the author, Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., describes in broad strokes the first major reform movement in twentieth century America. He concentrates not only on its political aspects but also on its intellectual foundations. In his most striking interpretation he finds important parallels between the concepts of progressivism in the United States and state democracy or socialism in Europe. Too often, he argues, historians of the Progressive Period, in the belief that the American experience was isolated and unique, have neglected similar strains of ideology that existed across the Atlantic. But Ekirch finds many liberal antecedents in a Bismarkian Germany that stressed collectivism, statism, nationalism, and centralized power. The author describes the growing belief in America that solutions could be found by the organized, purposeful state. Instead of a drift in American society there grew the idea that a mastery of forces could be achieved. Under the strong leadership of Theodore Roosevelt, America became an organized nation that cast its gaze not only on internal conquests but on those overseas. (Ekirch correctly points out the important role of Elihu Root in the latter.) While TR escapes serious criticism in the growth of progressivism, the prophet armed, Woodrow Wilson, does not. Ekirch finds Wilson's policies "hopelessly out of date" (p. 269) by the time of the Paris Peace Conference as the First World War played a most crucial role in the development of a nationalistic progressivism that passed Wilson by.

This is a most perplexing book. One's first reaction is that little is presented that is new and original. It is based largely, if not wholly, on secondary sources (there are no footnotes) and appears to have been designed more as a textbook survey than as a monograph. Nor is the writing as strong and as clear as in Ekirch's previous books; this is especially true of his conclusion. Despite these points, however, the book has merit. Its strength lies in its incorporation of much of the recent literature and its periodic flashes of insight into the progressive mind. The tying together of

domestic progressivism and overseas imperialism is very well done, as is the description of Wilson. The volume is a solid and competent, but unexciting, introduction to the era of progressivism.

University of Tulsa, Tulsa

Thomas Buckley

The United States, 1929-1945: Years of Crisis and Change.

By Richard S. Kirkendall. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974. Pp. x, 308. Illustrations, suggestions for additional reading, index. Clothbound, \$8.95; paperbound, \$4.95.)

This book is one volume of a series which is designed to cover the entire history of the United States, and it is a significant contribution to the historiography of the period from 1929 to 1945. Packed with descriptive action, Professor Kirkendall's book deals with two crises in the nation's life—the major depression and World War II. The stock market crash, October, 1929, ushered in a depression. At late as 1932, however, Herbert Hoover urged a balanced budget to be wrought, he said, by less aid to the poor and to the unemployed, by tight money, and by more taxes.

To the author the most obvious feature of the New Deal was an increase of the federal government's power in the economy. This enhancement of power was necessary because of the maldistribution of wealth, the unjustified power of the rich, and the control by this group of the government. The writer is careful to emphasize that the New Deal was not meant to destroy capitalism but to reform it. By 1935 the changes brought about by the New Deal were practically finished. Such changes, Kirkendall states convincingly, were designed to improve the living standards of the low income, the aged, and the underprivileged.

Perhaps the best writing in this excellently written book is the brilliant analysis of the election of 1936. In this analysis one reads of the increased role of organized labor in American affairs. Indeed, labor grew rapidly when nourished by the milk of the New Deal. After 1936 increasing opposition to the New Deal became apparent and flourished under the impact of Franklin D. Roosevelt's fight with the Supreme Court, by the national recession, and by the split in the Democratic party in Congress. Although by 1940 the conservatives