

would embrace the farm cooperative movement, and, most important, his conviction that science and experimentation would provide farmers with security on the land while improving the quality of life on the farm. Franklin D. Roosevelt's future secretary of agriculture seemed to be completely optimistic about the impact that irrigation would have on agriculture. Wallace concluded that small irrigated farms of forty acres or less would not only enjoy prosperity, but also would create "superior" farmers committed to cooperation, community, and the democratic way of life. Although Wallace considered the matter briefly, he seemed little concerned that irrigation and technological change would lead to overproduction, increased competition, and ultimately to a dramatic reduction in the number of farmers needed to work the land.

The volume accomplishes what it attempts to do—to provide the reader with introductory information about early irrigation history in the West and to provide in a convenient collection the essays Wallace wrote about his western trip. The focus on irrigation is appropriate and provides useful information about an often neglected subject. On the other hand, the time period covered during Wallace's trip is very brief and may limit interest in the book to specialists in agricultural history and students seeking more information about Wallace's early years.

From New Day to New Deal: American Farm Policy from Hoover to Roosevelt, 1928–1933, by David E. Hamilton. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991. xi, 333 pp. Notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$39.95 cloth.

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David E. Hamilton, an associate professor of history at the University of Kentucky, is well known to many Iowa historians who were in the state in the 1970s and 1980s. Then, he was an undergraduate at Iowa State University, a graduate student at the University of Iowa, an energetic researcher in the libraries of the state, and a brilliant participant in historical programs. Now, he thanks a number of Iowans for their help. His interest in agriculture and farm policy grew naturally out of the life of the state, and his interpretation reflects the influence of one of its most distinguished historians, Ellis Hawley.

In *From New Day to New Deal*, Hamilton examines the development of American farm policy in a pivotal period, 1928–1933. After a powerful introduction, he surveys the debate over farm policy in the years just before 1928 and then moves on to Herbert Hoover's ideas

about agriculture, their triumph in the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929, and the Farm Board's administration of the act. He next examines Hoover's unsuccessful efforts to grapple with the farm crisis of the early 1930s, the Farm Board's failure to organize farmers, and the Federal Farm Loan System's inability to end the farm credit crunch. Then three chapters explore the ideas of the agricultural economists, the farm relief issue in the presidential election year (1932), and the beginning of the New Deal for agriculture. To all of this, he adds a conclusion and epilogue that possess the power needed to have a large impact on the development of historical interpretation.

One of the impressive features of this book is the strength of its research base. Hamilton explored the relevant holdings of more than a dozen research centers, including the Hoover and Roosevelt libraries and the National Archives. For him, the most important collections were the papers of Herbert Hoover, Arthur Hyde, M. L. Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Rexford Tugwell, Henry A. Wallace, and William Myers, the diaries of Theodore Joslin and Nils Olsen, the records of the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Historical Files of the Agricultural History Division of the Department of Agriculture, and the Columbia Oral History Collection. He also made extensive use of published government documents, farm journals, and the writings of historians and agricultural economists. The range and depth of the research guarantee that even the scholar who has already explored many of the sources on the subject can learn much from the book.

Hamilton could have given us a narrow monograph, but instead he presented a book that forms a part of his ongoing effort to develop a large-scale interpretation of modern American agricultural history. Here and in related articles he challenges the "Progressive School" or "liberal framework" and other more recent interpretations. In its place he adopts the "organizational synthesis" pioneered by Robert Wiebe and Ellis Hawley, among others. He focuses on "the American state-building process," argues that there were "tensions and ambiguities inherent" in it that were "acutely evident" in agriculture, and defines two basic approaches to "reordering American agriculture." One was the approach of the interest groups that emphasized the organization of farmers "to balance the economic and political power of 'organized industry' and 'organized labor' with an 'organized agriculture.'" The other approach, championed by social scientists, among others, advocated "associational structures in which farmers could participate as free individuals in modernizing systems to overcome their atomized state, accept scientific and organizational values, and create a more rational farm economy" (4-5).

These competing ideals, counterorganization versus associationism, Hamilton argues, shaped federal farm policies from 1929 to 1933. "The 'revolution of 1933,' at least in the field of farm policy," he concludes, "did not mark the shift from the laissez-faire state to the modern liberal state, but rather the beginning of a new attempt to build the modern associative state" (7).

Hoover played a major role in this development. Hamilton shares the opinion of Hoover revisionists such as Hawley that Hoover was an important builder of modern America, not the laissez faire reactionary of older interpretations. Yet Hamilton is not uncritical. He defines Hoover as the most prominent of the builders of associational systems, writing that he "was determined to fit farmers and agriculture to an advanced capitalist economy without either resorting to formal intervention to support prices or bowing to interest group demands." But Hamilton concludes that Hoover failed, largely because of his "rigid conception of associationism, his refusal to rethink the implications of protectionist trade policies, and his inability to understand the almost utopian demands he was making of farmers and agricultural cooperatives" (6-7). "What is evident in almost all of his policies," the author adds, ". . . is how poorly Hoover understood farming and the farm economy. . . . His assumptions . . . suited his political philosophy better than they did the realities of postwar American agriculture" (240).

Hamilton interprets the New Deal for agriculture as more successful than Hoover's program, largely because of a greater willingness to use the state. Yet, he concludes, the New Deal failed to become what its most ambitious architects desired. Contrary to the hopes of social scientists such as M. L. Wilson and Mordecai Ezekiel, the New Deal ultimately "sanctioned the type of interest-group broker-state that Hoover had fought to avoid. . . . it left a governing system with a limited ability to rationalize and direct interest-group activity toward national purposes or to carry out meaningful economic planning and coordination" (250).

The book's topics—agriculture and the state—are large parts of American history and life. Because of their importance, as well as the quality of Hamilton's work, all students of twentieth-century American history should confront his interpretation. Furthermore, all Iowans with a strong interest in either Iowa's major industry or its most important contribution to the presidency should read *From New Day to New Deal*.

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