

sources inadequate. He apparently did not read publications of the reform organizations he names, the proceedings of their annual meetings, or *The American Federationist*. The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, a crusading "anti-monopoly" paper, is the chief source Piott used for all topics except the Chicago strike, the sources for which were Chicago newspapers. For the substantive chapters, between Introduction and Epilogue, there are 168 endnotes, 79 percent of which cite only newspaper articles; all but five of the remaining notes cite newspaper articles along with other sources. The sources for the few scattered paragraphs that deal with other midwestern states are articles in the *Post-Dispatch*. The book is also written in a clumsy, often ungrammatical prose.

WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

AILEEN S. KRADITOR

Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist, by Nick Salvatore. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982. 437 pp. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper.

Nick Salvatore's Bancroft-prize-winning biography of Eugene V. Debs, now available in paperback, is likely to become the standard work on the American Socialist leader. Debs symbolized his party's struggle on behalf of the working class during the first quarter of this century, and Salvatore has delved deeply into manuscript collections, government documents, and secondary works to document the man's life and contribution. The author extensively researched material from the Debs Foundation in Terre Haute and from the Socialist history collections at Duke University and the University of Wisconsin.

While *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* covers much of the same material as Ray Ginger's brilliant biography, *Eugene V. Debs: A Biography* (1949, originally published as *The Bending Cross: A Biography of Eugene V. Debs*), Salvatore inquires more thoroughly into the environmental and social forces that molded Debs's thinking. Thus Salvatore finds Debs's transition from middle-class traditional values to socialism more evolutionary than did Ginger's analysis, and provides additional insight into the Socialist leader's vacillating character and the internal squabbles which plagued and divided the Socialist party.

The result is an impressive, stimulating book. Debs emerges not as a saint or martyr, but as a sensitive, dedicated human being complete with ambiguities, frailties, indecision, and contradictions. Transcending all are Debs's devotion to humane ideals; his search for complete manhood; his love of ordinary working-class people; his growing outrage at the exploitative features of industrial capitalism and its threat to

basic American democratic ideals; and that sense of community which Debs felt as a youngster in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Salvatore traces the evolution in Debs's career from the secretaryship of Vigo Lodge No. 16 (Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen) to his ultimate emergence as the spokesman of American socialism. Debs owed this evolution—from his youthful endorsement of the "harmony of community" to socialism—more to his acceptance of innate American faith in the democratic political process and its implications of equality than to the writings of foreign Socialist theorists, including Karl Marx. Indeed, Salvatore implies that Debs was less wedded to Marx than was his AFL antagonist, Samuel Gompers, who, as an immigrant, was more exposed to Marxist thought. Thus, Salvatore insists, Debs took his cue from the American political system and from reformers and utopians William Lloyd Garrison, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edward Bellamy, and Henry George along with the sensitive presidential examples of Jefferson and Lincoln.

The critical point of Debs's emerging socialism was his imprisonment following the Pullman strike of 1894. Even then the transformation was not complete and Debs could infuriate the more theoretical Victor Berger by defining socialism as "merely Christianity in action. It recognizes the equality in men" (165). Debs's radicalism matured slowly, becoming most pronounced during the early years of his incarceration in Atlanta prison for violation of the Espionage Act in September 1918. From his jail cell, Debs was unable to assess the national or international situation with his usual acumen. He appeared markedly sympathetic to the extremists on the Socialist flank who identified with the Bolshevik Revolution when it seemed on the verge of inundating Eastern Europe. But this enthusiasm was shortlived and Debs soon refused to support the excesses of the left wing. He was also unable, however, to keep the Socialist party afloat as a unified force. Beloved as both a man and a symbol against oppression, Debs was too sick and worn to heal the factional wounds cutting deeply into the party. Internal conflict among the radical foreign language federations, the immigrant and native-American leftists who sought to capture the party, and the discredited national leadership joined with continued government repression and public hostility to ultimately splinter the party. Debs died in 1926, no longer the drawing card at public rallies that he had once been and somewhat out of tune with contemporary party needs.

Salvatore does not spare his criticism of either Debs or other Socialist leaders. Those seeking a more balanced view of Victor Berger, whose enormous ego the author constantly pricks, may want to consult Sally Miller's *Victor Berger and the Promise of Constructive Socialism, 1910-*

1921 (1973). Salvatore is critical of Berger's petulance, ego, and determination to dominate both the party and Debs, although he does not spare Debs for his failure to force confrontation. He attributes this failure to Debs's fear that the more intellectual Berger might humiliate him in debate; this is not the only occasion on which the author finds Debs's leadership less than decisive.

Salvatore's overall analysis is sympathetic to the Socialist leader. Debs's native heritage, simplicity, and belief in the dignity of all men enabled him to interpret socialism in American terms: that in the dream society with political and economic equality, all might share his essentially classless vision. His interpretation would not be enough, for socialism seemed alien to too many Americans and other political traditions were too deeply rooted for him to wean many away from them. Even to working-class Americans, socialism was an unAmerican, European import.

Debs would prick the marrow of those who sought an answer to society's woes through a form of Socialist humanism. While the immediate gains of Debs's socialism may have been meager, author Salvatore feels something new may spring from the ashes—perhaps that potential in our society in which Debs believed and for which he suffered. Certainly, victims of oppression, injustice, and poverty could still find inspiration in the words Debs uttered prior to his sentencing in 1918:

While there is a lower class, I am in it;

While there is a criminal element, I am of it;

While there is a soul in prison, I am not free (295).

Nick Salvatore has combined scholarship with lively prose and probing insight to capture the passion, the weaknesses, the indecisiveness, but above all the dignity and humanity of an American radical who endeavored to show that "citizen" and "Socialist" might be synonymous.

BUENA VISTA COLLEGE

WILLIAM CUMBERLAND

Farmers in Rebellion: The Rise and Fall of the Southern Farmers Alliance and the People's Party in Texas, by Donna A. Barnes. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984. x, 266 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$22.50 cloth.

A combination of sociology and history, *Farmers in Rebellion* represents an effort to demonstrate, as the author declares, that "sociological theory . . . serve[s] to inform the historian about key questions which must be addressed if an event or phenomenon is to be adequately understood" (19). Certainly the goal of interdisciplinary exchange is laudible

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