

their provincial assemblies to increase local authority until they ultimately worked their design for independence. Using history as a lawyer would to build a legal case, Chalmers laid out diverse complaints from British officials suggesting that the colonials were deliberately conspiring to achieve independence. Yet Chalmers presented no evidence that the Americans themselves were ever aware of any such design, and most scholars today would agree that his first thesis fails. But after reviewing the evidence for Chalmers's second "case" — that the British neglected close administration of the colonies while the assemblies usurped authority—the reader is likely to murmur "guilty." As Jack P. Greene and others have illustrated, the British colonists did work diligently, if not consciously, in a successful "quest for power" in their local assemblies to undermine the imperial administration and to become virtually self-governing. Chalmers was among the first historians to note this, and it is understandable that such a partisan would see in it a latent desire for American independence.

Chalmers's study had yet additional value. In taking a strict partisan approach, he challenged Americans to rewrite their own history. And for years, ironically, pro-American writers leaned heavily on Chalmers's history because it was such a rich storehouse of facts and details, particularly from the official British side. Thus, such supernationalists as Jared Sparks and Chief Justice John Marshall exploited its evidence, with Marshall virtually plagiarizing whole sections for his five-volume biography of Washington. Indeed, Chalmers was a better historian than most of the chauvinistic, ardent nationalists of the Parson Weems variety who replaced him in the generation following his departure for England. His work is well worth reprinting — and rereading.

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The Greenback-Labor Movement in Pennsylvania. By RALPH R. RICKER. (Bellefonte, Pa.: Pennsylvania Heritage, Inc., 1966. Pp. viii, 141. Bibliography, appendices. \$5.00.)

The major contribution of this 1955 doctoral dissertation is its demonstration of the importance of the Pennsylvania branch of the Greenback-Labor party, especially in 1877 and 1878 before the agricul-

tural West took over control and leadership of the national organization. Beyond that, however, this book combines a tedious chronological cataloging of party conventions, platforms, and candidates, with broad generalization, much of it unsupported. According to Ricker, "the Greenback-Labor Party was the party of hope for the destitute and unemployed" To argue this point, Ricker must first show the existence of such a group, but if his statistics indicate declines in agricultural prices and in money wages, the key factor — purchasing power — remains in doubt. When Ricker attempts to correlate economics with politics in an interesting chapter on the 1878 election, the result is a logical hypothesis, not a proven thesis. Bituminous and anthracite miners and depressed farmers in the northern part of the state may have provided the basis of Greenback-Labor strength, but good evidence of that is not to be found here.

Ricker's conjectural concluding remarks also could use amplification. In accounting for the decline of the Greenback-Labor movement, for example, he emphasizes the new reformist approach of the state Democratic party. "The first start toward constructive labor reforms in Pennsylvania," asserts Ricker, "were [*sic*] made during the Democratic administration of Governor Pattison, 1883-1887." Here, too, unless one counts a mere listing of bills passed by the state legislature, we have hypothesis rather than thesis. In this case the absence of supporting evidence is also indicative of Ricker's tendency to concentrate on electoral, and virtually ignore legislative, politics.

At bottom, the work suffers from deficiencies in sources and methodology. The dissertation was submitted in 1955 and evidently not revised and so does not benefit from the work of numerous historians, including Irwin Unger, Bray Hammond, Thomas Cochran, and Douglass North. This is perhaps less serious than the author's failure to make better use of legislative sources for the 1870s. Alexander Trachtenberg's *The History of Legislation for the Protection of Coal Miners in Pennsylvania, 1824-1915* (1942) comes to mind. As for methodology, the chronological approach guides the author into superfluous storytelling; a subject organization, perhaps emphasizing occupational groups, might yield interesting results. And, although one does not expect everyone to be a statistician, this subject would clearly benefit from quantification. The possibilities for further research are intriguing.

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