to redress some of their grievances.

The socialist platform combined an endorsement of the principles of the international socialist movement with “immediate demands” for better health programs in working-class districts, municipal ownership of public utilities and an eight-hour day for city workers. Working-class districts provided most of the electoral support for the socialists, with a scattering of votes coming from the middle class. Once in office they faced opposition from a businessmen’s reform movement, and were also hurt by divisions among the moderate and more radical socialists, the latter group being sympathetic to the Industrial Workers of the World. Although the socialist mayor won re-election in 1913, he had little power, owing to the inauguration of a commission government; in 1915, the socialists lost the mayoral race. Despite this defeat, New Castle socialists took pride in holding the allegiance of a growing segment of working-class voters, and in their publication, Free Press, which depicted their struggles.

Socialists also made changes in very small towns such as Whit- taker, an industrial community of 2,500 residents near Pittsburgh, where the new administration tore down the jail, abolished saloons and levied a “phone tax” on Bell Telephone. In the 1912 presidential election Eugene Debs, the Socialist Party candidate, won 60 percent of the Whittaker vote, and his supporters held a banquet to celebrate their victory.

The book discusses many socialist defeats and offers an interpretation of the factors responsible for these failures, but it con- cludes on an “upbeat note.” The author reminds his readers about the enthusiasm generated by the socialists in their “golden age” which was reflected in their lectures, parades and picnics. He also sees the socialists’ “proud heritage of struggle for social justice” as their mark left on American society.

This volume adds important elements to the story of municipal socialism, contributing to our understanding of the interaction of national and local developments. It brings us somewhat closer to a synthesis which will integrate the insight and framework provided by Nick Salvatore in his biography of Debs with the grass roots perspective of this book. Ironically, readers interested in the details of socialist successes in Milwaukee and Reading, Pennsylvania, will have to turn to other sources, particularly for an account of the 1920s and 1930s. Also readers will miss a conclusion that draws the threads of the book together, or aids them in appreciating local episodes and the light they shed on larger questions. Nevertheless, this is a valuable and well-researched book based on archival materials, and secondary sources. Of particular note is the author’s widespread use of local newspapers, and the labor and socialist presses. This volume adds to our knowledge of socialism, providing a fine complement to an earlier work edited by Donald T. Critchlow, Socialism in the Heartland: The Midwestern Experience, 1900-1925.

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Rev. Charles Owen Rice: Apostle of Contradiction

By Patrick J. McGeever
Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1989. Illustrations, endnotes, Pp. xiii, 313. $28.95, $18 paper

If you have lived in Pittsburgh during the last 50 years and have followed the city’s political scene, you probably recognize the name of Father Rice, and if you know much about him, you probably have strong opinions about his political involvements. For leftists in particular, Rice has been a vexing figure. An activist in most of the significant causes of the past half-century, Rice’s politics seem to have vacillated from CIO supporter in the 1930s, to super-patriot during World War II, to red-baiter after the war, to anti-McCarthyite in the 1950s, to civil rights champion and anti-Vietnam War advocate in the 1960s, to supporter of eminent domain proceedings in response to corporate shutdown of area steel plants in the 1980s. Professor McGeever’s book, based on exhaustive research in the Rice Papers at the University of Pittsburgh, attempts to tackle these apparent contradictions and shed light on Rice’s real politics. Rice’s career deserves scholarly study because it is so clearly intertwined with the evolution of American liberalism during the last half-century.

McGeever vigorously debunks Rice’s self-proclaimed radicalism. Defining radical as either a revolutionary, who desires a violent overthrow of government so that a new vision for society can be implemented, or as a rebel, who would use illegal methods to tear down a government with the hope that his own special demands would then be met, McGeever feels that Rice’s activities at all points do not meet his demanding standards. Instead, McGeever places Rice into the category of liberal reformer. This label might be useful if it had been more clearly defined in the context of American liberalism in this century. As is, Rice receives this designation by default.

Despite the many rich and colorful vignettes of the various stages in Rice’s career that he provides, McGeever fails to pose and develop a rigorous thesis regarding Rice’s political ideology and behavior. For example, the author sees Rice’s ardent anti-commu-
nism in the late 1940s and support of black civil rights in the 1960s as paradoxical. Although inconsistent for left-wing observers, these positions were not contradictory for cold war liberals or Catholic clerics. McGeever admits that Rice firmly adhered to the Catholic church's moral authority, and provides ample evidence of Rice's essential adherence to cold war liberalism, yet he does not push his analysis beyond the dismissal of the radical appellation Rice so ably cultivated for himself during his long political career.

As McGeever demonstrates, Rice was most adept at placing himself squarely in the midst of all the significant political frays of the past half-century to emerge as a central arbitrator in those debates. Although certainly not shy about capitalizing on his participation to bolster his own prestige, Rice undoubtedly perceived his social activism as "radical." Moreover, when he came to political maturity during the Great Depression, New Deal reforms were popularly viewed as "radical."

Beyond Rice's own impressions, and given the evidence McGeever presents, Rice might be seen more accurately as a Catholic cold war liberal. Specifically in regard to the apparent contradiction between Rice's anti-communism of the late 1940s and his support for black civil rights in the 1960s, Rice's anti-communist liberalism was solidly in step with the dominant liberal position of the period; his subsequent rejection of this position in face of contradictions raised by the Vietnam War was also not unusual, as Godfrey Hodgson and others have indicated. In addition, Rice's anti-communism and support of black civil rights have been positions that the American Catholic church has firmly supported in this century. Many of the seeming contradictions in Rice's politics echo the inconsistencies that radicals often see in the Catholic church and cold war liberalism.

The general reader will likely appreciate McGeever's solid research and presentation of Father Rice's activities. The scholar, however, will likely take exception to the lack of rigorous historical analysis. McGeever cites relatively few secondary sources (I count fewer than 30), given his formidable task. Additionally, a firmer hand in the editing of the book would have improved it, I think; the number of glaring typos alone is difficult to forgive. It seems as though McGeever and Duquesne University Press simply wanted to get the first Rice book out and beat the rush.

As McGeever correctly notes during the course of his book, Rice has indeed been a central figure in American political developments in this century. Although his biography contains many of the essential elements necessary to understand the meaning of Rice's politics, McGeever's effort falls short of a satisfactory interpretation because he fails to place Rice's career in the deeper context of American liberalism.

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**The Business Career of Henry Clay Frick**

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- **Page 7** Top, From *Henry Clay Frick — The Man*, by George Harvey (New York and London, 1928); bottom, Frick Archives
- **Page 8** West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University
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**The First Generation**

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