

zetti protests were often the most violent. Temkin himself argues that Latin Americans “probably had the strongest reasons for resenting the United States generally and the treatment of Sacco and Vanzetti specifically.” But he spends little time here, stating that “Latin American radicals had almost no influence” on the case (p. 17).

Nonetheless, Temkin is right to argue that “foreign influence” had an impact on several individuals who were centrally involved in the trial. For example, Republican Senator William Borah, chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, was initially sympathetic to Sacco and Vanzetti before concluding that it would be a “national humiliation” to bow to foreign pressure on the trial. Temkin contends successfully that the thinking of several other key individuals was shaped by protests outside the United States, among them Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and Massachusetts Governor Alvan Fuller.

But this astute analysis is undermined by the contradictory conclusions that the author draws from it. Early in the text, Temkin blames international protest for Sacco and Vanzetti’s executions, asserting that they “were executed not despite the international campaign on their behalf but rather because of it” (p. 7). This troublesome claim begs the altogether more important question of what their fates would have been without the protests. Temkin later answers this question the only way possible. However unwittingly, he acknowledges that “without the appeals and protests of non-Americans, there would have been no ‘affair’ to speak of, and probably not much hope for Sacco and Vanzetti; their executions would have been carried out but without as much national or international controversy” (p. 100).

Temkin’s assertions about the significance of the “affair” in Europe seem overblown in other ways as well. He describes responses to the trial that ranged from the “conflicted Americanism” of people like Bertrand Russell, who were disillusioned by the United States’ abandonment of its ideals, to the angry anti-Americanism that he argues began in France as a result of the executions. But in the years after World War I, there was a great deal more to respond to as European nations and their populations reassessed their relationships to the United States. Among them, as Temkin notes, were the United States’ emergence as an unwieldy world power; its increased influence as a lender nation; and the cultural, economic, and political influences of Fordism. Anger about Sacco and Vanzetti may have played a role in Europeans’ perspectives on the United States, but not a central or an enduring one.

In sum, this book does a service by exploring the international response to the Sacco and Vanzetti case and by reassessing the roles that Fred Moore and communists worldwide played in fomenting protest on the an-

archist prisoners’ behalf. But ultimately, it falls well short of its larger goals.

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KATE SAMPSELL-WILLMANN. *Lewis Hine as Social Critic*. Foreword by ALAN TRACHTENBERG. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. 2009. Pp. xii, 331. \$50.00.

The photographer Lewis Hine died in 1940, broke and all but forgotten. Like the great documentary photographers Mathew Brady and Edward Curtis, he found little honor in his lifetime. Only after his death did scholars and curators transform Hine into the progenitor of the American tradition of social documentary photography. Hine documented the arrival of immigrants at Ellis Island and the heartbreaking work of child laborers. He worked for the Pittsburgh Survey, a pioneering sociological attempt to assess urban life; photographed overseas for the American Red Cross during World War I; and created a portrait of American workers during the 1920s and 1930s. Committed to photography as a tool of moral and political suasion, he worked for the National Child Labor Committee and published his pictures in *The Survey*, a progressivist journal promoting social reform. He stood alone during the early twentieth century in grasping the ways in which photographs could document the human condition and serve as moral arguments for improved working conditions. But Roy Stryker, the director of the Farm Security Administration photography project during the 1930s, pointedly refused to hire Hine. At the very moment this government-sponsored project made photography a familiar and potent tool for social reform, Hine struggled to survive. He seemed a has-been, even as the kind of photography he had long championed finally found a place in the sun.

Kate Sampsell-Willmann’s book joins a handful of other texts in trying to restore Hine to his rightful place in the history of American photography. But she takes a somewhat different tack, trying to craft an intellectual biography of the photographer. “Rather than looking at culturally important individuals such as Hine as *either* artists or intellectuals,” she writes, “perhaps scholars can incorporate the production of such cultural critics into a unified history of American ideas” (p. 17). Fair enough. And she makes some big claims for Hine’s importance as a key figure linking the ideals of the Progressive era with those of the New Deal. She argues for Hine as a pragmatist in the tradition of William James and John Dewey and “an important intellectual contributor to the tradition of American cultural democracy” that began with Walt Whitman (p. 16). Hine, she writes, is the “first true photographic disciple” of this strain of American thought. “This is not an inconsequential statement . . . Lewis Hine deserves a prominent place in the canon of American cultural democracy” (pp. 168–169).

Sampsell-Willmann overstates the extent to which

previous scholars have focused on Hine's images at the expense of his intellectual ambitions. But she sharpens the sometimes fuzzy humanist accolades to Hine by trying to lay out the intellectual underpinnings of his ideas. Her instincts are accurate here, and she persuasively suggests that Hine drew from a broad array of ideas about the importance of experience-based knowledge. However, her arguments about direct influences feel strained, and her claim that Hine "was so heavily influenced by James and Dewey" seems more asserted than proved (p. 53). She writes: "If Hine *chose* to make straight images with a relatively easily accessed narrative . . . for the purpose of eluding obfuscation and communicating a verifiable image of what he saw, then it is likely that James's theories of empiricism figured prominently in the development of his technique" (p. 39). She speculates that "radical empiricism could well have been the source of his social documentary style" (p. 39). Elsewhere, she writes that Hine realized his photographs would not be included in the photographic canon alongside the more self-consciously artistic images of Alfred Stieglitz and his fellow members of the Photo-Secession group, "a realization of which John Dewey would probably have very much approved" (p. 173). Such speculations may be useful, but they do not establish a tight case for direct lines of influence.

Sampsel-Willmann nonetheless makes a persuasive argument for the importance of considering photographic intent and rooting the analysis of photographic images in a careful study of the circumstances under which they were produced and viewed. Critiquing the postmodernist emphasis on reading images without regard for their historical meanings and contexts, she makes a powerful case for the value of photographs as indices of their creators' own intellectual ideas and ambitions.

Still, Sampsel-Willmann cannot help but introduce her own readings of Hine's photographs in support of both her method and her thesis. This reveals the inherent difficulty of making this sort of argument. Much as one might want to believe that a photograph can be made to yield some essential truth, such documents remain as stubbornly elusive and resistant to fixed interpretation as any literary document. In her analysis of "Tension between black farmers and white Red Cross representatives" during the 1930–1931 drought, Sampsel-Willmann sees "undisguised hostility and fear" in the faces of the applicants for relief (p. 216). Looking at the same image, I see something more akin to patient and weary resignation. Such differences in the reading of an image underscore the fundamental importance of Sampsel-Willmann's plea that we give thoughtful and careful consideration to the broader literary record that documents a photographer's underlying philosophy and point of view. Visual documents, engaging and alluring as they may be, are necessarily unsteady kinds of historical evidence.

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VICTORIA GRIEVE. *The Federal Art Project and the Creation of Middlebrow Culture*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2009. Pp. x, 229. \$45.00.

There are many books on the arts programs of the New Deal, but Victoria Grieve points out early in her study that most of them have focused on economic, employment, or political aspects. She believes that the real story is rooted less in these familiar frameworks and more in "fundamentally different and competing views of culture: highbrow versus middlebrow" (p. 3).

"Middlebrow" is the name for a cultural identity midway between popular culture and high culture, and Grieve traces the concept back to the hydra-headed progressive impulse dominant in the early twentieth century. John Dewey, in fact, is ubiquitous throughout the book's first half. Here, given his influence, "middlebrow" becomes shorthand for cultural democracy.

As the man who wove Dewey's ideas of cultural democracy into the Federal Art Project (FAP), Holger Cahill is a major figure in Grieve's study, but as for the titular FAP, it comes on stage only in the second half of the book, which may provoke some impatient readers. But the purpose of the long run-up, it turns out, is to give Cahill's intentions for the FAP an ideological provenance, something that other books on the New Deal art programs do not do quite as clearly, so it is a welcome element here.

Contributing less is Grieve's lengthy discussion of John Cotton Dana, founder and director of the Newark Museum. Even with his connection to Cahill, Dana's story does not add as much as the pages dedicated to him would indicate. By the time we hear of his affinity for the style of modern department stores, the reader begins to feel distracted. Yes, Dana stands in for "other critics of traditional art museums" (p. 71) and traditional ideas (i.e., the bifurcation between high and popular culture with no room for something in the middle), but ultimately the space devoted to him cannot shake the feeling of a recurring digression.

As things turned out, the FAP did not quite *create* a lasting middlebrow culture as much as it contributed to a lacuna of sorts between the growing momentum toward American modernism in the 1910s and 1920s and the explosion, and critical celebration, of non-representational art in the later 1940s and 1950s. What we come to see quite clearly here is the New Deal art program working in part as a conservative force in American art, something of which both Cahill and the author seem to approve, even though many of the professional artists—a qualification required to participate in the New Deal's art programs—would have blanched to be enlisted in such an undertaking. Many professional artists themselves, Grieve shows, were a weak reed with which to do battle in the name of "middlebrow" culture. Partially in reaction against Joseph Stalin's and Adolf Hitler's pronouncements against modern art and the totalitarian embrace of a kind of nationalistic realism, American abstractionists "explicitly rejected a funda-