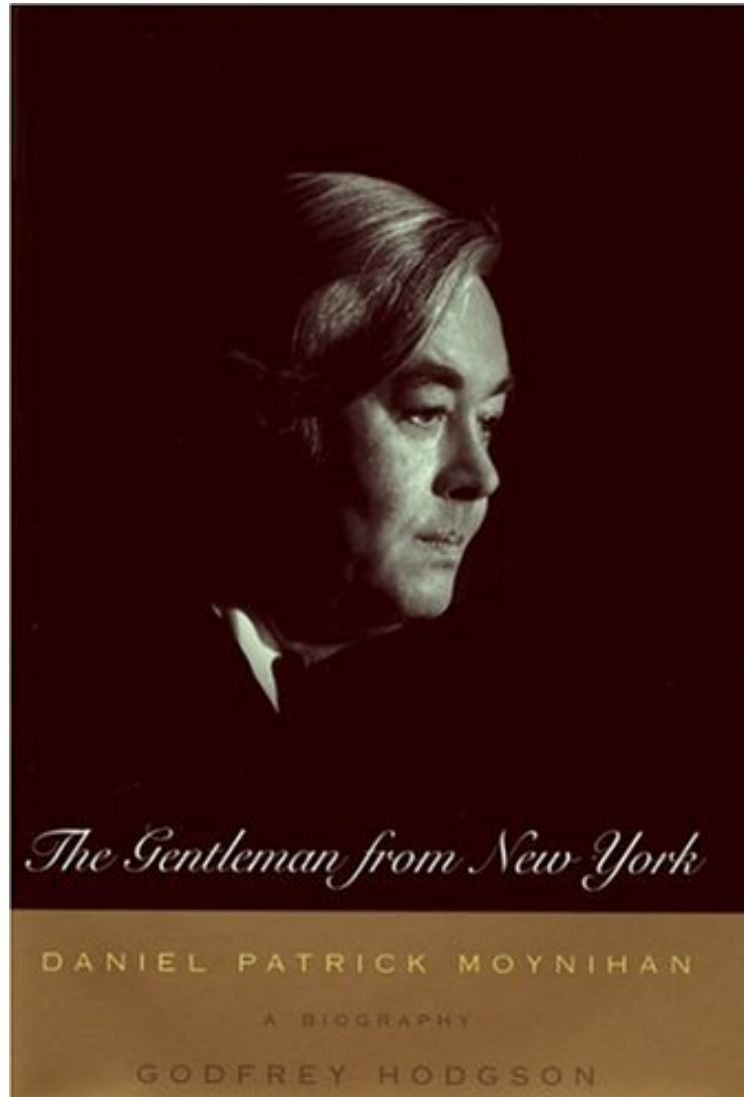


[FREE] The Gentleman From New York : Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Biography

The Gentleman From New York : Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Biography

Godfrey Hodgson

ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#934467 in Books 2000-08-16 2000-08-16 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.37 x 6.001, 1.75 #File Name: 0395860423464 pages | File size: 55.Mb

Godfrey Hodgson : The Gentleman From New York : Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Biography before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gentleman From New York : Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Biography:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hodgson is an excellent scholar but his admitted fandom of this compleiing figure ...By C. KatzPrett well done biography but and admiring intimate.Hodgson is an excellent scholar

but his admitted fandom of this compleiing figure is the books sreth and weakness.Moynihan who was embraced at various time by both right and left,came from a prgressive New Deal background worked for NY Gov. Averill Harriman then later for the Kennedy and Johnson adminastrations,he came to nationalm prominece at Harvard after writting the famous (or infamous depending on your take),"The Negro Family: A Case For National Action" otherwise known as the "Moynihan Report".He was invited by Richard Nixon to join his admintration were he had some influence.Stints fllowed as Ambassador to the U.N. and India before hs tenure as Senator of New York.Though he penned very little legislation he was a major influence in the Senate.His ability the seek answers across a wide political spectrum while still insisting on a progressive/liberal identity makes him dfine the term "Neo-Liberal".Hodgson personal closeness may have led to too little skepticism or critical approach but ackowleges this in his introduction.What this closeness lends to the biography out weighs it weaknesses.CKatz27 of 34 people found the following review helpful. A revealing, if biased, political biographyBy Richard E. HegnerGodfrey Hodgson, the author of this new biography of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, is admittedly a long-standing, close friend of his subject. This is at once the major strength and major weakness of this portrait of the senior Senator from New York. On the one hand, Hodgson has enjoyed unprecedented access to Moynihan in writing this book, which stops just short of being an official biography, making the book extremely revealing. Yet as an intimate of Moynihan's, the author cannot seem to achieve the distance and perspective which objectivity demands.Nonetheless, anyone interested in American or New York politics--or contemporary American history--is bound to find this an absorbing volume. After all, Moynihan's friends and associates have ranged from Averell Harriman to Henry Kissinger, from Arthur Goldberg to Richard Nixon, from Lyndon Johnson to Irving Kristol. He has exercised power in locales as varied as Albany, the U.S. Labor Department, the Nixon White House, the United Nations, New Delhi, and the U.S. Senate. Perhaps more than most political biographies, this is not just the story of one man but a political and intellectual history of the period in which his career flourished.Yet the author's biases are apparent. He strives mightily to reconcile and explain Moynihan's political inconsistencies, styling him at one point an "orthodox centrist liberal"--whatever that means. (It strikes me as an oxymoron.) He tries to find consistent strains in what seems to me to have been a political career characterized most of all by opportunism, if not outright caprice. He tries to explain away Moynihan's alcohol problem, while reporting that his staff employs the euphemism that the Senator is "with the Mexican ambassador" to explain that he is enjoying Tio Pepe, his favorite dry sherry. He justifies the Senator's long-standing feud with the liberal wing of his party in light of some early slights at the hands of liberal New Yorkers, referring at one point to "the authoritarian left," an interesting turn of phrase in the wake of Gingrich and Co.There are a number of obvious errors in the book. The author notes that in 1953, the Democrats had been out of power in New York State for 20 years, ignoring the fact that Democrat Herbert Lehman served as Governor through 1943, following FDR and Al Smith. He refers to the Comptroller General of the U.S. as a "Treasury official," although the C.G. is in charge of the U.S. General Accounting Office, a Congressional agency, not part of the Treasury Department. He suggests that President Clinton pledged that he would "vote for" the welfare reform legislation he eventually signed, missing the fact that America is not a parliamentary democracy.Despite the weaknesses, this is a beguiling biography, which is for the most part well written, and sure to captivate anyone with more than a passing interest in U.S. politics. I do not regret for a minute the time I spent reading it.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Curtis TriplettGood read.

Coinciding with his departure from the United States Senate after twenty-four years of distinguished service, this major work is the first comprehensive account of the life and ideas of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a great political figure and a brilliant and complex man. Godfrey Hodgson, a highly regarded expert on American politics and history, has known Senator Moynihan for four decades and had full access to him and to his political papers while preparing this book. In addition, he interviewed dozens of Moyhnihan's friends, aides, and antagonists. Both admiring and critical, this balanced portrait follows Moynihan's rise from an unpromising childhood in a broken middle-class family (not, as many believe, a tenement boyhood in New York's Hell's Kitchen). It explains how a self-described "birthright Democrat" could decide to work for Richard Nixon, and how a man elected to the Senate as the darling of the neoconservatives could come to oppose Ronald Reagan and fight for the goals of mainstream Democrats. It deals at length with Moynihan's sometimes embattled tenure as our ambassador to India and to the United Nations. Above all, it is the history of a mind, portraying Moynihan as a prophet who again and again saw through the conventional wisdom of liberals and conservatives alike, and who expressed his insights with clarity, vigor, and not a little wit. From "benign neglect" to "defining deviancy down," his formulation of some of the central problems of American society are sure to remain part of our national discourse for years to come. Among the many prominent people who appear in these pages, some in fascinating behind-the-scenes encounters, are Presidents Lyndon Johnson, Gerald Ford, and Richard Nixon; Henry Kissinger; Indira Gandhi; and Elizabeth Moynihan, the senator's wife and a remarkable figure in her own right. This splendid biography powerfully illuminates the life and ideas of a courageous, controversial, truly impressive American, whose entire career embodies a sustained faith in the possibility of a Great Society.

.com History will probably remember Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, as one of the great American senators and rank his name alongside Stephen Douglas and Daniel Webster. He isn't known as a topnotch legislator--his name is attached to no ground-shaking bill--but he is respected by colleagues in both parties and by the media as one of the brightest men to work in Washington in recent years. He's also had a fascinating political journey, which took him from liberalism in the 1950s to flirtations with neoconservatism in the '60s and '70s to old-style Democratic loyalties in the '80s and '90s. "In contact with both liberalism and conservatism, he belongs to neither," writes Moynihan biographer Godfrey Hodgson, an English journalist who previously penned a history of American conservatism, *The World Turned Right Side Up*. "Supported by both, he seems to link them, and to transcend them." Hodgson covers Moynihan's whole life--from growing up (it wasn't in Hell's Kitchen, by the way) to his time in the navy, his controversial role in the Johnson administration (where he wrote the so-called Moynihan Report on the black family), his Nixon-Ford days as ambassador to India and the United Nations, and finally his career as an elected pol. He moved about constantly, writes Hodgson: "It is a record that suggests impatience, dissatisfaction, persistent difficulty in getting on with superiors, and the troubled emotions that afflict a man of immense ability and energy who cannot quite find the right task and is afraid that his time will run out before he does." Following four full terms in the Senate, he has finally found "increasing serenity." (Moynihan announced he would not seek reelection in 2000, which opened the door for Hillary Clinton's candidacy.) Hodgson himself has known Moynihan for several decades; the senator even attended the author's wedding in 1970. This relationship allows the biographer to include firsthand reflections at appropriate moments ("When Pat announced that he was going to work for Nixon in the White House, I almost fell off my chair"). An interesting, favorable, and admiring book, *The Gentleman from New York* serves as a fitting tribute to the man. Of Moynihan's legacy, Hodgson writes: "After the dazzling speeches and elegant essays, the wit and the prophetic utterances are largely forgotten, he will be remembered as the man who ... had the lucidity and courage to restate the enduring propositions of the American political creed ... [and] above all a faith in the redemptive power of republican government." --John J. Miller

From Publishers Weekly

Though it may not rank as the definitive Moynihan biography, this informative study brings clarity to the Democratic senator's 24-year career as a legislator and his even longer career as a political thinker. Moynihan has called his career a series of "chance encounters, random walks"; Hodgson (*The World Turned Right Side Up*), an Oxford-based historian and a friend of Moynihan's since 1962, manages to lend that random walk a narrative coherence. Giving a colorful if not always balanced account of the senator's extraordinary journey from the sidewalks of New York to the chairmanship of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, Hodgson, who had access to the senator's political papers and personal letters, peppers his account liberally with charming anecdotes and vivid biographical details. He portrays, for example, a young Pat, back in New York City after three formative years at the London School of Economics, devouring cheese and onion sandwiches between beers at McSorley's Ale House. He also gives a nicely detailed account of Moynihan's momentous 1975 speech as delegate to the U.N., where he denounced anti-Semitism amid a furious debate over a resolution declaring Zionism a form of racism. And he follows the legislator as he went on to become, in the words of the *New York Times*, an "aggressive debater, outrageous flatterer, shrewd adviser, indeed manipulator, a friend of Presidents, accomplished diplomat and heartfelt friend of the poor." Hodgson's summary of the senator's legislative record is uncritical, and his prose gets cumbersome in places. But as an eyewitness account of Moynihan's colorful career, this biography is a welcome achievement. (Aug.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist

While the New York Senate race preoccupies the media, journalist Hodgson directs attention to the man both candidates hope to succeed. Hodgson described the late twentieth-century rise of conservatism in *The World Turned Right Side Up* (1996); he judges Moynihan one of the few people who "have lived and felt the liberal impulse, and at the same time understood the emotions behind the new conservatism." A friend of the senator and his wife for nearly 40 years, Hodgson observes a notable consistency in a career in which Moynihan was often viewed as a traitor by liberals or conservatives or both. As an appointee of New York governor Averell Harriman and in the administrations of Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford, in academia and in the Senate, Moynihan mixed skepticism about the value of social science in defining public policy with a solid "faith in the capacity, and the duty, of government to make society better." A cold war liberal, more of a regular Democrat than a reformer, Moynihan will no doubt be remembered as one of the smarter, more thoughtful elected officials of the late twentieth century. Others will probably produce more critical biographies, but, for now, Hodgson has supplied a fairly balanced overview. Mary Carroll

Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved