

shaping politics. Catholics constituted the largest denomination. Ethnic attitudes were reflected on such issues as temperance, abolition, emancipation, and conscription. During the Civil War many of the foreign born were segregated in companies and even regiments of a single nationality. Current believes that the war increased ethnic tensions and a sense of ethnic identity. Indiana, in contrast, was less affected by European immigration in this period than any northern state.

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Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City. By Kathleen Neils Conzen. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. Pp. 300. Figures, tables, appendix [note on sources and methods], notes, index. \$16.50.)

During the past decade an impressive historical literature has appeared that focuses on the social, economic, and political characteristics of immigrant groups in America and on their relationships to the rest of society. Kathleen Neils Conzen's *Immigrant Milwaukee* is one of the best of these studies. Treating the first quarter century of Milwaukee's history, Conzen concentrates on the Germans, who by 1860 accounted for slightly more than half of the households in the city. Irish and British immigrants were much less numerous and are often analyzed in this account only as contrasted to the Germans.

Conzen presents extensive data to define the place of immigrants in the frontier city. Residential patterns, mobility rates, occupational distributions, family size, the status of women, literacy, and school attendance are among the variables examined, and all are related to ethnicity. She shows that while native born persons ranked disproportionately high on the economic ladder, the Irish were low, the British clustered at the middle, and the Germans were to be found at all levels. Thus, only the numerous Germans had the range and heterogeneity necessary for the development of a genuinely ethnic community with a full complement of supportive functions independent of the host society. By contrast, the more homogeneous Irish, smaller in number, were limited by their lack of wealth, education, and skills in

the variety of activities they could engage in as ethnics. Their community was therefore essentially a class division clothed in ethnoreligious distinctions.

Within the German subsociety, however, social and religious divisions deepened over time. As middle class and educated Germans prospered, they supported cultural development and gave substance to Milwaukee's reputation as the German Athens. The well known German refugees of the revolutions of 1848, in Conzen's view, only augmented a process of social differentiation already underway. Meanwhile, large numbers of unskilled German immigrants continued to pour into the city, especially during the 1850s.

All ethnic groups in the city, but especially the Irish, were highly concentrated in rather well defined residential districts, and there was an intensification of ethnic clustering as the years passed. Milwaukee's immigrants did not conform to the frequently described movement from the city core to suburban areas. Instead, newcomers found homes on the edge of the city as older districts improved in status and security, hence in attractiveness to upwardly mobile immigrants.

Conzen attacks the familiar ghetto model of immigrant experience with her analysis of the German associational activity. Rejecting the convention that immigrant voluntary organizations were accommodations to exclusion from established society, she argues that Milwaukee's many *vereine* were essentially familiar forms of association developed in Germany by middle class urbanites who transferred them to American cities. The German community enjoyed such cultural and institutional variety that few immigrants felt the need to leave it completely. Because of its remarkable heterogeneity, it functioned all the more effectively in easing the process of adjustment to American life.

In a long chapter on politics Conzen shows that the classic model of the urban political machine erected on ethnic votes has little applicability to antebellum Milwaukee. The Germans as a group never had the lower class homogeneity assumed by the model; hence, unlike the Irish, they did not produce a machine vote. Even though the Germans tended to prefer the Democratic party, of which they formed the major segment, they were prepared to vote independently. The author effectively treats anticlericalism as a political issue and describes the advent of Republicanism as the agent that crystallized

divisions of class, religion, and time of arrival within the German community. Like most recent students of midnineteenth century ethnic politics, she finds that voting rights for immigrants and other political dimensions of nativism were major issues, whereas slavery and European nationalism were not.

By any measure this book is a major contribution to American social history. It is characterized by thorough research, brilliant interpretation, and lucid writing. Conzen has set a new standard of excellence for urban and ethnic historians.

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Robert M. La Follette and the Insurgent Spirit. By David P. Thelen. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1976. Pp. ix, 211. Note on sources, index. \$7.50.)

There has long been a need for a one volume interpretative biography of "Fighting Bob" La Follette. David P. Thelen did not seek to fill this void, and it continues to exist. Like other books in the *Library of American Biography* series, this study focuses as much on the times as on the individual. The result, in this instance, is a provocative analysis of the "insurgent spirit" during the first quarter of the twentieth century with La Follette viewed as the chief representative of the "radical" reformers.

La Follette's service as a three term congressman from Wisconsin during the Gilded Age did not suggest the ardent progressive who emerged after 1897. As a governor and senator, "Fighting Bob" denounced corporate wealth and privilege and the inequities of the capitalistic system. When he opposed America's entry into World War I, he felt the wrath of those committed to "making the world safe for democracy." During the Harding-Coolidge years he kept the flame of reform burning in the midst of the darkness of corruption and economic repression. His courage won La Follette the respect of his enemies, and the Senate would later name him one of its five greatest members.

A determined and consummate politician, La Follette was not converted to progressivism as the result of a bribery attempt by a Stalwart, as he later alleged. Rather, he recog-