

Divide and Dissent: Kentucky Politics, 1930–1963. By John Ed Pearce. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987. Pp. viii, 247. Illustrations, selected bibliography, index. \$24.00.)

John Ed Pearce, a reporter and columnist for the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, has written an interesting, enjoyable, and probing history of Kentucky state politics during the time period 1930–1963. Originally the author intended to write a brief review of Bert T. Combs's years as governor of Kentucky (1959–1963), but the material grew and grew until Pearce produced this 247-page book.

Three Democrats, A. B. (Happy) Chandler, Earle C. Clements, and Combs, are the book's major protagonists. Unfortunately, these men did not work together but rather often opposed each other to the great detriment of the state. Of the three, Chandler appears as the "heavy" because, among other defects, he did not want to share the political spotlight with anyone else and was a person who put his career ahead of the interests and needs of the commonwealth of Kentucky. Combs is Pearce's hero because he believes Combs performed excellently as governor. Combs tried hard and made important though sometimes politically unpopular decisions (e.g., raising taxes) as he attempted to get the state "going." A detailed discussion of Combs's political career and tenure as governor makes up the main portion of this volume.

Pearce's first chapters cover the early history of Kentucky politics. The author barely mentions Republican party politicians because during the thirty-three years covered by the book, they were a distinct minority and did not play a major role in the state's political development.

According to Pearce, Kentucky suffers from many deep-seated problems and long-term deficiencies, such as an economically poor population and an antiquated state Constitution that was last revised in 1891. This second problem is compounded by present-day resistance to a sweeping overhaul of the Constitution. Governors cannot succeed themselves in office (which may be a good idea). Moreover, elected officials are unwilling to levy and raise taxes to support the state government and to help solve the state's critical needs for better education, highways, and social programs. Perhaps most importantly, there is an overriding and transcendent preoccupation with the game of politics. As the title of this book indicates, the state is divided geographically, politically, and economically. Dissent between the groups dominates over the body politic's ability to work together to bring Kentucky into the mainstream of mid-twentieth century America.

The book is well written. It is a frank and somewhat cynical view of the fascinating history of Kentucky politics. While there are no footnotes or documentation in the text, a three-page bibliography appears at the end. Two sections of black-and-white photographs add to the reader's enjoyment of the text.

Politicians from neighboring states will find much "ammunition" in this book to use in urging potential businesses to settle in their state and to avoid Kentucky, as politics in the Blue Grass state is a history of bitterness, dissension, and missed opportunities.

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Class Conflict and Cultural Consensus: The Making of a Mass Consumer Society in Flint, Michigan. By Ronald Edsforth. (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987. Pp. xvi, 294. Figures, notes, selected bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$40.00; paperbound, \$12.00.)

In this book Ronald Edsforth provides an account of Flint automobile workers in the twentieth century. Although the title speaks of "cultural consensus" and of the "making of a mass consumer society," in fact the author has little to say about these intriguing but vague topics. This is not surprising since the forces shaping a cultural consensus and a mass consumer society have been more national than local in origin and focus. A case study approach yields relatively little where such large and fuzzy abstractions are concerned. The author does present a narrative that combines the development of Flint's automobile industry and work force with an account of a few short-lived attempts to establish a radical political presence in the city.

The story begins with the General Motors Corporation and William C. Durant. From the automobile industry's early days through the 1920s the work force quiescently submitted to the manufacturer's domination of the factories. There is little evidence of class consciousness or conflict. For practical purposes labor organizations did not exist, and a brief socialist political movement prior to World War I left no lasting impression. The Great Depression generated class feeling and produced the organization of the United Automobile Workers in Flint as in other automobile manufacturing centers. Also important were the efforts of the American Federation of Labor and the surge forward of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which climaxed in the great sit-down strike of 1936-1937. Political radicalism made little headway among the rank and file as Democrats such as President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Governor Frank Murphy captured the political loyalty of most workers.

In the final chapters Edsforth traces the decline of class feeling among the workers, attributing much of it to Walter P. Reuther, president of the UAW after 1946. Some historians may believe that