

efforts at publishing reformist newspapers, his career took an unexpected turn. In the 1850s circumstances allowed him to help institute reforms in the infant life insurance industry, whose mysteries were creating fortunes for a few manipulators and losses for myriad small policyholders. Wright put his remarkable mathematical ability to the task of developing actuary tables that removed some of the mystery and much of the chicanery from life insurance. This was a permanent achievement from which millions of Americans have benefited.

Lawrence B. Goodheart has performed the enviable feat of making the abstruse realm of insurance statistics—of which Wright was master—comprehensible to the layman. For this alone he deserves congratulation. In all, Goodheart has written a well-researched, engaging study of a nineteenth-century figure whose varied accomplishments deserve to be better known.

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American Immigrants and Their Generations: Studies and Commentaries on the Hansen Thesis after Fifty Years. Edited by Peter Kivisto and Dag Blanck. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990. Pp. viii, 222. Illustration, notes, figures, tables, appendix, index. \$19.95.)

Historian Marcus Lee Hansen mostly is remembered for his oft-quoted dictum about generational relations: “what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember” (p. 195). Hansen’s “principle of third generation interest” (p. 194) influenced writing on immigration and ethnic history following its exposure in *Commentary* in 1952, which was fifteen years after Hansen dealt with “The Problem of the Third Generation” before the Augustana Historical Society in Rock Island, Illinois. In 1987 editors Peter Kivisto and Dag Blanck, Augustana College faculty, invited leading historians and social scientists to the school to assess the significance over the last half-century of Hansen’s thesis; they now have edited the proceedings.

John Higham, Thomas J. Archdeacon, and Moses Rischin begin with essays that place Hansen’s work, including *The Atlantic Migration* (1940) and *The Immigrant in American History* (1940), in historical context and propose the terms for its enduring value. Particularly interesting is Higham’s contrast of Hansen’s narrative writing with that of social historian John Bodnar of Indiana University. Five essays are directed toward application of Hansen’s thesis to specific ethnicities. Philip Gleason argues that Will Herberg’s *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* (1960) made the first critical use of Hansen’s thesis in applying it to American religion and finds the

fit more favorable to Jews than to Catholics or Protestants. Nathan Glazer links generational interaction with specific historical change and shows how generational standing and contemporary events combine to shape the Jewish quest. Arnold Barton notes, with reservations, ways in which Hansen's thesis aids in comprehending Swedish-American history. Stanford M. Lyman questions Hansen's treatment of, and the relevance of the generational thesis to, the black experience. Victor Greene amends Hansen's thesis by arguing that the 1920–1950 generation's devotion to native dance and music indicates an affinity with the parent generation. In a final chapter Fred Matthews surveys the shifts in the study of immigrant history.

Although Hansen's thesis has been used to help explain up-drifts of interest in ethnicity, speculations on the connections of his insight to the dramatic rise in immigrant numbers in the 1980s are not apparent in this volume. What does come through is that Hansen gave voice to a demonstrable cultural phenomenon that should be considered in intergenerational research, but one relative to time, place, and group. Moreover, his elevation of the principle as "applicable in all fields of historical study" (p. 194) does not hold up. Readers may find that the critique of Hansen's thesis, finally, is secondary to the welcome positing of current direction in thinking about ethnicity and its historiography.

The book's appendix provides the text of Hansen's Augustana address, along with his long-forgotten essay "Who Shall Inherit America?" delivered in Indianapolis in 1937 before, according to the editors, the National Conference of Social Work (actually he spoke to the concurrent Conference on Immigration Policy). This was Hansen's last address before his premature death in 1938.

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The Reluctant Radicals: Jacob L. Beilhart and The Spirit Fruit Society. By James L. Murphy. (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989. Pp. xii, 263. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$39.50.)

Spirit Fruit Society, a small utopian community that was founded in 1901 and that continued until 1930, has been the subject of significant scholarship over the past few years. No scholar, however, has engaged in more painstaking research nor unearthed more details about the community than James L. Murphy. For more than twenty-five years Murphy seemingly searched every nook and cranny—as his acknowledgments and endnotes reveal—to furnish a more complete picture of Spirit Fruit.