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Ebner, Michael H. and Eugene M. Tobin, editors. *The Age of Urban Reform: New Perspectives on the Progressive Era*. Port Washington, N.Y.: National University Publications, Kennikat Press, 1977. Pp. viii, 213. Maps. \$12.95

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The touchstone of this anthology of ten essays on urban reform in America during the Progressive era is diversity. Ranging geographically from Seattle to Jersey City, and thematically from tenement houses to taxation, these articles by a self-proclaimed "new generation of historians," all of which appear for the first time in this volume, take up the challenge of providing systematic and detailed case studies of particular cities and their urban reform movements. While American cities between the 1890s and 1920s shared many common problems, such as inadequate housing, poor public health, substandard transportation, and corrupt civic administration, each city produced a fairly distinct progressive movement. Building on the foundation established by Wiebe, Hays, Lubove, Thelen, and others, these essays offer incisive analyses of ten different urban environments. As one of the authors comments, "Progressivism's blend of uniformity and diversity makes comparative analysis of individual case studies vital to an understanding of the period." The catchwords of reform assumed widely varied meanings and concealed diverse purposes when enunciated by different interest groups.

However, some characteristics appear to be common to all ten cities' urban reformers. The predominant force behind each city's reform movement was a group of Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, middle-class professionals and businessmen. Their innovations invariably functioned to restrict the political clout of the less-advantaged citizenry, and to make the city a more advantageous field for business investment. In Chelsea, Massachusetts, according to Edward J. Kopf, the drive for a commission-style government was an attempt by the Anglo-Saxon business community to dominate city politics, and commission government was opposed by labour and immigrant voters. In Houston, a burgeoning business elite with national connections successfully consolidated power in its own hands by instituting a commission government, a victory marked by the crushing of striking street-railway workers and the imposition of a poll tax to disenfranchise low-income citizens. For Harold Platt, Houston's "physical and structural modernization occurred simultaneously with racial and social exclusion." In Seattle, described by Lee Pendergrass, the broad coalition which formed the Municipal League attempted to wrench political leverage from an older group of capitalists over such issues as prostitution and private electric company franchises. Once in power, the League became increasingly elitist and conservative. Economic recession after 1912, industrial conflict, and the toughening of the labour movement disengaged working-class voters from the League and drove it further to the right. Finally, according to Wayne J. Urban, educational reform in the Atlanta public school system was imposed by a professional elite on a

largely reluctant population; Atlanta labour, for example, criticized progressive educational "fads."

A second characteristic common to most of America's early twentieth-century progressives was an ideology of technical expertise and state intervention. In an essay by Augustus Cerillo, Jr., New York City reformers such as Lawrence Veiller and Charles Evans Hughes are viewed as sharing a faith in administrative efficiency and bureaucracy through the use of new boards, bureaus and regulations. "The interests of the community" expressed through the state, Hughes avowed, had to take priority over individual profits. Los Angeles professionals and businessmen campaigned successfully for civil service reform and municipalization of utilities to win rationalized management of urban growth. The importance of civic technocrats, described for Los Angeles by Martin J. Schiesl, is also apparent in John F. Bauman's study of the Philadelphia Housing Commission, which established stringent housing laws and inspectorships. Michael Ebner's reform hero, mayor Frederick Low of Passaic, New Jersey, was an engineer and technical journalist with a deep faith in government intervention. Low, however, alienated corporate interests when he became an ardent single taxer and tried to increase taxes on the town's large textile industry.

Industrialization had clearly augmented economic and social divisions in American cities, and had thrown up barricades to business advance. The middle-class reformers described in The Age of Urban Reform were not Americans who wasted time agonizing over the maintenance of laissez-faire and free-enterprise myths. They used civic and state governments, as well as political associations, to intervene in a variety of problems and to secure cities more conducive to business prosperity and expansion. One of these problems was poor housing. For a Philadelphia business executive, "In order to obtain the maximum efficiency from any workman, he must have good conditions under which to live and work Health makes life and life creates property and property is the wealth of the world." Another problem was education. Atlanta reformers strove to ensure that public schools would provide vocational training to mesh with the needs of local employers. For its accounts of housing, education, and other civic facilities, and the groups which instituted them, The Age of Urban Reform is a valuable source on the modernization of American cities.

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Fries, Sylvia Doughty. The Urban Idea in Colonial America. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977. Pp. xviii, 216. \$12.50.

Sylvia Doughty Fries has described and analysed the intellectual and social origins of the city in colonial America, focusing on New England