

Fox, Kenneth. *Better City Government: Innovations in American Urban Politics, 1850-1937*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977. Pp. 222. Tables, bibliographic essay, index. \$15.00 cloth

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this log jam by establishing greater centralized control over city finances and public services. Baltimore then constructed a new sewer system, repaved its streets, and introduced new forms of commuter transport such as the electric streetcar and the automobile. In each case, however, Anderson shows that economic and technological imperatives shaped events; at best politicians simply modified existing trends. Anderson accepts the thesis that a self-interested business elite led the reform movement but he points out that improved sanitation, better streets, and faster transportation benefited everyone.

Anderson's work, by use of urban spatial models, brings a refreshing new approach to urban historiography. While he tends to tip the scale too far, his stress on the importance of economic and technological causes and his insistence on perceiving the city as a total system act as needed counterweights to those who have emphasized political affairs to the exclusion of all else. Impersonal forces dominated city reform in the past because civic leaders tackled one problem at a time without any overall frame of reference. In the current crisis, Anderson concludes, "unless a comprehensive view is taken of the urban system, its resolution -- if there is a resolution -- will once again be beyond our control."

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Fox, Kenneth. Better City Government: Innovations in American Urban Politics, 1850-1937. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977. Pp. 222. Tables, bibliographic essay, index. \$15.00 cloth.

Historical studies of urban municipal government in the United States suffered for too many years. "Precisely what is lacking," Eric E. Lampard observed not long ago, "is good political history of American cities ... political in the larger sense, not just elections and running for office ... but the nature of local government." Ernest S. Griffith's highly regarded History of American City Government, The Colonial Period (1938), the first in a projected series, waited thirty-six years to be joined by its companions. It now is inclusive, if not always satisfactory, through 1920 in four volumes.

Fortunately this dearth of analytic scholarship is in the process of reversal. Young historians within the past three years have published important monographs on critical aspects of urban municipal government, namely John C. Teaford's The Municipal Revolution in America, Origins of Modern Urban Government, 1650-1825 (1975), Martin J. Schiesl's The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America, 1880-1920

(1977), and Bradley R. Rice's Progressive Cities, The Commission Government Movement in America (1977). The book under review by Kenneth Fox, originally a doctoral dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania, is another addition to this newly flourishing and enriched literature. With these four volumes, plus the Griffith series, in hand, no longer are historians dependent on other social scientists, whose coverage of the subject is often cursory at best.

Better City Government is an ambitious and important book that belies its graduate school origins. It is multi-faceted in the questions pursued and the audiences addressed. Fox labels the volume as (xiv), "a history of urban political innovation in the United States during the period of transformation into an industrial, urban, and modern society." Unlike such well-regarded case studies as Allswang (Chicago), Crooks (Baltimore), Holli (Detroit), or Tager (Toledo), the author focuses primarily on national factors which shaped the ideology of municipal reform. In the process he selectively traces the evolution of systematic thinking about the urban policy through three phases. First he examines the impact of Lord Bryce, John W. Burgess, and "the new political science" prior to the Depression of 1893. Next he discusses Frank Goodnow, the National Municipal League, and what Fox calls the school of "functional innovation" which broadly affected urban Progressivism. He concludes with a dissection of the conflict-ridden concept of metropolitanism. The latter spawned a critical debate among social scientists in the inter-war years which culminated in the New Deal's impressively entitled, albeit largely ignored, Our Cities, Their Role in the National Economy. In the end, as one might very well suspect, Fox draws a rather pessimistic statement about national urban policy since the 1930s. Public officials charged with responsibility for formulating contemporary policy would be well-served if they considered the unhappy story as related by Fox.

Consideration of this book would remain incomplete without some further attention to two of its especially important aspects. Among the contributions made by the author, clearly the most illuminating as well as original involves the role of the federal Bureau of the Census at the beginning of the twentieth century in developing categories of statistical standards by which officials in any given city could measure performance, say in allocations for public safety or street sanitation, with those of similar communities. Less convincing, however, is the handling of the "functionalists" of the Progressive Era. I am particularly bothered by the failure of the author to even consider the so-called activists of this era, big city reform mayors such as Detroit's Hazen S. Pingree, Toledo's Samuel "Golden Rule" Jones and Brand Whitlock, Jersey City's Mark M. Fagan, or Cleveland's Tom L. Johnson. Clearly their very critical role, though markedly different from the people whom Fox is concerned with, cannot be ignored in any consideration of national urban policy at the beginning of the twentieth century. Finally, the author deserves our unremitting praise for his careful explanation of the much-abused notion of business efficiency, elaborating on its inapplicability to key facets of the public economy.

Better City Government may not be a book that will please everyone, but that is a tribute to the author's willingness to entertain an array of critical issues. Fox has written a provocative book that can only be ignored at one's peril.

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Donajgrodzki, A. P., editor. Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain.
 London: Croom Helm, 1977. Pp. 258. £8.50.

Whether or not they employ the specific term "social control" a growing number of historians of nineteenth century Britain have in the past decade been turning to the question of how the social elites succeeded in maintaining both themselves and the lower classes in their respective places during the difficult transition from a rural to an urbanized society. Donajgrodzki has drawn together nine essays of varying quality and interest which attempt to deal with some key aspects of this enormous problem. In his introduction to the volume the editor sketches out the history of the term "social control" and traces its use by sociologists from Durkheim to Ross to Parsons. At the bottom the concept implies that order -- in which the possessing classes had the greatest interest -- was not "natural" but a product of social processes, relationships, and institutions. And these institutions included, in addition to the obvious arms of the legal system, charity, education and the direction of both leisure and philanthropy. The problem of social control was in one sense thus a constant implicit pre-occupation of the nineteenth-century elite, but only at times of acute social tensions as in the 1840s and the 1880s would they address themselves explicitly to the issue. Such a concept as that of social control can, in clumsy hands, be pushed to absurd, reductionist lengths. Every act of the upper classes could be construed as being blatantly hypocritical; their institutions seen as serving no other goal but that of assuring consensus while deflecting conflict. The essays in this collection are indeed successful or not according to the extent to which they stress the interactionist, developmental potential of the concept rather than its crudely mechanistic employment.

John Stevenson's essay on riots between 1789 and 1829 deals mainly with the machinery of legal repression and focuses on the flexibility and subtlety of the establishment's responses to disorder. Extremes were avoided, he asserts, charity was doled out, deference was elicited. Donajgrodzki's own contribution is a comparison of visions of order held by the traditionalist Tremeneere and the utilitarian Chadwick. He finds that, not surprisingly, they agreed on ends and only differed on the means by which order was to be