

Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

Anderson, Alan D. *The Origin and Resolution of an Urban Crisis: Baltimore, 1890-1930*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. Pp. xi, 143. Illustrations. \$12.00 cloth

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Number 3-78, February 1979

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019418ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019418ar>

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Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Adams, G. (1979). Review of [Anderson, Alan D. *The Origin and Resolution of an Urban Crisis: Baltimore, 1890-1930*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. Pp. xi, 143. Illustrations. \$12.00 cloth]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, (3-78), 142-143. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019418ar>

There is, of course, much between the covers of The Politics of Crime and Conflict. This review has perhaps not adequately conveyed the extent of the information that can be gleaned from the work. Those searching for data on many areas of "deviant" behaviour, public disorder, and criminal activity can profit from a close reading of the text. But in approach, sensitivity, conception, and method, the study is too general, the net too widely cast, to tell us much beyond the most obvious. To understand "the politics of crime and conflict" we need many more historical studies of specific contexts, events, and processes. Merely using historical evidence to address questions of central concern to North America's liberal intelligensia and the funding agencies that so often finance their grandiose projects is no solution.

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Anderson, Alan D. The Origin and Resolution of an Urban Crisis: Baltimore, 1890-1930. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. Pp. xi, 143. Illustrations. \$12.00 cloth.

Scholars who have analyzed the American city as it evolved during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries have usually focused on the role played by municipal government. Some have viewed the strife which erupted as a moral struggle between highminded reformers and corrupt bosses while others have seen it as a drive for modernization and order. In his book, The Origin and Resolution of an Urban Crisis: Baltimore, 1890-1930, Alan D. Anderson finds these and other interpretations inadequate because they fail to give proper weight to those economic and technological forces which he believes truly determined the course of urban history. "It is necessary," he also declares, "to view the city as a system in which the decisions of the several different institutional units interact." His work is a case study of Baltimore surveyed from this vantage point.

So many American cities found themselves in a state of crisis by the end of the Nineteenth Century that almost simultaneously they started the movements for reform which became hallmarks of the progressive era. In Baltimore's case a swollen population, a rise in per capita income, and a congested and polluted central business district had induced many citizens to move to the outer fringes of the city. This migration, plus other influences, stimulated a growing demand for more and better public services especially in the fields of education, sanitation, and transportation. Improvements of this nature, Anderson notes, demanded money and experts but the incumbent political chiefs refused to surrender their power to civil servants, and reformers proved unwilling to raise taxes for a loosely organized government run by local bosses. In 1898 a new city charter broke

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