because Warren's history seems to contrast so sharply with the small bituminous coal towns I have studied in southwestern Pennsylvania. Yet, like other works of the new urban history, Weber's study leaves gnawing unanswered questions about the social life of Warren, 1870-1910. Recently, historians such as Edward Pessen have pointed out that dependence on aggregate data, while giving voice to the inarticulate, can produce rather arid history. While far from an arid study, Weber's description of Warren, 1870-1910, could bear some fleshing out.

Department of History
California State College
California, Pennsylvania

John F. Bauman


This well-written and thoroughly researched study of Polish and Lithuanian immigrants between 1860 and 1910 concentrates on the theme of rising ethnic consciousness. Not content merely to describe the process of growing ethnic identity among immigrants, Victor Greene offers an interesting explanation for the phenomenon. Greene's thesis is that ethnic awareness originated in the internecine turmoil of ethnic subcultures. Minimizing the importance of intergroup conflict and economic exploitation as generators of ethnic identity, he argues that the "heightened group awareness" experienced by Polish and Lithuanian newcomers emerged from conflicts within communities. Specifically, peasants, who had little sense of ethnic nationalism in Europe, acquired "national awareness" in America when elites within the ethnic communities sought to define their objectives. For Poles and Lithuanians the debate which stirred this awareness raged over God (religion) and country (nationalism).

Greene demonstrates his theme by studying the internal disputes of Poles and Lithuanians primarily in Chicago. The fundamental debate during the first half-century of Chicago Polonia involved the contention between the "religionists" and the "nationalists." The former defined Polishness as synonymous with Roman Catholicism and urged Poles to be loyal to the Catholic hierarchy in America. Nationalists, on the other
hand, emphasized the need for a highly developed sense of Polish ethnic identity which went beyond Roman Catholicism to include other religions, political views, and congregational autonomy (Poles should control Polish churches), rather than submission to Roman Catholic authority. For the Poles, whose experience constitutes nearly the entire book, a resolution of their contention was not effected until 1908, when the appointment of a Polish-American bishop brought recognition for both Polish distinctiveness and Polish Catholicism. The impact of this enduring controversy was to force newcomers to gain a greater awareness of their ethnic identity and its components.

While Greene's argument is well thought out, it should be evaluated carefully, for it is constructed in a somewhat narrow framework and overlooks other than ideological divisions within the Polish community. His notion that the American experience reinforced ethnicity is correct. His concentration on leaders of Polish religious and fraternal institutions — who usually arrived with an acute sense of ethnic nationalism — almost insures, however, a conclusion that internal ethnic issues were the primary cause of heightened ethnicity. The fact that he deals with the early period of Polish immigration, moreover, means that his arrivals were largely Prussian Poles, who were higher in literacy, skills, and Polish identity than Poles from Galicia, the origin of most peasant Poles after the 1890s. Could the debates he describes have been essentially between elites? At least the views of the Polish masses, especially from Galicia, could stand further elaboration. Did they totally embrace this new ethnic nationalism? To what extent — which I think was considerable — did they retain European regional attachments? In Pittsburgh Galician Poles seldom married Prussian Poles before 1900. To what extent were the masses acquiring working-class views which would also explain concerns over ethnicity, property ownership, and status?

Secondly, Greene's denial that economic exploitation in America or intergroup consciousness did not significantly contribute to the formation of group consciousness is far from conclusive. His concentration on elites and religious institutions tends to obscure other variables which were influencing newly arrived Poles and Lithuanians. Noticeably absent is any discussion of Poles or Lithuanians in the workplace. Whom did Poles face as foremen every day? Who hired or fired them? To what extent was Polish cohesiveness fostered by the realization that ethnic kinship could be a valuable means of securing jobs?

Greene also fails to seek an explanation as to why Poles were
totally preoccupied with the issues he describes. Some sense of structural isolation in America would have had to exist if Poles completely eschewed the concerns of the larger community for those which were purely ethnic. Part of this sense of distinctiveness may have emanated from a realization that they were workers — Polish workers to be sure — who were low on the American economic hierarchy. This perception could also explain the heightened concern with status and property ownership which Greene attributed solely to a transfer of peasant values. Indeed, the overtones of anticlericalism among nationalists often had a working-class base (priests did not work hard for a living). The ethnic community had divisions, as Greene admits, but these differences were economic as well as ideological. A more extensive structural analysis of the Polish community may have revealed not only who was most concerned with "God and Country," but the complexity of the immigrant's new consciousness.

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

John Bodnar