

Social Expectations and Perception: The Case of the Slavic Anthracite Workers. By MICHAEL A. BARENDSE. The Pennsylvania State University Studies No. 47. (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981. Pp. 79. Preface, map, bibliography. \$3.50.)

Throughout the course of American history, Michael Barendse contends, "culturally produced negative expectations concerning immigrants in American society" have created the very perceptions that have "fulfilled these expectations" (Preface, no page number). What a people expect to be true about newcomers, then, is what they perceive about them.

This is regrettable enough, but perhaps understandable, if applied to ordinary people in any given situation. But what is worse, according to Barendse, is that many historians have been guilty of perpetuating negative and untrue stereotypes in their accounts of the immigrant experience. More specifically, he points out that until the work of Harold Aurand, Victor Greene, and others appeared in the late 1960s, most histories of the Slavic immigration into eastern Pennsylvania were rife with misconceptions of both the Slavic potential as productive American citizens and the true role of Slavic miners in the eventual triumph of the United Mine Workers in the anthracite coalfields.

In a series of brief chapters and "case studies" Barendse supports the conclusions of Aurand and Greene. He argues that, contrary to accounts previous to theirs, Slavic miners contributed significantly — more than many "American" miners — to the union victory in eastern Pennsylvania. Further, in one of his case studies, Barendse demonstrates that in breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church of Scranton and forming their own Polish National Catholic Church, local Slavic immigrants proved that, contrary to many interpretations, they were not a strange people of limited capacity unable to fend for themselves in their new land.

In pursuit of the question of Slavic assimilation into American life, Barendse terminates his short volume with a two-page Epilogue. In it he concludes that assimilation is complete because editions of *Who's Who in America* now contain Slavic names in equal proportion to that of other core groups in American society.

As may be necessary for an addition to the Pennsylvania State University Studies, this volume is very brief, amounting to fewer than seventy pages of text. While the reader may desire greater

elucidation in support of the author's theses, this may be less a problem than the book's lack of scholarly documentation. Although the flow of the text is often interrupted by a reference to newspapers or secondary sources, the absence of footnotes detracts from the book's intended directness and effect. There is no index (perhaps understandable in such a brief work), and the bibliography of almost eight-and-a-half pages includes a number of references that appear to bear little relevance to the text. Despite these shortcomings Barendse's point is well taken and his book is necessary reading for students of labor, immigrant, and social history, particularly for those in Pennsylvania.

Department of History and Urban Affairs THOMAS H. COODE
California State College
California, Pennsylvania

My Voice Was Heard. Edited by IDA COHEN SELAVAN. (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., and National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section, 1981. Pp. xxii, 278. Introduction, preface, list of respondents, list of contributors, bibliography, index, illustrations. \$15.00, hardbound; \$9.95, paper.)

Oral history projects have become quite popular in recent years in high school and college classrooms, church and synagogue groups, and local community organizations. Volunteers, sometimes under the guidance of professional historians or anthropologists, prepare a questionnaire and interview older members of the community in an effort to preserve fragments of the past that would otherwise be lost forever with the passing of the generation that still remembers. Sometimes the resulting transcriptions are published in whole or in part; in other cases, where resources are more slender, they become a valuable archive for future historians.

Publications based on oral history techniques vary widely in form, ranging from the fairly straightforward biographical or autobiographical study of a prominent person, which simply uses the tape recorder instead of the typewriter to capture the subject's words more easily and naturally, to analytical studies which use the recorded statements of ordinary men and women to arrive at a view of history "from the bottom up." In between are autobiographical statements by ordinary folk, allowed to stand largely on their own as case histories, with a minimum of editorial intervention. Perhaps the most crucial