

every page. This book will appeal to thousands of former students and teachers as well as add a personal dimension to the analysis of this important phenomenon in Iowa and midwestern educational history.

Kingdom to Commune: Protestant Pacifist Culture Between World War I and the Vietnam Era, by Patricia Appelbaum. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. xi, 330 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Acts of Conscience: Christian Nonviolence and Modern American Democracy, by Joseph Kip Kosek. Columbia Studies in Contemporary American History. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. xiii, 352 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth.

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Pacifism has always been a distinctly minority position in U.S. society, but between the world wars it exercised enough influence that even the ultimate, if fictional, ecclesiastical opportunist Elmer Gantry toyed with preaching pacifism during his Methodist phase. But it apparently required principles.

These two fine books both deftly illuminate mainstream Protestant pacifism from around 1920 to 1960 and its evolution within that time, but in very different ways. (We should pause to note that there were other disparate Protestant pacifisms, including a diminishing Pentecostal variety and an enduring Anabaptist one that were larger numerically if not as influential intellectually until after this period, when John Howard Yoder synthesized Mennonitism and Barth.) Appelbaum is interested in pacifism's internal dynamics; Kosek in its influence on American society.

Both authors take a primarily biographical approach, and some similarities emerge. Both begin with Harold Gray, the World War I conscientious objector whose memoir *Character Bad* would be influential for World War II objectors. Kosek adds into the mix Gray's shipmates on his YMCA journey to Europe, Evan Thomas and Kirby Page. Both Appelbaum and Kosek seek to rehabilitate the historical memory of the almost forgotten Page, whose tireless efforts as a pacifist "social evangelist" crisscrossing the country in the 1920s and '30s did as much as anyone's to popularize pacifism. Kosek and Appelbaum both devote considerable space to Richard Gregg, an early nonviolent theorist. (Only Kosek mentions the earlier theorist Clarence Case, a University

of Iowa political scientist who was the first to analyze Gandhi's achievements.) Not surprisingly, both see a turn in U.S. pacifism around 1940 as the world descended into another conflagration; Appelbaum sees it as a turn inward, Kosek as a turn to Gandhianism. Each ends by profiling a different participant in the 1959 Omaha action against nuclear weapons: Appelbaum portrays Marjorie Swann, who was featured in the women's magazine *Redbook* for her civil disobedience and prison time even though she had small children at home; Kosek limns A. J. Muste, whose more traditional marriage left him with more time to organize actions designed to prick the consciences of those residing in the American national security state.

Appelbaum is obsessed with categorizing what kind of movement twentieth-century pacifism was. That she does not succeed in a definition only shows that the movement was *sui generis*, but her attempts in both her dissertation and book do help delineate its parameters. In her dissertation Appelbaum made the audacious if overstated claim that mainstream Protestant pacifism was a new religion. The case can be made, if definitions can be set to fit the evidence, but probably pacifism remained within the boundaries of liberal Protestantism (as prominent pacifist Kirby Page's frequent presence in the pages of *The Christian Century* suggests). But the provocative claim in her dissertation at least has the advantage of making us think about the newness of pacifism in a way that the suggestions in her book do not. Here she merely presents sociological classifications, and her final word — that pacifism is a movement within Protestantism like fundamentalism — may be true, but seems unhelpful in understanding its distinctions.

Never mind — Appelbaum's strength is not in defining pacifism's sociological grouping, but in describing its internal dynamics and its evolution. By unearthing such artifacts as plays, worship services, artwork, and storytelling, and by tracing the social networks that pacifists constructed, she has made a significant contribution to communitarian studies as well as to the history of pacifism.

Appelbaum does make a few mistakes. She claims incorrectly that William Lloyd Garrison was a premillennialist (46). She also states that Kirby Page saw that "the true meaning of the cross was not atonement . . . but the 'redeeming power of sacrificial love'" (53). Actually, that was his view of the atonement. She describes the draft-age David Delinger in 1940 as a "longtime activist." But these are minor quibbles.

I haven't read Kosek's dissertation, so I don't know if it deviates from his sure-footed book. Kosek's book more nearly resembles an institutional history, following the leadership of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), the major religious pacifist organization of the

time. One of Kosek's many contributions is to situate the early Reinhold Niebuhr within the context of the FOR. That Niebuhr, even after the publication of *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, was for pacifism before he was against it adds to our understanding of Niebuhr as well as his pacifist contemporaries.

Appelbaum is correct that pacifists took comfort in a like-minded community to construct a new society with building blocks they could find within their own confines, but Kosek is also right that pacifists urgently sought to affect the larger society through nonviolent theory and action.

Appelbaum, in ending her study with the biography of Marjorie Swann, shows how pacifism's internal dynamics led to feminism. Kosek, more interested in pacifism's effect on political realities, ends with pacifism's impact on the civil rights revolution. The protagonists that they both evoke would be impatient with a president who seeks to postpone the abolition of nuclear weapons, much less war, to a future beyond our lifetimes.

Both Appelbaum and Kosek discuss pacifists with Iowa connections, though not always identifying that connection. Both rehabilitate the importance of Kirby Page, who graduated from Drake Divinity School, pastored his first parish in Iowa, and frequently returned to the state as a social evangelist. A. J. Muste spent a year at Northwestern College and was married in Iowa. Marj Swann was born and raised outside of Cedar Rapids and retains the gentle effects of a Methodist upbringing.

Both books have excellent bibliographies, boons to future research. I had some problems with the index in Appelbaum's book: I couldn't find a reference to Nazis, Hitler, Germany, the Axis, or World War II, although my clear recollection is that she didn't elide treatment of that war. I also happened to find in the footnotes but not in the index a reference to nineteenth-century Danish theologian N. F. S. Grundtvig, associated ancillary with Iowa history.

So, should advocates of social change concentrate on internal community or external organizing? A reading of these books would suggest that the answer is yes to both, unless the seemingly sterile argument that either the feminist or the civil rights revolution was more important in reshaping American society can be definitively answered. Appelbaum's and Kosek's works suggest that placing the fulcrum on the edge of the possible may be more fruitful than more incremental attempts.