

who engaged in a bitter battle with management that included a lengthy sit-down strike in the summer of 1938. Sentner's championing of rank-and-file participation helped make District 8 into what Feurer considers "the most democratic labor organization in the country" (xvii).

At times, Feurer overstates her case; one did not have to be a Communist to embrace civic unionism, and District 8 had no monopoly on the slogan, "human rights over property rights," which also served as a rallying cry for midwestern UAW members. But, to her credit, Feurer reminds us that any study of industrial unionism must take seriously the contributions of radical labor activists. Although they would stand no chance of surviving in today's narrow political spectrum, Feurer concludes that they would be welcome allies in helping local communities confront the challenges of today's global economy. A latter-day Sentner might start in Newton, Iowa, where in October 2007 the Maytag plant closed its doors after 114 years in production.

*Fighting Son: A Biography of Philip F. La Follette*, by Jonathan Kasperek. Madison: Wisconsin State Historical Society Press, 2006. xviii, 332 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$22.95 paper.

Reviewer John D. Buenker is professor emeritus of history at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. He is the author or editor of seven books and some three dozen articles and essays on the Progressive Era, including *The History of Wisconsin*, volume 4, *The Progressive Era, 1893-1914*.

*Fighting Son* is a heroic attempt to delineate a political and personal perspective on one of the most enigmatic figures in the history of midwestern politics. Although the author generally succeeds in his task, he cannot avoid admitting that some aspects of Wisconsin's Philip Fox La Follette will always remain paradoxical, puzzling, and internally contradictory. A self-described "radical," chief architect of the Wisconsin Progressive Party, and the son of a progressive icon, he later took up with such reactionaries as Charles A. Lindbergh and Douglas MacArthur. Blessed with gifts that made a career in politics "almost inevitable," he also harbored a desire for the cloister of academia. An avid spokesman for the America First Committee, he later served as MacArthur's right-hand man during World War II. As one who espoused the "most significant expression of liberal thought outside the New Deal" (xvii) and fiercely defended state and party autonomy, La Follette nevertheless recognized that the enormity of the country's economic malaise mandated massive federal intervention.

The keys to understanding Phil La Follette, according to Kasperek, are "his profound grasp of the meaning of America" (259) and his "de-

sire to do great things" (xviii). His parents instilled in him an almost mystical faith in America as an ongoing experiment, a new *kind* of nation, an idea that has inspired all of the country's great leaders. To nurture that idea, Americans have to work tirelessly at democracy and adapt to changing conditions. Like his famous father, Phil was convinced that political democracy was impossible without economic opportunity. He saw the Great Depression not just as an economic disaster, but also as a political crisis that threatened to destroy American democracy. He believed that it was the task of his generation, and of himself personally, to engender what Lincoln called "a new birth of freedom," in order to counteract the totalitarianism that was engulfing much of the world. As he asserted in his controversial speech on behalf of the National Progressives of America in 1938, it was possible for men to have both work and freedom. For him, "progressivism was not so much a collection of political tenets as it was an approach" (xvi). He insisted that no problem was impossible to solve if intelligent and dedicated public servants could investigate it thoroughly and craft an appropriate response. Part intellectual and part politician, he based his actions on "the habits of careful observation and reflection" (xvi). By the same token, no rational person of good will could possibly reject such an approach unless he or she put personal, class, or localized interests ahead of the general welfare. Like his father, Phil was inclined to make any difference of opinion into a conflict between good and evil. Although he had no use for the moral reforms that had been favored by so many Progressive Era activists, he regularly infused his speeches and correspondence with a strong sense of moral weight. Like the earlier reformers, he hated "sin," but he defined it as the exploitation of the less fortunate by the rich and powerful.

Much of the motivation for his actions, the author makes clear, sprang from his unique position within the dynamic of the La Follette political dynasty. At the risk of oversimplification, it appears that he suffered from "second son syndrome." Even though Phil was far more like "Fighting Bob" in political acumen, ambition, and oratorical ability, it was his older brother, Robert Jr., whom their father groomed to be his successor and who took the La Follette seat in the U.S. Senate upon the older man's death in 1925. As Phil later wrote, "my father did not dislike me, but I worried him" (7). Always the apple of his mother's eye, Phil strove all his life to gain his father's approval and to emulate him in public life, while trying to be a better husband, father, and human being. At the same time, he was fiercely loyal to his older brother and almost always deferred to him, except in their attitude toward Franklin D. Roosevelt and in his decision to form a separate Progress-

sive Party. All things considered, Kasperek asserts, the La Follette political dynasty did a better job of transferring power than did either the Roosevelts or the Kennedys.

*Fort Des Moines*, by Penelope A. LeFew-Blake. Images of America Series. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2006. 127 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$19.99 paper.

Reviewer Michael W. Vogt is curator at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge and a member of the State Historical Society of Iowa's board of trustees.

Fort Des Moines, completed in 1903, played a significant role in the history of the U.S. Army. The third Iowa fort so named, the post's history began as one of the last and largest cavalry facilities constructed in the twentieth century. Over the following 40 years Fort Des Moines served as the starting point for two revolutionary programs that forever changed the army's employment of African Americans and women. On the picturesque parade ground at Fort Des Moines, long-held racial and gender stereotypes were shattered.

LeFew-Blake's illustrated history begins with a brief introduction summarizing the history of Fort Des Moines No. 3, chronicling the changing use of the fort in response to evolving military tactics, technology, and personnel use over time. The remainder of the book is divided into four chapters illustrating the post's role as the first training site for African American officer candidates (1917), the cavalry, hospital, and artillery (prior to World War II), and the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps/Women's Army Corps years (1942-1946), and, finally, the structural deterioration of a once scenic military complex. Each chapter is illustrated with period photographs and postcard images providing a unique visual history of Fort Des Moines and its support of U.S. military operations throughout the twentieth century.

Readers should not be misled by the book's title and presume that the author uniformly covers the entire history of Fort Des Moines No. 3. LeFew-Blake devotes the majority of her text, research, and photo selections to the experiences of the 72,000 women who entered the army at the fort. All 21 bibliographic sources reference WAAC/WAC history. That emphasis allows readers to more fully understand the early 1940s military environment at the fort and the available billets and constructed amenities supporting the training, social, and military activities of the first women to enter the army at Fort Des Moines during World War II.