



Encyclopedia of American Social Movements (Four Volume Set)

By Immanuel Ness

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Editorial Review

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This is the first major reference work to convey social conflicts in U.S. history that mainstream accounts usually gloss over--the struggles waged by ordinary people against power. The 152 contributors are mainly from American universities, and the editor is at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. The encyclopedia is organized according to 16 movements, among them the antislavery, civil rights, women's, labor, and environmental movements. After an introductory overview, each section contains from 5 to more than 30 articles that correspond to time periods (e.g., "Religious Movements, 1730s-1830s" in the chapter "Religious, Utopian, and Health Movements") or subject (for example, "Eugenics Movement" and "Prohibition and Repeal" in the chapter "Moral Reform Movements").

The writing is lively, accurate, and balanced. As a result of interrelationships in the movements, and probably the plan of organization for the work, there is some duplication. A history of the Knights of Labor can be found in both the "Knights of Labor" and the "Labor Movement, 1877-1919" sections of the "Labor Movement" chapter. As with any reference work, readers may quibble about some editorial decisions. For example, the only individual woman who is given full-article treatment in the "Women's Movement" chapter is Matilda Joselyn Gage. African American and Latino mutual aid societies are described but not ones begun by European or Asian immigrants.

A bibliography at the end of each of the articles and a 54-page bibliography at the end of the work direct users to further resources. Each volume has cumulative general and biographical indexes. Photos appear in most articles, as do sidebars that generally highlight a prominent person or a pertinent document. The work is current, including, for example, a June 2003 decision by the Supreme Court.

Some similar information can be found scattered across other works, but this title provides a unique context and will fill a need for easily accessible information in public and academic libraries. *Arthur Meyers*
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