

Arja Pilli, *The Finnish-Language Press in Canada, 1901-1939: A Study in the History of Ethnic Journalism*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1982. 330 pages.

Compared to the Nordic immigration and ethnic history of the United States, that of Canada has received little attention until fairly recently. In some respects the histories of various immigrant groups cut across the border, both because groups and individuals migrated from one country to the other and because the same institutions often served ethnic communities on either side. In other respects the histories diverged with separate institutions and separating paths of integration into two distinct identities, the paths of Americanization and of Canadianization. The relative paucity of specialized studies of the Canadian situation may be one reason why there have been so few comparative studies. Arja Pilli's detailed study of *The Finnish-Language Press in Canada, 1901-1939* is

therefore a welcome contribution.

Her book illustrates a major problem that most ethnic historians are confronted with: the dearth of records. The majority language and culture have official status. (In Canada, of course, two languages have such status.) Public national and provincial archives and well-funded private collections are repositories for this majority culture. Such institutions do not necessarily consciously neglect what goes on within the various North American immigrant communities: they have until recently simply been unaware of the existence of any other culture than that of the dominant groups. Consequently, complete runs of immigrant newspapers are rarely found in the libraries that collect such material in the official language(s) and these libraries have demonstrated little interest in acquiring and taking care of the records of immigrant institutions.

When the official culture did demonstrate interest in immigrant culture it often took the form of suspicion or even suppression. This negative reaction to the strangers in their midst is ironically one reason why Dr. Pilli has been able to document some parts of her study so well: in Canada as in the United States the First World War led to censorship of the foreign language press. In Canada censorship applied to the press in general, but those in foreign languages and particularly those languages that, like Finnish, for a time were defined as "enemy languages," were monitored with special attention. Consequently, the Public Archives of Canada actually have a good number of records and collections that relate to the history of the ethnic press. Dr. Pilli has made excellent use of these records, and her account of the Finnish-Canadian press in the context of Canadian censorship during and immediately after the war years is a particularly valuable contribution to ethnic history. With Carl H. Chrislock's study of the effects of US censorship on the Norwegian-American press in his *Ethnicity Challenged: The Upper Midwest Norwegian-American Experience in World War I* (1981) and Arja Pilli's book we now have a basis for comparisons of aspects of nativist reactions in Canada and the US.

A distinct difference between the Finnish immigrant experience and that of other Nordic peoples in North America is the division of the Finns into two irreconcilable groupings reflecting the divisions that led to civil war in the home country: one with socialism and unionism as dominant forces, the other rallying around national cultural traditions and the Lutheran Church. In Canada the radical groups had the strongest organizations and while Dr. Pilli has been able to document the history and the organizational context of the Finnish labor and socialist press in great detail, she has had difficulties in finding corresponding sources for the non-socialist activities among the Finns in Canada. As a result her book is at times as much a history of radical movements among the Finnish-Canadians as a press history.

Arja Pilli is primarily interested in the organizational or institutional history of the Finnish-Canadian press and she has not tried to give her readers a sense of the actual contents of the newspapers. The 24-page chapter entitled "Content Analysis of the Finnish-Canadian Press" gives statistical tables of the distribution of content by broad categories like "community news" or "feature articles" but does not give any sense of the journalistic style, the variety of contributors, the themes or the ways in which the various newspapers reflect life in the immigrant community. Although the lack of complete runs makes it impossible to base such studies on the reading of all issues, it would seem that there