

acclaim and established her as a superstar. Lil, West's stock character, was a prostitute with "a heart of gold," who "used men" and was "always in control."

Although West had a contract with Paramount and a formidable reputation, Sochen notes that her success in Hollywood was far from certain. The irrepressible West, however, quickly discovered "the trump cards that would allow her to get her way" at Paramount, and established her special niche as a sex comedienne by bringing various reincarnations of Lil to the screen. Her 1933 films *She Done Him Wrong* (the film adaptation of *Diamond Lil*) and *I'm No Angel*, both extremely successful, reiterated West's themes about women's sexual nature and their "right to express it" without suffering "any social consequences as a result." West made other films and received enormous amounts of publicity in her constant skirmishes with Will Hays and the Production Code, but Sochen points out that what had once seemed daring soon became predictable and hackneyed. Convinced her persona need never change, West blamed others for the decline in popularity of her movies. Sochen's discussion of West's Hollywood career is balanced and fair; she delineates both West's talents and the different facets of her personality that contributed to her demise as a film star. Although her film career was over by 1943, West remained an active performer for two more decades, first in stage revivals of *Diamond Lil*, and later in a night club act in which she was surrounded by male body builders in a parody of the "girlie" shows. West's vanity and ego seemed somewhat pathetic at this stage of her life, but Sochen treats her with admirable understanding and sympathy. The author is not convincing, however, when she claims that West had become "a vital force" among the Baby Boom generation in the 1960s.

As Sochen notes, the historical profession has been slow to acknowledge the importance of popular culture. Thus many historians have only recently begun to incorporate more information on popular culture into their classes. *Mae West: She Who Laughs, Lasts* provides some very valuable background for such instructors, but it will probably remain on supplemental rather than required reading lists for most general twentieth century surveys or women's history courses. *Mae West* is more likely to be assigned in film studies classes or American studies courses with a strong emphasis on popular culture.

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James R. Ralph, Jr. *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 338. Cloth, \$27.95.

The story of the civil rights movement has been frequently told, both in print and in visual form. However, most treatments of the topic have allocated little space to the open-housing protests in Chicago in 1966. *Northern Protest* very adequately fills this void.

The book begins with the decision by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in August 1965 to take its non-violent campaign to the North. The site selected for the first action was Chicago, a city where the civil rights movement showed signs of faltering. The author carefully probes the difficulties encountered by the SCLC when trying to confront entrenched social and economic inequities in the North with the same methods that had worked so effectively in the South. The picture that emerges is often one of confusion and uncertainty. It becomes clear that the SCLC had trouble selecting an injustice that seemed certain to rally the black population. Furthermore, divisions within the black community itself and disagreements between national and local leaders often threatened to derail the process. After an initial attempt to target Chicago's slums, the goal of integrating white neighborhoods was selected as the primary focus of the non-violent campaign. Although many blacks and a

significant number of whites ultimately participated, the level of commitment was far less than in the earlier protests in the South. When marches through white neighborhoods did take place, sometimes with violent response, they failed to gain the media coverage that had turned the Southern protests into national news, thus generating widespread support. The role of the SCLC came to an end after controversial negotiations with city leaders produced an agreement designed to promote housing reforms. Throughout the presentation of the Chicago protest, Martin Luther King, Jr., for the most part, retains his heroic stature. Although it is acknowledged that King made some mistakes, the renowned leader is largely exonerated by his ability to admit his errors and to learn from them.

Ralph has meticulously researched his subject, interviewing many of those involved in organizing the protests and examining more than fifty manuscript collections. Nearly 100 pages of notes at the end of the book attest to his careful survey of the sources. Two organizational defects mar the fluidity of his presentation, however. Rather than putting all the necessary background information together in the introductory chapter, bits of it are intermingled with the protest story itself. Thus it is sometimes difficult to avoid confusing past events with those of 1966. Secondly, a chapter on the national government and the Civil Rights Bill of 1966 interrupts the Chicago story. These shortcomings aside, *Northern Protest* provides a significant new perspective on the northern non-violent movement.

Because the topic is quite narrow, the usefulness of this book in college classes will be limited. While it certainly would be instructive reading in a course on the civil rights movement or on the politics of protest, it is probably not appropriate to use as required reading even for a course on the United States since 1945. It could certainly be suggested as recommended reading for such a course, however. On the other hand, by studying the material contained in these pages, an instructor would clearly broaden his/her knowledge of the peculiar problems that were associated with the non-violent movement in the North. There is valuable material for class lectures to be found here. While *Northern Protest* may not be a best seller in most college bookstores, it is nonetheless a well written and well balanced contribution to the scholarly literature on the civil rights movement.

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Philippe Ariés and Goerge Duby, eds. *A History of Private Life. Volume I: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*. Paul Veyne, ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987. Pp. ix, 670. Paper, \$18.95. Volume II: *Revelations of the Medieval World*. Georges Duby, ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988. Pp. xiii, 650. Paper, \$18.95.

These are the first two volumes of a five volume series unique in their approach and scope in western historical scholarship. Later volumes, also now in print, come down to the present century. Originally published as *Histoire de la vie privée* and translated from the French by Arthur Goldhammer, they are lavishly illustrated with black-and-white and color pictures, diagrams, and other drawings.

Multi-authored works usually suffer from varied writing styles and a general lack of overall balance and organization. The use of a single highly able translator has helped to pull this English edition together at least in style. A bibliography and index are in both volumes, brief notes are present only in volume I.

Paul Veyne writes the initial section of over 200 pages in volume I on the pagan Greco-Roman world of the early Empire. Slavery, family life, the treatment of children, concubinage, and marriage are among the many topics discussed. The baths, the spectacles, views of death