

cial, cultural, and historical forces that shape Foote and his literary works. Watson offers a glimpse of Foote's Texas childhood and reveals how these incidents influenced his plays and screen adaptations. *Horton Foote: A Literary Biography* proves to be both scholarly and accessible; specialists will appreciate Watson's meticulous research and laypeople will enjoy the vivid and sometimes amusing anecdotes that Watson provides about Foote, the charming man who has deservedly become a favorite.

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Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth Century South. By Robert Rodgers Korstad. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. Pp. 576. Paper, \$24.95; Cloth, \$55.00)

Would Robert Rodgers Korstad agree with the adage, "All politics are local"? Perhaps not entirely, however, his book, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth Century South* (2003), attempts to validate this assertion. Korstad's study is an amalgam of traditional labor history, (at times focused inwardly on the minutia of union organization), and a newer tradition, which examines labor history from the broader framework of working class experience. His narrative revolves around the activities of tobacco workers in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, who, through labor activism and the fusion of class consciousness, gender parity, and racial progressivism, changed the region's political landscape. This blend fostered a political assertiveness and helped form an effective brand of civic unionism. Although Korstad's protagonists made significant inroads into North Carolina's political debate in the immediate aftermath of New Deal reform, the author laments that the eventual "collapse of civil rights unionism cast a long shadow over the second half of the twentieth century" (11). Within this framework, Korstad's book sheds light on the decline of New Deal liberalism, the origins of the Civil Rights Movement, the development of interracial labor unions, and the coalescence of the Cold War consensus.

Korstad relies heavily on oral histories and newspapers to reconstruct the narrative of Local 22 of the Food, Tobacco, Agriculture, and Allied Workers-Congress of Industrial Organizations (FTA-CIO). He begins by detailing the strike of June 1943 at the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, Co. and then proceeds to trace the political culture of the region since Reconstruction. Repeated challenges to Jim Crow reminded both blacks and whites that they were living in a society contingent on control and white supremacy. For these workers, the first step toward organization was realizing that change was possible (60, 71).

Similar to the conclusions of Thomas Sugrue (*The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 1996), who illustrated how inequalities in urban geography fostered and sustained racial status quos in Detroit, Korstad sees urban demography as essential to understanding the origins of early civil rights activism. Housing shortages and poor living conditions formed an umbrella of discontent for African-American workers who utilized backing from southern liberals, leftist cooperatives of the "Southern Front," churches, and the local Communist Party to create a formidable bloc that demanded recognition (92). In what Korstad calls an "atmosphere of hope," local tobacco unions managed to combine the interests of the working class with concerns over race discrimination (141). In doing so, they appealed to both black and white workers who were spurred forward by New Deal liberalism and the increased attention given to issues of discrimination during World War II (163).

Because middle class black leaders depended on racial solidarity in order to support their own positions within the community, skepticism among blacks towards both unionism and Communism was somewhat alleviated. Blacks shared a culture of music, sport, and faith that furthered this cooperation. However, black middle class leaders often refused to publicly acknowledge the class-based complaints emanating from the tobacco unions, and instead chose to emphasize civil rights. As the nation moved closer to its second Red Scare, anticommunist conservatives used red-baiting tactics to undermine the union's public support and race-baiting tactics to destroy the interracial recruitment efforts from within the organization – both tactics Korstad points out have legacies in the initial formation of southern white supremacy (330-333). As the Cold War consensus unraveled support for unions across the region, R.J. Reynolds' management used welfare capitalism to alleviate its public relations problems. Korstad argues that by "improving opportunities and conditions for African-Americans and developing an alternative leadership cadre in the black community, white leaders maneuvered to maintain white supremacy" (380).

Civil Rights Unionism succeeds in demonstrating how workers' rights and organizational efforts were undermined through persistent fissures from within the black community and attacks from government and industrial management. Despite these numerous successes, Korstad's book also suffers from a variety of shortcomings. For instance, Korstad's efforts to be thorough force him to sacrifice conciseness and context. His thesis is occasionally lost in the minutia of labor history, which is itself a hindrance to clarity and brevity, especially for novice labor historians. Undoubtedly, Korstad's use of oral histories provides him with a window into the minds of grassroots workers whose voices are typically ignored. Yet, in providing such a level of detail, Korstad's prose is occasionally dramatized and appears affected by the close working relationship between author and subject (Korstad's father even finds his way into the narrative) (329, 416). Finally, Korstad undermines the book's title by showing that conditions in Winston-Salem were unique in many ways to the rest of the South. No doubt, scholars like John Dittmer (*Local People*, 1995) have been effective in using case studies to draw conclusions on a region and nation as a whole. Similarly, authors like Patricia Sullivan (*Days of Hope*, 1996) have managed to make significant contributions by employing broad temporal and geographic boundaries. Yet, it is important to define these intentions, and Korstad does not do this as effectively as he could have. For instance, the industrialized nature of Winston-Salem, the geography of segregation, and the dynamics between the black middle class and black working class all allowed for greater success in the FTA-CIO's efforts to construct a civic union that dealt with issues of both class and race. Simply substituting "North Carolina" or "Winston-Salem" for "South" in his subtitle would have solved this minor problem, without undermining the importance of the book's conclusions.

In the final analysis, researchers interested in how local activism translates into political change will find much to commend in this book. Additionally, those interested in melding labor and civil rights history might have found a seminal work. Although Korstad's epilogue may overextend his conclusions and underemphasize the real threat of communist infiltration recognized by Cold War conservatives, he leaves us with a richer understanding of how southern liberals fought back in the face of oppression and poverty.

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