

Afro-Americans" (p. 218). As a race leader within the American Federation of Labor, he usually played the role of racial propagandist, promoting conferences on the plight of black workers and urging economic radicalism as a strategy for racial uplift. With such lofty aspirations, it is hardly surprising that Randolph depended upon "pure and simple" labor leaders, such as Milton P. Webster of the Chicago district, to conduct the daily operations of BSCP. Because Webster worried more about enrolling new members than about a militant public image, he and Randolph constantly bickered over policy priorities. Fortunately, each recognized the merits of the other's position, enabling the Brotherhood to wield significantly more influence than its membership rolls alone indicated.

Although clearly written, *Keeping the Faith*, is so detailed that occasionally the reader's interest meanders away from the narrative. Also, the influences of broader social forces, such as the Great Depression, upon the Brotherhood's decision-making apparatus are minimized, restricting the book's usefulness in answering larger issues which emerge from the interaction between employer paternalism, laissez-faire government, the labor movement, and racial oppression. This could have been alleviated by more extensive use of interpretive sources. Nevertheless, this is a superb book which greatly enhances understanding of the internal structure of BSCP during its crucial first decade of existence.

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Those Radio Commentators! By Irving E. Fang. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1977. Pp. ix, 341. Illustrations, bibliographies, index. \$14.95.)

This well-written, handsomely illustrated collection of biographical sketches of fifteen of the most important radio commentators of the 1930s and the 1940s is both fascinating and entertaining, but its value to historians is greatly lessened by the fact that the author did not document his sources. This all too common recent phenomenon of omitting footnotes might be understandable in a popularly written commercial book, but it is inexcusable for a university press to take such unscholarly shortcuts. If university presses do not further the cause of scholarship, what then is the purpose of their existence?

It is difficult to quarrel with Irving E. Fang's belief that the radio commentators of the 1930s and the 1940s played a

vital role in influencing American political opinion. Radio had clearly replaced the newspaper as the principal source of news for most Americans by the 1930s. The most popular of the commentators, Walter Winchell, Edward R. Murrow, H. V. Kaltenborn, Drew Pearson, and Elmer Davis, probably did influence more people than even the inflated egos of some of them led them to believe. But, as Fang concedes, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine to what degree they influenced any one decision. For example, he raises the question of whether American support for England in World War II would have been as strong as it was without the talented Murrow to champion the British cause. There is no generally accepted scientific method of proving this, but most observers agree that Murrow was the most effective single spokesman for the British cause.

Fang is on far weaker ground, however, when he appears to accept as true the testimony of Ernest Cuneo, a man whom he describes as "an attorney with New Deal connections" (p. 264) and later a member of Winchell's staff, to the effect that Winchell played a decisive role in electing Franklin Roosevelt to a third term in 1940. Cuneo's story is that, at his urging, Winchell began broadcasting support for Roosevelt's third term in 1938. The idea was to bring Roosevelt's opposition out into the open "so that it could be identified and fought" (p. 254). The strategy supposedly worked, and Fang gives Winchell credit for Roosevelt's victory in 1940: "White House insiders said Winchell's broadcasts and columns provided the 1940 victory margin" (p. 264). Winchell's support undoubtedly was very helpful to Roosevelt, but not a single New Deal scholar credits either Winchell or Cuneo with a major role in the 1940 election.

The author does a good job in providing short, lively biographical sketches of some of America's most colorful and eccentric radio personalities. He pulls no punches, yet does not go out of his way to attack his subjects. He is probably the hardest on Winchell, whom he describes as "petty and vicious" (p. 246). Even with Winchell, however, he concludes on a positive note by saying that "at times he [Winchell] rose above the smallness of his nature" (p. 273).

Of special interest to readers of this journal is the very fine chapter on Elmer Davis, the product of Aurora, Indiana, and Franklin College, whose Hoosier twang became a familiar sound to millions of Americans. Davis, who went on from Franklin to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, was indisputedly the most intellec-

tual of all the commentators. He was also one of the most respected members of his profession, a fact that led Franklin Roosevelt to name him the director of the Office of War Information in 1942. The *New York Times* said it best when it described Davis as a "horse-sense liberal . . . given neither to hysterical hand wringing nor to fuzzy optimism" (p. 193).

Fang has written a very readable and enjoyable account of several of the radio news personalities of yesterday, ranging from the shallow, uneducated, raucous Winchell to the pompous, scholarly Kaltenborn. Unfortunately, he has chosen to ignore most of the abundant archival sources so carefully utilized by David Culbert in his *News for Everyman* (1976). Fang's account contains a great deal of useful information, but serious students of American radio should use it in conjunction with the more scholarly works of Culbert and Erik Barnouw. A very attractive bonus feature is the inclusion of two soundsheets which contain short, interesting excerpts from broadcasts of the fifteen radio commentators discussed in the book.

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From Main Street to State Street: Town, City, and Community in America. By Park Dixon Goist. (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1977. Pp. 180. Notes and references, bibliography, index. \$12.50.)

If close personal interaction, extensive cooperation, group solidarity, and a strong identification with a locality define community, then most Americans associate community with the small town. The erosion of community life as a consequence of the growth of large cities, in fact, has been a major image in American thought since the 1890s. Yet by examining the writings of numerous novelists, reformers, sociologists, and city planners who "sought to rethink the meaning of community in terms more appropriate to large cities" (p. 7), Park Dixon Goist reminds readers that the American cultural debate over the decline of community has been considerable.

Goist uses Booth Tarkington, Theodore Dreiser, and Robert and Helen Lynd, among others, to illustrate the traditional image of community in town and city. Just as Tarkington's *The Gentleman from Indiana* presents the small town as the embodiment of community life, Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* consistently portrays the city as a chaotic world devoid of socially sanctioned norms or long-term human bonds. And the Lynds' *Mid-*