

part of a family-run operation that included the sale of kitchen and bathroom appliances. Although his facilities, as Matassa put it, were put together with “spit and wire” (p. 181), J&M became the go-to destination of anyone interested in Fats Domino.

In the aftermath of the payola scandals, Broven reminds us, the “record men—disc jockey—distributor network was crumbling” (p. 460). As the British Invasion made it clear that rock ’n’ roll was here to stay (and pay), the major labels intensified their efforts to gobble up star performers and more than

a few of the “indies” themselves. The “merry band of mavericks,” Broven concludes, with the nostalgia that permeates his book, was reined in by “natural economic forces and technological revolution.” Once wide-open record markets had matured, as markets “always do.” And “the energetic excitement” drained, “as it always does” (p. 470).

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Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple

By Rebecca Moore

(Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2009. Pp. xi, 179. Notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.)

“Are you an activist yourself? Do you believe in the practical approach to resolving human problems?” This advertisement appeared in a May 1976 issue of the newspaper *Peoples Forum*. As a longtime chronicler and analyst of Jim Jones, Jonestown, and the Peoples Temple, Rebecca Moore has built a career out of interpreting the pragmatic appeal of such promotions. Much of her explanatory narrative agrees with novelist Shiva Naipaul’s assessment that “Jim Jones built his movement on the debris of the Sixties; on its frustrations, failures, and apostasies” (p. 22). At its height, Peoples Temple boasted a membership of 20,000, but it never

represented a demographically significant trend in American religion. Rather, due to its tragic conclusion, Peoples Temple—and, colloquially, its poisoned Kool-Aid—has become a metonym for brainwashing and blind obedience. Through Moore’s scholarly stewardship, Peoples Temple and Jonestown become instead quintessentially American. As she writes, “Peoples Temple was a home-grown religion and, at its heart, reflected American institutions” (p. 6). From its beginnings, the church of Jim Jones embodied patterns in U.S. religious sociology. After many shifts of congregational name and location, the Peoples Temple Chris-

tian Church Full Gospel took root in Indianapolis, Indiana, as a Disciples of Christ church renowned for its Pentecostal-style healing services and interracial congregation. Moore tracks Jones on the long religious journey that took him as a young man through Methodist, Nazarene, Pentecostal, and Quaker meetings in the 1930s and 1940s; then, as an entrepreneurial pastor, on scouting trips in the 1950s to see Father Divine's Peace Mission movement; and, as an emerging prophet, on missionary explorations to Cuba, Guyana, and Brazil in the 1960s. Like the Peace Mission movement he so admired, Jones's Peoples Temple became as well known for its free food and social services as it did for his passionate sermons. This Social Gospel impulse attracted working-class whites and blacks seeking immediate response to the grotesque inequalities of capitalism. "Social justice," Moore writes, "became an important and perhaps central element of Peoples Temple's theology" (p. 27).

Part reportage and part critical historiography, Moore's account moves expertly through thickets of evidence, from newspapers and government reports to Jonestown recordings and first-person accounts. When Jones moves his church to California in 1965, she expands her analysis to include the social context of the Bay area and the contemporaneous political projects to which Jones committed as a civic figure. When the

Temple relocated again from California to Guyana in 1977, she sifts and considers a variety of positions to achieve a redacted account. Was their migration to Guyana prompted by a fear that the IRS would freeze the Temple's assets? Or was it worries over child custody battles? Or was it because the community became convinced by Jones's argument that a fascist takeover was imminent in the United States? Moore draws no neat conclusions. Instead, Chapters Four, Five, and Six supply an elegant appraisal of the sociologies, psychologies, and theologies that concluded in the November 1978 suicide of 900 Jonestown occupants. With analysis of external and internal forces, Moore's description builds into a devastating symphony of irritants (government investigations, news reporters) and aggravations (defecting leaders, material circumstances, psychical terror). In the year leading up to it, there had been a half-dozen such "White Nights," or ritual occasions in which people were led to believe by Jones that they were threatened, and that there was only one way to preserve their dream. Through Moore's judicious rendering, the story of Peoples Temple is no longer mere madness. Instead, it appears as a utopian journey whose catastrophic millennialism belies its midwestern origins, as well as its optimistic advertisements of progress, communal labor, and real equality.

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To Shake Their Guns in the Tyrant's Face
Libertarian Political Violence and the Origins of the Militia Movement
 By Robert H. Churchill

(Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009. Pp. xii, 370. Illustrations, notes, index. \$35.00.)

Robert Churchill attempts something daring in *To Shake Their Guns in the Tyrant's Face*. He firmly positions the modern militia movement—widely despised and feared as dangerous and “extremist”—in an American political and intellectual tradition that defined our founding.

The book attempts to answer the question that Churchill frames in his introduction: “[H]ow do certain ideas, movements, and political impulses come to be considered extremist?” (p. 3). Churchill understands American history well enough to know—as many of the opinion makers and media appalled by modern militias do not—that “the militias’ assertion of a right to use armed force to change government policy” is not something “new, threatening, or beyond the pale of legitimate politics” but rather “achingly familiar,” in the face of what the militia members see as “the exercise of unconstitutional power by the federal government” (p. 3).

Churchill sees in modern militias the principle that underlay our Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War that accompanied it:

that citizens have the right and even duty to rise up forcefully against state attempts to violate their rights. In telling the story of the militias’ institutions and ideas, Churchill shines a light of understanding, if not approval.

The stories Churchill tells trace the occasional revival of the American insurrectionist spirit after the Revolutionary era and up to the 1990s. He understands that it is clearly a good thing for peaceful civic order that America is not regularly wracked by political violence. He tells of Fries’ Rebellion (which arose from the Alien and Sedition Act controversies of 1798-99); the Sons of Liberty insurrection against Lincoln’s government in Indiana in 1863-64; and the “Black Legion” that arose in the Midwest in opposition to Roosevelt’s policies in 1936. None of these groups, no matter how much one might approve (or disapprove) of their specific grievances, has a particularly noble story to tell for themselves.

Churchill also puts forth a broader view of the evolution of Americans’ implicit political philosophy: we have lost, he says, the