

REVIEWS

Paul V. McNutt and the Age of FDR

By Dean J. Kotlowski

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. Pp. 580. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00.)

This book, issued sixty years after Paul V. McNutt's premature death in 1955 (at age 63) and nearly eighty years after he stepped down as Indiana's most transformative governor (1933-1937), is long overdue, but its excellence makes the wait for it worthwhile. As Dean J. Kotlowski eloquently demonstrates in this remarkable, and remarkably thorough, study, McNutt was an outstanding man, complex and accomplished, but ultimately frustrated. Although he was successful in practically everything he did early in life, the one goal he felt himself destined to achieve—the presidency of the United States—eluded his grasp.

This study, self-described as both “biography and history” (p.10), thoroughly explores the many careers of perhaps Indiana's most successful and powerful governor (Civil War governor Oliver P. Morton is McNutt's

closest rival for this distinction). Based upon exhaustive research in seemingly every possible archive and library—the American Legion, Indiana University, the Indiana State Archives, the National Archives, and the National Library of the Philippines—Kotlowski produces a readable, quotable, and highly analytical overview of McNutt's life. McNutt's career spanned his service as commander of the Indiana Department and later national commander of the American Legion; professor and then dean of the Indiana University Law School; governor of Indiana; and then the United States High Commissioner to the Philippines from 1937 to 1939, and, again, from 1944 to 1946, before becoming the first U.S. ambassador to the newly independent Republic of the Philippines from 1946 to 1947.

One of the book's many strengths is its analysis of the dynamics at the

1932 Chicago Democratic National Convention, where McNutt, Indiana's "favorite son" candidate for president, delayed joining the FDR bandwagon until late in the proceedings. FDR never forgot this delay and indeed it was, in Kotlowski's view, the main factor that led to McNutt's failure to become FDR's running mate in 1936 (and 1940 too). Instead, FDR sent the vain and ambitious Hoosier to the Philippines where, in a bold move now largely forgotten, he defied America's restrictions on mass immigration into the United States and persuaded the Philippine leaders to open their doors to some 1,300 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution.

Paul V. McNutt and the Age of FDR fulfills its promise regarding McNutt's life and adds some information regarding the New Deal era in national politics. For those interested in either topic, but especially in the

life of McNutt, this book is essential reading based upon massive research. However, much of McNutt's personal life, his work and study habits, his reading, and the source of many of his strongly held and capably articulated views remain hidden—Kotlowski's McNutt seems at times more robotic than vibrant.

RALPH D. GRAY is Professor Emeritus of History, Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis. Among his publications are an edited collection of essays on Indiana politicians and a biography of Indiana author and diplomat Meredith Nicholson, a close friend of Governor McNutt. His current projects include a biography of an Indiana attorney and I. U. trustee during the tumultuous years of the 1960s and 1970s, and an edited three-year diary of an Indiana Civil War soldier.



John Bartlow Martin: A Voice for the Underdog

By Ray E. Boomhower

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. Pp. 408. Illustrations, notes, index. \$40.00.)

Author of well-executed volumes about such Hoosiers as Civil War general Lew Wallace, combat photographer John A. Bushemi, astronaut Gus Grissom, and congressman Jim Jontz, Ray Boomhower first wrote about John Bartlow Martin in *Robert F. Kennedy and the 1968 Indiana Primary* (2008). This impeccably researched and gracefully written biography traces Martin's career as an award-

winning magazine journalist, adviser to Democratic presidential candidates (for twenty years beginning in 1952 with Adlai E. Stevenson), and diplomatic troubleshooter (during the 1960s to the war-torn Dominican Republic).

Starting in 1919 at age four, Martin spent nineteen formative years in Indianapolis, a place he claimed to have loathed, labeling his Brookside