

Another, more important, contribution is Nelson's persuasive argument that even Eccles favored balancing the federal government's budget in 1937 because he believed that the economic recovery underway by 1936 had become so robust that it no longer needed deficit spending to keep it going. The older view of Eccles on this issue (that he steadily called for deficit spending throughout the 1930s), Nelson makes clear, was based on an error of chronology—Eccles sent Franklin D. Roosevelt a memo in December 1935 calling for more deficit spending, which scholars mistakenly believed was sent to Roosevelt in December 1936. *Jumping the Abyss* makes clear for the first time that the misguided balanced-budget mentality was universally shared at that time not just among leading conservatives but also among Roosevelt's top economic advisers.

When that mentality produced the "Roosevelt recession" of 1937–1938, Eccles quickly changed his mind and called for more deficit spending on public works. *Jumping the Abyss* adds to this part of the story by showing how Eccles's pacifist views led him to oppose more spending on the military in the late 1930s, even as America's national security concerns grew and congressional support for domestic spending fell. The only kind of heavy deficit spending possible by then was of a sort that Eccles stoutly resisted until the attack on Pearl Harbor changed his mind. Nelson's book does much to explain why New Dealers never found a solution to the Great Depression until war came to America. For that reason, *Jumping the Abyss* is an important study that deserves careful attention from historians of modern America.

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*Newspaper Wars: Civil Rights and White Resistance in South Carolina, 1935–1965.* By Sid Bedingfield. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017. x, 269 pp. Cloth, \$95.00. Paper, \$29.95.)

The black press was integral to shaping African American ideology regarding the strate-

gies and justifications for civil rights between the World War II era and the end of the traditionally understood civil rights movement in the mid-1960s. Many of those presses in the South are caricatured as conservative in comparison to their northern counterparts. While such caricatures are not always accurate, there are some universally understood exceptions to the rule that the southern black press was conservative. P. B. Young's *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, for example, was far bolder than many of its southern counterparts. Miami's *Tropical Dispatch* and Memphis's *Tri-State Defender* were also demonstrably radical. Those papers, however, were on the South's edges, a luxury black editors and activists did not have in Deep South states such as South Carolina.

Sid Bedingfield's *Newspaper Wars* examines South Carolina editor John H. McCray's *Lighthouse and Informer*, a Deep South black newspaper published in Charleston that not only challenged Jim Crow in all of its facets but also formed key alliances with leaders such as Modjeska Simkins and local activist groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, using journalism both to advocate and to coordinate the rights effort in the state, to make "strategic use of society's symbolic codes concerning freedom, justice, and equality to rally the black community and to elicit empathy from potential allies" (p. 6). And it did so to great success, helping achieve equal pay for South Carolina teachers, securing black voting rights in Democratic primaries, and initiating the suit that would ultimately become part of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision.

Those successes drove white newspapers in the state, such as Thomas Waring's *Charleston News and Courier*, to attempt to shape white public opinion to hold the line against black progress, all while wrestling with the journalistic imperative of objectivity. White journalists, too, had powerful relationships with segregationist politicians. As civil rights victories mounted in the two decades following World War II, however, those journalists changed their tactics and began to mimic the conservative message coming from larger publications such as William F. Buckley's *National Review* that trumpeted "color-blind conservatism" and helped spur the move of South Carolina's

white southern Democrats to the Republican party, led by Senator Strom Thurmond's conversion in 1964.

Thus, journalism did not just shape and reflect the political ideology of Carolinians in the throes of earlier and later struggles for civil rights; it actively played a role in the outcome of those struggles. Bedingfield's work is not then just an interesting and well-told story of state-level grassroots civil rights activism; it is an important supplement to the growing body of scholarship on the black press, one that places an example of southern radical journalism and its multifaceted political efforts at the forefront of a historiography that tends to prefer northern newspapers with a larger demographic reach. *Newspaper Wars* is a strong, important study of black journalism, state-level organizing, and the role that journalists play in shaping the assumptions of the public sphere, assumptions that conditioned the discussions that created civil rights success in South Carolina.

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*Judicial Review and American Conservatism: Christianity, Public Education, and the Federal Courts in the Reagan Era.* By Robert Daniel Rubin. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. x, 347 pp. \$59.99.)

Robert Daniel Rubin's *Judicial Review and American Conservatism* traces a path through the conservative legal movement of the early 1980s and explores its shifting strategy in response to defeats in court. The book focuses on two closely related federal cases concerning the constitutionality of school prayer policies in Mobile, Alabama: *Jaffree v. Board of School Commissioners* (1983, U.S. Supreme Court) and *Smith v. Board of School Commissioners* (1987, U.S. Court of Appeals). Rubin offers an intensely local exploration of litigants, schools, and the views of the very conservative judge, W. Brevard Hand, who decided both cases at the district court level. The author also explores the national response, the work

of conservatives in and around the Reagan administration, and the processes by which Hand's rulings were overturned. These aspects of Rubin's examination interact both through the unrolling judicial process and through the activities of local, state, and federal politicians and campaigners. An underlying theme he uncovers is a shift from conservatives being opposed to judicial intervention in politics to that group beginning to seek judicial intervention on conservative terms.

Frustratingly, Rubin's exploration of conservative principles tends to push to the background issues of race and civil rights. This period still featured ongoing, sometimes-intense litigation over race in Mobile schools: the *Birdie Mae Davis* litigation, which had begun in 1963, was not finally settled until 1997; other litigation, which had established African American representatives on the school board in 1978, did not fully secure their voting rights on the board until 1984. Key figures in the story include not just Hand (who thought, Rubin says, that *Brown v. Board of Education* [1954] "had turned the Supreme Court into a Big Brother with robes") but also Senator Jesse Helms and even George Wallace, returning as governor of Alabama for a final term (p. 99). Perhaps the lack of involvement of African Americans in Mobile in defending school prayer politically, while supporting the practice in principle, was the result of more than just "mistrust" (p. 93). The book misses an opportunity to relate the politics of this issue more clearly to the prior politics of segregation in Mobile and elsewhere.

The book has a number of significant strengths: it is an extremely rich account of complex litigation, with profound depth in its Mobile sections and a clear account of contemporary conservative legal thinking in its Washington, D.C., sections. Rubin gives persuasive and sympathetic accounts of the legal reasoning of participants as varied as Supreme Court justice William Brennan and federal district court judge Hand. His depth of understanding of what Hand thought he was doing is, in the end, quietly devastating. The development of the cases certainly fits with a shift in conservative legal strategies, but less clear is whether that shift is a result of the Alabama cases or something they illustrate. As

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