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Abel A. Bartley. *Keeping the Faith: Race, Politics, and Social Development in Jacksonville, Florida, 1940-1970.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000. x + 177 pp. $87.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-313-31035-5.

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Each year historians, journalists, and activist intellectuals enlarge our understanding of the origins, methods, and legacies of the modern Civil Rights Movement. Civil rights historiography has become one of the most exciting fields of scholarly inquiry and it is an example of scholarship that connects academics and popular audiences. Even as historians ritually lament their failure to engage with the public, authors of books on "the movement" make bestseller lists, win major awards, and reach new audiences via public symposia, radio interviews, and online chat forums. The literature of the Civil Rights Movement has helped to spawn–and now creatively feeds upon–scores of local oral history and photo documentary projects that in turn have markedly increased dialogue across the generations about some of the most important issues of our time: the meaning(s) of freedom, the price of American citizenship (and who has consistently paid that price), as well as the connection–or lack thereof–between ordinary people, democratic institutions, and elected leaders in the United States.

Boosted by civil rights reunions as well as the inauguration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the "movement years" are now cherished, argued over, lamented, and celebrated in thousands of out-of-the way hamlets. Does history have the power to transform lives? Anyone who has witnessed a ninety-year-old woman or man testify about the first time they risked assault, arrest, or worse in order to register to vote can only answer the question in the affirmative. Finally, the history of the Civil Rights Movement–and the black freedom struggle that forms its foundation–is an international story studied with intensity by political activists in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Brazil, and other nations.

There are several reasons why civil rights historiography has successfully deepened the public's engagement with history while other fields of scholarly inquiry have shriveled behind ivory towers. Most importantly, the literature of the movement–whether it deals with the legal, organizational, or political dimensions of the struggle–is written in plain language relatively free of the impenetrable jargon that characterizes much of what passes for the life of the mind these days. The great majority of authors in the field of civil rights scholarship have avoided what Edward Said lamented as the narrow "professionalization of intellectual life" because most have managed to stay in contact with former movement activists and organizations of various stripes. Oral history and other forms of social documentary have greatly enriched the evidentiary base of movement scholarship. The divergent recollections and sometimes acrimonious reunions of the veterans of the Civil Rights Movement have helped to generate wonderfully conflicting narratives of the struggle. Thomas Jefferson may have scores of scholarly acolytes who police his image but no one owns or controls the legacy of the movement years. For every laudatory biography of Dr. King there are now numerous monographs that criticize King's leadership style and instead extol the work of "local people" in the struggle. Early studies that praised the activism of lesser-known (mainly male) leaders are being supplanted by essays on the centrality of women organizers. While Montgomery and Birmingham continue to occupy center stage in movement iconography, little-studied regions such as the Arkansas Delta, the North Carolina piedmont, and East Texas are pushing to the fore. Sexism, homophobia, color prejudice, and class discrimination are frankly discussed in books, films, and conferences on what used to be known back in ancient times as "the King Years." Pages and paragraphs once spent on the vicissitudes of JFK and LBJ now chronicle the organizing strategies of Ella Baker and the Highlander Folk Center–even as some scholars call for even greater attention to the legal, electoral, and political dimensions of the battle for equal citizenship. Finally, even this notion–that the struggle was primarily one about gaining equal citizenship or alternatively, integration–is

facing a heady challenge.

Abel A. Bartley's *Keeping the Faith* fits within the trajectory of recent movement scholarship. Professor Bartley introduces oral histories, documentary photographs, legal records, and other primary sources to paint a compelling portrait of the black freedom struggle in Jacksonville between 1940 and 1970. Bartley's monograph places Jacksonville where it should have been all along: at the center of the modern Civil Rights Movement. He introduces his readers to a new set of local people and activists every bit as committed to social justice and democracy as their counterparts in Albany, Memphis, and Greensboro were.

Equally impressive, *Keeping the Faith* explains what African Americans were up against. Despite a veneer of racial paternalism, the Gateway City was a Jim Crow town. Black disfranchisement and the institution of one-party rule at the turn of the century paved the way for endemic police brutality, economic impoverishment, and municipal corruption that plagued Jacksonville. The privately-owned media helped maintain public malfeasance. The *Times-Union* was a shrill supporter of white supremacy and a frequent apologist of racist violence.

Whenever African Americans challenged this oppressive system, white officials resorted to electoral gerrymandering, physical intimidation–the Ku Klux Klan played a formidable role in city and state politics during this era–and a host of other strategies to keep one-party rule in place. In this author's estimation, Bartley clearly demonstrates that Jim Crow ultimately depended on–and ushered in–systematic governmental fraud at the municipal level as well as the vigilante and state violence that we have traditionally associated with legal segregation. This is an important contribution. Bartley notes that Jacksonville–and by extension the state of Florida–has too often escaped critical scrutiny because of a unique ability to promote an image of a "racially moderate" polity. *Keeping the Faith* shatters this image. By the end of World War II, a study of social conditions in Jacksonville found that on the whole, African Americans in the city suffered from "poor health, limited employment opportunities, crime, inadequate housing, insufficient police protection, poor sanitation, and governmental neglect" (p. 14). In effect, white supremacy had accomplished its mission in Jacksonville: it flung the city's black population to the bottom of the social structure. However unequal power relations were in Jacksonville–and they were grievously unequal for most of the twentieth century–African Americans fought back. Bartley unearths a remarkable array of church congregations, business groups, and fraternal associations that each grappled with the social and economic crises of segregation. What needs further investigation is the equally impressive number of African-American working-class institutions and labor organizations in Jacksonville. By the turn of the century, the city's black carpenters, mill workers, domestics, and other workers were organized into independent unions. In the wake of Reconstruction, African-American dock workers and longshoremen created relatively powerful unions that sometimes were able to strike for higher wages and better working conditions. Bartley argues that African Americans used the leverage of World War II to begin to take what he calls "first strides towards political power." Local activist Theodore Redding and the NAACP sought to exploit the 1944 *Smith v. Allwright* Supreme Court decision by launching a frontal assault on the white primary. The following year, Rev. Dallas Graham, a minister at Mt. Ararat Baptist Church, was asked by Redding and the NAACP to attempt to register as a Roosevelt Democrat. Bartley argues that the black freedom struggle escalated from this point forward. However, he is careful to note the vast range of politics, associations, and organizing styles in Jacksonville's African-American neighborhoods. Bartley avoids creating a myth of a unified and monolithic black community in Jacksonville during the final decades of de jure segregation. Differences in class and disagreements over the leadership of women in African-American politics often weakened incipient organizing efforts.

For example, in 1947, Wilson Armstrong, a carpenter, ran for city council in Jacksonville. This appeared to be a golden opportunity to elect the first African American to city council in four decades. Unfortunately, Armstrong was denigrated by white and black elites as a "common day laborer" and his campaign was undermined by the "prominent, middle class African-Americans [who] lived in the fifth ward. Their leaders did not think that Armstrong could represent their interests" (p. 31). Armstrong was also Red-baited and attempts were made to tie him to the Communist Party. While Bartley captures the tragedy of this lost opportunity to elect a black working-class man to office he does not fully consider the vexing limitations of political organizing in the era of the Cold War. One gets the sense from Bartley's narrative–and this confirms what we know from other cities during this time period–that black working-class involvement in politics was out of bounds precisely because it raised the specter of real, broad-based economic change in the South. Instead, black workers were supposed to pick "representative" (middle-class) African Americans for office. How much of an improvement was this from

the paternalistic "brokerage politics" that characterized the Jim Crow South?

In a final chapter aptly titled, "Race Still Matters," the author assesses the accomplishments and unfulfilled promises of the black freedom struggle in Jacksonville. On balance, de jure segregation has been defeated yet deep inequities remain. Jacksonville is a city marred by environmental racism (toxic dumping in minority neighborhoods has been an open scandal), school re-segregation, and economic inequality. "Jacksonville," Abel A. Bartley concludes, "has the opportunity to improve conditions for all of its citizens, and the potential to become one of America's greatest cities. But it must lead the way in solving the urban and racial problems prevalent in our society" (p. 167).

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