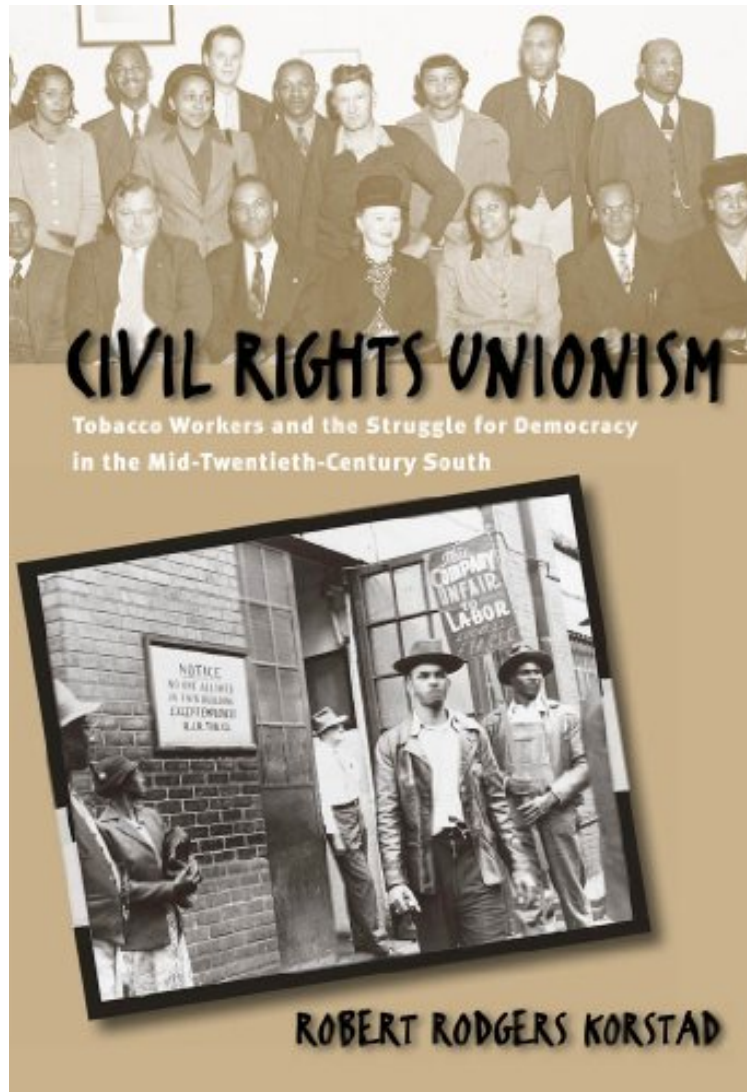


(Ebook free) Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South

Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South

Robert R. Korstad

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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful work of civil rights and labor history By Nathan D. Backlund This book uses oral history, company, and union archives to tell a riveting story about an attempt by poor

(mostly black) workers to build a union against heavy odds. This book tells us so much about twentieth century American history, and it does it with great skill. All the great themes of labor's downfall are here. The inability to organize the South. The racism and anti-communism of high union officials. The failure of Operation Dixie. The vicious backlash of employers and the Democratic party against the movement for working class power. This book is a great example of micro history used to illuminate important national trends. I cannot recommend a book more highly. 7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Fabulous story, fabulous storytelling
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In this wonderful book, African American tobacco workers tell their own story of civil rights struggle and union organizing. It is long, but so was the struggle, and I couldn't put it down. Oral interviews give us the black workers' own accounts, sending, for once, the white supremacists to the back of the bus. Read it. You will find a South you never thought you would find. 6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating history, important analysis--read it!
By Richard M McGahey
This is a terrific book--an important history that brings together a story of race, labor unions, economic change, politics, and culture, but never loses sight of the actual people involved. Very well written--not dry and academic like some history, but also very rich analytically. Buy it and read it!

Drawing on scores of interviews with black and white tobacco workers in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Robert Korstad brings to life the forgotten heroes of Local 22 of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers of America-CIO. These workers confronted a system of racial capitalism that consigned African Americans to the basest jobs in the industry, perpetuated low wages for all southerners, and shored up white supremacy. Galvanized by the emergence of the CIO, African Americans took the lead in a campaign that saw a strong labor movement and the reenfranchisement of the southern poor as keys to reforming the South--and a reformed South as central to the survival and expansion of the New Deal. In the window of opportunity opened by World War II, they blurred the boundaries between home and work as they linked civil rights and labor rights in a bid for justice at work and in the public sphere. But civil rights unionism foundered in the maelstrom of the Cold War. Its defeat undermined later efforts by civil rights activists to raise issues of economic equality to the moral high ground occupied by the fight against legalized segregation and, Korstad contends, constrains the prospects for justice and democracy today.