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### Reviewed Work: From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges by Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb

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cluding dismantling the archaic system of farm tenancy in the agricultural sector, greater union activity and empowerment of labor in the industrial sector, and a quest for greater racial justice culminating in the civil rights movement of the sixties. Meanwhile, southern politics were affected as the Democratic party began putting together a coalition of eastern liberals, organized labor, and African Americans that would eventually lead to southern disaffection with the party and to the current affinity among that region's white population for Republicanism.

In addition to providing a clear and concise overview of the New Deal's influence on the South as a region, Biles succeeds in going beyond the rudimentary character of a general work and capturing the mood of the period with well-chosen anecdotes and examples of how the New Deal impacted individual states. He is able to move beyond a simple presentation of how the New Deal affected such broad areas as agriculture, employment, labor, race relations, and politics in the South and punctuates his account with vignettes that allow the reader to develop a sense of what it was like to live in the region during the New Deal era. For instance, in discussing the plowing up of cotton fields in the South under the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), Biles mentions the difficulty many farmers had when mules who had been trained to pull the plow between rows were suddenly expected to plow up the crop. As Biles explains, the farmers simply hitched the plow between two mules so that as the two animals walked between rows, the plow would overturn the plants between them. Such attention to detail enlivens the narrative while providing additional insight to the reader.

Overall, *The South and the New Deal* is a useful introduction to the study of the South during the era of the Great Depression. The author's research draws on a blend of selected primary sources and current scholarship to create a readable and informative work that aptly demonstrates the importance of the thirties as a turning point in southern history. Biles concludes his work with careful notation and a bibliographical essay offering a lengthy compilation of the major published and unpublished works in the field. In the end, the author succeeds in offering a concise and well-researched volume that provides a good starting point for any study of the New Deal and the South.

Jacksonville, Florida

JOANN D. CARPENTER

*From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges.* By Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb. (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishing Company, 1993. Pp. xx, 144. Paper, \$12.50, ISBN 0-89464-775-X.)

In the days of Nazi domination in Germany, a number of scholars, many of them Jewish, fled to the United States where they found employment in white universities. A few sought new academic homes among people of color in the historically black colleges of the segregated South. This work focuses on their interactions with students, staff, and faculty they encountered.

As one who left Nazi Germany herself and arrived in America as a young woman, Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb brings a personal perspective to this study. Her own experiences as a teenager in pre-World War II New York—very briefly recalled in the introductory chapter—paralleled those of the

refugee scholars who, like herself, had to come to terms with “the peculiar American contradiction between egalitarian rhetoric and unequal reality” (p. xix).

Edgcomb reveals the experiences of refugee scholars in black academe primarily through the reminiscences of the few surviving scholars and in interviews with former students, retired faculty, and relatives of those deceased. She highlights the struggles of these men and women to adjust to new and culturally alien environments, to empathize with people whose lives were circumscribed by discrimination, and to come to terms with the new militancy of African American students during the black nationalist movement of the 1960s. She concludes that the vast majority of these scholars had positive experiences and made lasting contributions within their respective institutions. They in turn learned valuable lessons from their students. Surprisingly, such interactions, with one or two notable exceptions, did not lead to any acknowledgement of similarities in their histories of oppression and persecution.

The focus of Edgcomb’s work is a worthy topic for research. Unfortunately, *From Swastika to Jim Crow* falls short of what one would wish to see in a study of this nature. Most importantly, the work suffers from thinness of research. Edgcomb acknowledges a “paucity of information” (p. 5) that might have been remedied partially had she been able to visit each of the twenty or more campuses where the refugees found employment. In addition, the book exhibits an uneven and distracting style; it employs an organizational framework whose rationale is not immediately apparent. Finally, it is difficult to identify a central thesis, which only contributes to the work’s disjointedness.

Despite these concerns, Edgcomb’s study provides valuable insight for both the scholar and the general reader. Some of the interviews—especially those from former students—are remarkable for the glimpses they offer into the character and personality, the motivations and mindsets of those refugee scholars who made their homes in the Jim Crow South.

Howard University

EDNA GREENE MEDFORD

*African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936–1941.* By Joseph E. Harris. (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1994. Pp. xiv, 185. \$35.00, ISBN 0-8071-1832-X.)

This book should have been entitled *Some African American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936–1941* because Professor Harris really relates the story of the Ethiopian Research Council (ERC) and its offshoot, the Ethiopian World Federation (EWF), from 1935 to 1941. The two organizations were connected in membership and ideology, and both had the support of the charismatic Dr. Melaku Bayen, Emperor Haile Sellassie’s relative and personal representative in the United States, who, as a pan-Africanist, sincerely believed in black unity and African consciousness. Harris bases his book on the papers of the late Professor William Leo Hansberry, documents still in the hands of his family, and on the personal archives of William M. Steen, former secretary of the ERC. Harris has used this material to chronicle the ERC and EWF, often presenting insignificant details such as sales figures of the