

'Voice of Protest': The times that try men's souls



Voices of Protest
Alan Brinkley
Knopf

In Alan Brinkley's "Voices of Protest," the lives of Huey Long and Father Coughlin are looked at from the vantage of their impact on the people of the Great Depression. At the peaks of their power, they were capable

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of calling on millions to bid for their causes in the halls of Congress and the White House.

The reason for their power was that the 1930s had left many people looking for a cause to believe in and these two men had the ability to give them organizations to follow. Long's "Share the Wealth Plan" and Coughlin's "National Union for Social Justice" were attractive to those who were in the process of losing everything they

Scandinavian music celebrated at concert

"Scandinavia Today," a musical festival celebrating Scandinavia's contributions to American culture, will be presented Tuesday by the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra in the O'Donnell Auditorium on Nebraska Wesleyan University campus at 8 p.m.

Conducted by Robert Emile, the orchestra will perform the "Estrella di Soria" overture by Berwald, "Symphony No. 4" by Nielsen and Brieg's "Piano Concerto in A Minor."

Audan Ravnar, a native of Norway who is celebrating his 25th year as a member of UNL's music faculty, will be guest pianist. He is the first individual performer to receive the Governor's Arts Award "for significant contributions to the cultural life of Nebraska."

The program is sponsored by the National Bank of Commerce and Security Mutual Life.

had. The "Share the Wealth Plan" called for a more progressive tax base that would tax the wealthy more heavily and redistribute the money into lower income groups. Though the plan was economically impossible at the time, Long kept pressing for it with Congress and Franklin Roosevelt.

Coughlin was a Catholic priest who wanted economic and social justice for all and who attacked the people, whether bankers, millionaires or Roosevelt, who stood in the way of their goals.

The book follows the lives of both as they accrue the power that was to vault them into national prominence. Both men gained power regionally and then built it into a base of national support.

For Long, his famous control of Louisiana began with his election as governor in 1928 and reigned until his death. He kept control of the Legislature and appointed his own successor as governor when he left for the U.S. Senate. Later, he challenged the courts by changing the state constitution to his advantage.

For Coughlin, his power was the result of the strength he gathered about his Detroit parish because of his locally broadcasted radio show. When he went national on CBS, his audience grew into the Northeast and gave him a greater power base.

As the Depression continued through Roosevelt's first term, both men overestimated their power and started directly challenging the president. This was the downfall of both, as the people's faith in Roosevelt increased and turned on these men whose promises were never backed with programs. In the 1936 election, Long already dead, Coughlin's third party did so poorly that he withdrew his radio show.

In the chapter titled, "The Dissident Ideology," Brinkley presents the movements' ideals and shows that within the ideals were strong contradictions. Both men wanted to create communities as they existed in the 19th century when small town merchants didn't rely on large corporations. They also crusaded for a mere localized government that wouldn't have to answer to a monolithic government in Washington.

But central to the plans of both was an expansion of the role of the federal government to redistribute the wealth and bring more justice to all. The world these men wanted to create ceased existing 50 years before when trains helped concentrate power in certain cities and businesses, as Brinkley points out.

The 1930s were a time when millions of Americans were turning to men like Long and Coughlin for help. The "Voices of Protest" shows how these men were able to use their power to challenge the political structures in the name of a cause. In desperate times, people turn to anyone who can give them hope and direction.

David Wiese

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'Rude Boy' at Sheldon; features The Clash

"Rude Boy," an English film starring The Clash and featuring concert footage of many of the band's great songs, will be shown in Sheldon Film Theater Tuesday at 7 and 9 p.m.

The film is a benefit for KZUM, Lincoln's non-commercial, community-access radio station.

The Clash have become England's leading rock 'n' roll band and the subject of some controversy, as their music combines raw musical energy with loaded political lyrics.

"Anyone interested in The Clash and the whole late-'70s English punk rock scene must see 'Rude Boy,'" Soho News said. "Great rock music/theater from The Clash."

"Rude Boy" was filmed in between the time of The Clash's first album and its second, "Give 'Em Enough Rope." The live footage comes from the band's first major tour and includes filmed rehearsals and interviews. The story hangs loosely around a roadie the band rescues from the dole, then discards when the "rude" dissolves his life in a bottle of booze.

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