

During the 1868 campaign the Democrats tallied but 6½ votes in 21 national convention ballots for the only candidate for their Presidential nomination who favored acceptance of Negro suffrage, framed a platform repudiating all steps taken to reconstruct the South as "unconstitutional, revolutionary, and void," and nominated for Vice-President a candidate who favored colonization of all U.S. Negroes and accused the Radical Republicans of promising White women in return for Black votes. Twenty-four years later in the national campaign of 1892 a leading Northern Democratic newspaper accused the GOP of desiring to revive "the horrors of negro domination" in the South, the national platform laid heavy stress on Democratic opposition to a congressional bill which sought to make universal male suffrage effective, and the party's Vice-Presidential candidate regaled audiences with barely-cloaked racist appeals for votes for the

Democracy. Between these two elections, however, the Democrats adopted, according to Lawrence Grossman, both a "new" and a "newer departure" in an attempt to win Northern Negro votes and assure White Northern racial liberals that a Democratic victory would not mean total subjugation of the Blacks, while at the same time allowing Southern Democrats the right to repress Blacks in their states without federal intervention. Grossman's chief contribution is to detail the development of this subtle strategy better than any previous work.

The first of these departures from the party's tradition of Negrophobia was brashly opportunistic. In New York state, for instance, the Democrats won power in 1869 by successfully race-baiting a Radical-sponsored referendum to eliminate the state's property qualifications for Black voters and by pledging to retract New York's ratification of the 15th Amendment. After the national promulgation of the impartial suffrage amendment in 1870, however, the Democratic-dominated legislature tried to curry favor with Negro voters by passing a superfluous bill repealing the now-unconstitutional property restriction (pp. 21-22). Furthermore, the term "new departure," strictly signifying a formal Democratic acceptance of the Reconstruction amendments together with opposition to any enforcement of the amendments and bare-faced denials of Democrats mistreatment of Southern dissenters of both races, was first applied to the 1871 Ohio platform of the North's arch-rebel sympathizer and racist Clement Vallandigham. Facing the continuing stigma of disloyalty because of their activities during the war, the proponents of the new line grasped at the "respectability" offered by the fusion with the Greelyites in 1872. A superficial acceptance of the postwar settlement, according to Grossman, "was essential for carrying out the policy of non-enforcement of the amendments," and thereby building a Southern phalanx in Congress and the electoral college for the Democrats (p. 30).

It will not seem strange, perhaps, to the generation of the "Second Reconstruction," which has witnessed the successful employment of "busing" and other code-words for racism in hampering the recent quest for racial equality, that the "new departure" appears to have convinced many Northern liberals. Wearied by the continual and seemingly intractable problems associated with changing America into a non-racist society, Yankees rushed to purchase the Democracy's wooden nutmegs. A small but growing number of Northern Negroes, disappointed with Republican patronage policies toward the race, angry at foot-dragging by some Republicans on various equal rights laws, and hoping to profit from holding a balance of power between the closely divided Northern parties, defected from the party of Lincoln. With the allegedly paternalistic Redeemers in control in the South and with the national party committed to the principle of civil (but not "social" equality), Black rights would be protected, White liberals and Blacks were told, even by the anti-Reconstruction party. By the early 1880s, the more credulous became convinced, Grossman believes, that "there was no longer a race question in national politics" (p. 59).

Although he treats the motives of those who pushed the often-chronicled new departure more harshly than many previous scholars, Grossman is much softer on the "newer departure" Democrats. Just as advocates of the new "racial liberalism" included old Copperheads as well as abolitionists,

Mugwumps as well as machine men, upper as well as lower class politicians, so their motives varied from simple Black vote-grabbing to a forthright idealism (pp. 62-3). Middle and lower-level patronage, sponsorship of Black Democratic clubs and newspapers, Democratic legislative support for weak state civil rights measures, and even a few Blacks placed on Democratic tickets attracted increasing numbers of Negroes, Grossman concludes on the basis of admittedly "impressionistic" evidence, to the ranks of the party in the 1880s (p. 105). If the tactics of the Indianapolis Irish machine mayor Thomas Taggart consisted largely of the usual small favors granted to ethnic leaders, the sincere integrationism of the former Free Soiler and Radical Republican, George Hoadly of Ohio, led during his 1884-86 gubernatorial term to a wide spectrum of pro-Negro activities (pp. 82-98). Unlike many other White politicians of both parties, Hoadly not only appealed for Black votes, but pushed equal rights laws and made good-faith efforts to enforce them.

Still, if the actions of Taggart, Hoadly, and their compatriots proved that, as a Black Cleveland newspaper put it, "the world moves, and with it even the Bourbon Democratic Party," the Republicans were hardly slaggards on civil rights matters. If the Ohio Democrats nominated one Black for the state legislature in 1886, the GOP nominated three (p. 86); if more than half of the Democratic state legislators who voted favored an 1885 Illinois civil rights act, the GOP backed it unanimously (pp. 93-94); if 29% of the Democrats Congressmen from north of the Mason-Dixon line opposed the Barksdale pro-segregation amendment to the 1884 interstate commerce bill, 100% of the non-Southern Republicans did, too (p. 111). Intermittent Black rejoicing over the tentative approach of the prodigal Democratic son was undoubtedly drowned out by the continual chorus for the party of Lincoln--a fact Grossman tends to underemphasize.

If Grossman can be faulted for a slight tilt against the party of William E. Chandler and Frederick Douglass, he is more subject to criticism for not employing social scientific techniques which have recently found growing acceptance in historical writing, for his failure to explore some questions in sufficient depth and with adequate rigor, and for his unwillingness to deal with some of the implications that his new and interesting research raises. First, although he clearly believes there were significant Black defections to the Democrats in the 1880s, he uses none of the available techniques of analyzing aggregate election returns to discover how large the Black Democracy was (pp. 104-5). And though he clearly approves of the "balance of power" strategy adopted by some Negroes as early as 1871, he never straightforwardly compares this with other tactics available to the Blacks or adverts to the more recent experience with such strategies of Blacks and other ethnic groups (pp. 140-1). Is it clear that Blacks, for instance, would have been better off in the short or long run if they had divided their votes more evenly between Goldwater and Johnson or Nixon or McGovern?

Second, what exactly was the mix of opportunism and idealism in the "newer departure," which kinds of politicians were more likely to be idealists and which opportunists, and why did the party split on policies toward Negroes? No doubt the question of motivation is difficult, given the sparseness of

surviving manuscripts (p. 104), but a systematic effort to go beyond soft, qualified generalizations would have increased the value of the book considerably. Why were some "old exploiters of racism" reborn as racial moderates? Were all the ex-Republicans as racially egalitarian as George Hoadly? Which ones? Why? Were there identifiable racist and anti-racist Democratic factions in any state? What was their basis? Did anything besides the percentage of Negroes in a county correlate with the positions of state legislators on civil rights laws? Did stands on these issues bear any relation to votes on economic matters or the ethnically-related issues which Lee Benson, Samuel P. Hays, Samuel McSeveney, and others have seen as basic to the politics of the 19th century?

And what of the larger implications of the work? Given the amount of racial liberalism Grossman finds in the Northern Democracy, were the eighties a temporary high-point in American race relations? If so, why, and why the decline to the "nadir" in the following two decades? If the Northern Democrats so easily became racial liberals during the 1870s and 1880s, at least as long as Southern issues weren't involved, why were they so strongly racist before 1871? Was there a social base (Irish? working class? Southern emigrés?) for the earlier party racism which somehow eroded later? And why did the formerly pro-Negro Northern Democrats succumb so easily to Southern white pressure during the Wilson administration? Did the "newer departure" put down any roots, or did it, too, depart quickly?

Despite these inadequacies, Grossman's is an interesting, well-written, and original book on a topic which deserves more attention than it has received. His outline of the full Northern Democratic strategy--appeal to Northern Blacks, but prevent any enforcement of civil rights in the South--makes the pro-Democratic stance of Mugwumps who were previously antislavery activists more understandable than in previous scholarly treatments. Perhaps a future scholar in Grossman's revisionist spirit will revise the unduly harsh picture Vincent DeSantis and Stanley Hirshson painted of the civil rights politics of the late nineteenth century Republicans.

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