

Pete Daniel. *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. Pp. xii, 378. Cloth, \$45.00; ISBN 0-8078-2537-9. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-8078-4848-4.

Lost Revolutions characterizes the two decades following World War II as a period of missed opportunity in terms of racial relations in the postwar South. Daniel grapples with mercurial and sometimes contradictory evidence in trying to make a case that racial relations in the South could have been very different. While providing much discussion and anecdote that is worthwhile to the teacher of U.S. history, he fails to convince the reader of the validity of his main assertion.

Daniel's strongest section in this work is, not surprisingly in view of some of his other publications, his discussion of the revolutionary shift in southern agriculture in the postwar period. The policies of the federal government and the agendas of the elites in the South resulted in the rapid dislocation of the last generation of sharecroppers. In terms of countering the view that the fifties were a time of bland conformity, this section is of most value to teachers of survey courses.

Almost equal in value is Daniel's treatment of the blurring of the color line through popular music. Certainly the merging of blues, rhythm and blues, and rock-n-roll in the younger generation of that time had the effect of eroding the color line, at least insofar as entertainment was concerned. And while his discussion of the creation of NASCAR and the biographical sketches he offers are interesting, he does not make a convincing link to any lost revolutionary effect that NASCAR might have had in this time.

Daniel's main assertion is that in the two decades following World War II the South was ripe with possibilities for change in racial relations that would, he implies, have resulted in a much more peaceful and even amicable arrangement of social relations than what actually occurred. He is critical of Southern white political leadership in this era, and rightly so, but his lament that things could have been very different constitutes wishful thinking more than historical analysis. At the same time that Southerners witnessed social changes induced by the relocation of sharecroppers and their "lowdown" culture to urban areas and the beginnings of racially hybrid rhythm-and-blues and rock-n-roll, they also were subjected to the extremely reactionary leadership of Strom Thurmond, Orval Faubus, George Wallace, Ross Barnett, and many more. Although this reviewer also wishes it had been otherwise, it is difficult to believe that any moderate white politician in the South at that time could have gotten elected in a political climate that saw the issuance of the Southern Manifesto in Congress, the prominence of White Citizens Councils, and public school closings by governors to avoid court-mandated desegregation, not to mention the more violent expressions of resistance. Politicians posturing themselves in opposition to the federal "intrusions" that advanced black civil rights tended to get elected. That black civil rights were opposed by white Southern politicians of the time is generally true; what this reviewer believes is also true is that political opposition to desegregation was supported by the

voters of the region who mandated with their ballots that they didn't want leadership of the kind Daniel wishes had existed.

Instructors can mine *Lost Revolutions* for wonderful anecdotal lecture material. I would not recommend it for a survey course, but it could be useful for generating discussion in an upper division or graduate U.S. southern history course. Above all, Daniel's work is a pleasure to read.

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Steven M. Gillon. *The American Paradox: A History of the United States Since 1945.* Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2003. Pp. xiii, 493. Paper, \$45.96; ISBN 0-618-15014-5.

Comprehensive and balanced textbooks for courses on recent U.S. history can be difficult to come by, whether at the secondary or university level. Steven Gillon's *The American Paradox* resolves that concern for teachers and professors. Combining an effective writing style with generous use of primary sources and a number of helpful illustrations, Gillon has prepared a volume that can easily serve as the required text for a college-level course or as a classroom supplement for a high school history survey.

As the title indicates, Gillon has organized the book to highlight the paradoxes of American social, political, and cultural history during the last half of the twentieth century. He moves smoothly from the diplomatic crises of the Cold War, to the political and social turmoil of the 1960s, to the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The primary source excerpts help to illustrate the conflicts present in each situation. For example, the section dealing with Joseph McCarthy features a substantial passage from his 1950 "list of names" speech in West Virginia contrasted with Senator Margaret Chase Smith's speech criticizing McCarthy's practices. This sort of selection will be useful in the classroom, allowing teachers to emphasize to students the complicated nature of the topics being studied and presenting opposing viewpoints. Too often, texts present one side of the issue. Gillon strives to show a variety of positions.

At the end of each chapter, a selected reading section gives suggestions for further study. While the reading lists are varied, they are not extensive. Still, they will provide students with a good direction from which to begin projects and additional research. In excess of thirty maps, charts, and graphs illustrate the text, along with a large number of photographs and other illustrations. Extensive captions link the visual aids to the text, making them a useful learning tool for the reader. Finally, a complete and thorough index makes finding specific topics a quick and easy task.

Writing a recent U.S. history text can be a difficult task. Authors of such texts do not have the benefit of years of scholarship to read and consider when formulating their arguments. Instead, they must develop their own interpretations based solely on the