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Republicans Face the Southern Question: The New Departure Years, 1877-1897. By Vincent P. De Santis. *The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, Series LXXVII (1959), Number 1. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1959. Pp. 275. Tables, index. Paperbound, \$4.00; cloth, \$5.00.)

The "Southern Question" has plagued the American public and the American politician for over a century. Before 1860 it revolved around the "sinfulness" of the slavocracy; during Reconstruction it included the controversies relating to the Negro, the Civil War, and military occupation of the South; after 1880, it involved treatment of the Negro, the one-party system, and the possible economic exploitation of the South. The latter three problems are with the country today.

In *Republicans Face the Southern Question* Dr. Vincent De Santis, of Notre Dame University, neglects the broad implications of his title and examines only the attempts of the Republicans to regain their position in the South after 1877. Primarily, the volume is even narrower in scope; it is the story of the efforts of four Republican presidents, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, and Harrison, to garner votes for their party in the former Confederate states. De Santis believes that the Republican party has consistently worked to "break up the Democratic South" and states that "Republican lack of success in the South has not been from a lack of effort" (p. 12). But as his volume itself indicates, few Republicans outside the White House ever gave much attention to the South; fewer still spent campaign money there. And the presidents, a cynic might charge, were interested in the area only because of its votes in the nominating conventions.

But whatever their reasons, various presidents did try to rebuild the Republican party in the South. Hayes, after carrying only three southern states, and those probably because fellow Republicans were counting the ballots, tried conciliation. He attempted to build a "conservative" party by awarding patronage to former Whigs, then uneasy Bourbon Democrats, abandoning the policy of military occupation, and,

to the disgust of many of the party faithful, leaving the Negro in the lurch. In return he got nothing, for Southern Democrats could see no good reason to come over to his side.

Garfield and Arthur almost completely dropped Hayes's strategy. They decided to build the party around the various independent movements springing up in the South, movements led by dissatisfied politicians who for diverse reasons were anxious to bring Bourbon domination to an end. By recognizing and giving the patronage to these leaders and ordering the Southern Republicans to cooperate with them, Garfield and Arthur hoped to add Republican votes in Congress and, possibly, in the electoral college. In the end the Garfield-Arthur program with the Independents collapsed, leaving a residual taste of bitterness in the mouths of many forgotten southern Negro Republicans.

From 1888 to 1892 Republican efforts to redeem the South centered around a quasi-return to Reconstruction. Harrison's program called for strong backing for Senator Henry C. Lodge's "Force Bill," which would allow federal supervision of local elections. Harrison felt that if only the Republicans could get a fair count in the South they could win some Congressional seats. But despite administrative pressure, many Republican senators were uninterested and the bill died in the Senate. By 1896, in despair, the Republicans had returned to the Garfield-Arthur policy of fusion with Independents, this time the Populists. Nothing came of their efforts—the two parties could never agree on a common policy.

Dr. De Santis recounts the story of these various Republican attempts to win the South with great skill. Although there is little here that is new, it is the first time this information has been put together into a coherent whole. The book is attractive (although the proofreading is poor) and is a credit to the Johns Hopkins Press.

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The World War and American Isolation, 1914-1917. By Ernest R. May. *Harvard Historical Studies*, Volume LXXI. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959. Pp. viii, 482. Bibliographical essay, index. \$7.50.)

There have been, if sweeping generalizations are permitted, two periods when the United States has been preoccupied with foreign relations. During its earliest years the new country successfully wrested its course away from the European balance of power in order to promote its own best interests. During its latest history it has voluntarily reentered a somewhat different balance of power for the same reason. It was the ill fortune of the American people and their president, 1914-1917, to have to make a decision as to their role with regard to a world conflagration before thinking about the country's new position had crystallized. Therefore, they did not have a clearly defined standard with which to assess the relation of the United States to the war.