

Radical Republicans in the North: State Politics during Reconstruction. Edited by James C. Mohr. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976. Pp. xvi, 200. Notes, tables, figure, historiographical note and summary of source materials. \$11.95.)

This collection of studies, one for each of nine northern states, is an important contribution to an understanding of state and local history in Reconstruction politics, a subject relatively neglected in the past but currently attracting considerable attention. The volume brings together the expertise of nine scholars, each of whom has an intimate knowledge of the state about which he writes. With the exception of David Montgomery's work on Pennsylvania Radicals, their accounts are originals rather than reprints.

The most rigorously analytical and illuminating chapter is that of Robert Dykstra on Iowa. Richard Current writes on Wisconsin with characteristic grace and perception. The Midwest is indeed generously treated with additional chapters on Michigan by George Blackburn, Illinois by Philip Swenson, and Ohio by Felice Bonadio. Besides Pennsylvania the East is represented by Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, handled respectively by Richard Abbott, John Niven, and the editor. Mohr also contributes an historiographic essay and an introduction that brings some cohesion to the separate state studies.

A collection devoted to a single topic raises expectations of internal coherence and broad conclusions that are difficult to satisfy, especially with nine distinctive political entities under consideration. A final chapter of conclusions, even if tentative ones, squarely based upon the nine studies would have been helpful. Each contributor has shed some light upon reform at the state level, but it is disappointing that the editor makes no explicit evaluation of the hypothesis raised by his earlier work, namely that in the immediate postwar years Republicans tried to transform their party into a vehicle for progressive social reform, an effort shattered in New York by hostile public reaction to black suffrage. The separate studies confirm the fact that advocacy of equal suffrage where it had not existed before the war was politically dangerous though not necessarily devastating. They do not, however, establish an unequivocal relationship between Republicans and socioeconomic reform. Only New York

leaders seem to have turned deliberately to reform as a means of retaining power in anticipation of the disappearance of wartime issues. Yet in most of the other eight states Republicans in positions of power were responsive to reform impulses and were generally ready to accept an expansive role for state government. Why institutional reform (other than black suffrage) at the state level did not become an effective partisan issue remains obscure. Limited perceptions in the face of socioeconomic change and a diversity of interests and values within the Republican constituency appear to have played a larger role than any subservience to vested economic interests.

Ironically, the state focus of these studies underscores the importance of the national scene for even the local politics of the postwar decade. Except in respect to Reconstruction and the Negro, issues did not define party lines but cut across them. As congressional Republicans advanced from equality before the law to equality at the ballot box, the national issue concerning black suffrage became dangerous and divisive, but no alternative promised to unite the party and advance its fortunes. Loyalty forged in civil conflict remained strong, but state Republican leaders increasingly turned from advocacy to patronage machines and the politics of accommodation.

*Hunter College and Graduate Center,
City University of New York*

LaWanda Cox

The Democratic Party and the Negro: Northern and National Politics, 1868-92. By Lawrence Grossman. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976. Pp. xi, 212. Notes, tables, bibliography, index. \$9.95.)

It is generally believed by historians and laymen alike that black voters in the United States—where they were permitted to vote—were overwhelmingly Republican from the 1860s until the 1930s, after which period they have been overwhelmingly Democratic. According to the common view, there were a couple of instances in which this was not true, such as the presidential election of 1912 when many Negroes, including W. E. B. Du Bois, crossed over and temporarily supported Woodrow Wilson; but it was not until the New Deal era that the vast majority of black voters left the party of