

*sequence Since 1945*. New York: New American Library. 1977. Pp. xi, 531. Cloth \$15.95, paper \$5.95.

Updating V. O. Key's *Southern Politics* (1949) has become a cottage industry. How good is the latest product and how does it compare with the original masterwork? Based largely on interviews with prominent southern politicians, knowledgeable newspaper reporters, and a scattering of activists and political technicians, the Jack Bass-Walter DeVries volume is sprightly and readable high journalism. Laced with classic anecdotes, it will intoxicate amateur politicians and aficionados of the regional pastime, flavor undergraduate reading lists, and add zest to lectures on twentieth century politics. Nonetheless, however craftsman-like the sketching of details, analytical scholars will find the canvas as a whole inferior to the original.

In composing his painting, Key employed three types of brushes—interviews, statistics, and more or less self-conscious political theory—and his strokes were both subtle and deft. He transformed political cartography, for instance, by using maps to demonstrate the "friends and neighbors" politics which lent some structure to a system in which the "normal" socioeconomic cleavages were largely suppressed. Although acutely aware of southern diversity and anxious to destroy the stereotype of a homogeneous, unreconstructed South, Key was also a scientist seeking to bring order to his data, to discover correspondences, to generalize. Thus, he found that a politics without parties, and in most states without continuing factions, rewarded certain types of politicians and produced policies that were generally unresponsive to the needs of the lower classes. And Key was not only diligent and perceptive; he was also lucky. Writing at a time when the long-established order was beginning to break down, but before a new one could take shape, he enjoyed a temporal position far enough removed from the old system to afford a clear perspective on it, yet not far enough along in the confused transition to hamper free speculation on the future.

Bass and DeVries, whose first printed words are "V. O. Key" and nearly all of whose chapters include a substantial quotation from Key in the first two pages, are neither so systematic nor so fortunate as their master. Their basic theme is the post-1965 success of white "moderates"—Carter, Bumpers, Askew, and others—usually elected with a firm core of black voting support. The era of "massive resistance" demagogues seems over, the Republican "southern strategy" in tatters, and the rural-dominated inactive legislatures energized by reapportionment. The story unfolds in chapters on each of the ex-Confederate states, four brief chapters on blacks, Republicans, organized labor, and

Congress, and initial and concluding overviews. (An example of their lack of central theme is their arrangement of the state chapters in strict alphabetic order; Key ordered his analogous chapters, which composed less than 40 percent of his text compared to three-fourths of theirs, in a non-alphabetic order to stress particular themes.)

Despite their subtitle ("Social Change and Political Consequence Since 1945") Bass and DeVries never clearly show just what social changes have taken place in the South, never argue convincingly that it was social, rather than political or economic or ideological, changes that produced the consequences, refuse to generalize about the transformed system, and express only "a cautious optimism" that the metamorphosis they describe is permanent. They never systematically discuss urbanization, industrialization, immigration, or prosperity; they never compare the effects on politics of those developments with the changes produced by Supreme Court and congressional decisions on school integration, black voting rights, and reapportionment. Furthermore, despite the availability of surveys and the huge increase in statistical sophistication in the professional audience since 1949, the present volume is actually less advanced than Key's in its employment of statistics. Their survey questions are too limited, the attitudes probably too transient to be of much interest. A hundred pages of maps, charts, and tables buried in appendixes contain no regressions or correlations, and the authors make extremely arbitrary classifications of counties to be shaded in maps.

Nevertheless, the book is both enjoyable and suggestive, the accounts of particular elections compelling, and the analysis of individual states often extremely prescient. Some of the authors' difficulties arise because current trends in some states are just unclear (what will happen in Alabama, for instance, after Wallace retires?), because they are writing for a popular as much as for a professional audience, and because the inevitable standard against which their work will be judged, Key's classic, is so high. Perhaps we need a series of volumes which are more sophisticated in theory and methodology, but less ambitious in scope, as well as a waiting period until trends become more pronounced before we turn out further facsimilies of Key.

J. MORGAN KOUSSER  
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