

Harnack's *We Have All Gone Away*, Gladys Leffler Gist's *Chasing Rainbows: A Recollection of the Great Plains, 1921-1975*, and Margaret Ott Onerheim's *Threads of Memory: A Memoir of the 1920's. A Bountiful Harvest* is visually rich, and well worth leisurely examination.

Making Minnesota Liberal: Civil Rights and the Transformation of the Democratic Party, by Jennifer A. Delton. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. xxvi, 226 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Andrew E. Kersten is associate professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. He is the author of *Race, Jobs, and the War: The FEPC in the Midwest, 1941-1946* (2000).

At the center of Jennifer Delton's book is an interesting historical question: Why did Hubert Humphrey champion civil rights? Certainly Humphrey's deep humanitarianism drove him to fight for justice. Yet Delton argues that there was much more to it. Backing civil rights fit neatly into the new political culture of the Democratic Party, which emphasized pluralism. Moreover, pushing civil rights as a political issue provided Humphrey and his liberal allies with the opportunity to recast Minnesota's politics and in so doing to reshape the national Democratic Party. In Delton's view, the 1948 presidential election was central to this story. Humphrey helped to lay a civil rights plank into the Democratic Party's platform, thus forcing the Democrats to transform their ideology and commit to political pluralism.

Delton's book enters a somewhat crowded historiographical field. Even before Senator Trent Lott drew recent national attention to the 1948 election, many scholars, such as Alan Brinkley, Robert Caro, Mary Dudziak, Robert Mann, and Timothy Thurber, had investigated the major shift in the Democratic Party to complete developments begun in the era of Franklin D. Roosevelt. What Delton brings to this discussion is a view from Minnesota, which in many ways was the proving ground for the changes that took place later on the national stage. The 1948 election was a culmination of events that began in Minnesota with the rise and fall of the Farmer-Labor Party.

In 1918 the Minnesota Federation of Labor and the Nonpartisan League, a farmers' organization, joined forces to form the basis of what became the Farmer-Labor Party. Rather quickly the party established itself as a major force, electing several governors during the 1930s. Despite the popularity of such politicians as Floyd Olson, the Farmer-Laborites were under constant strain. Simply put, it was difficult to keep the farmers and workers together. This weakness allowed other progressive forces to ascend. By the 1940s, there was a new cadre

of Democrats of which Hubert Humphrey was one. His political training (like that of other Minnesota progressives) came from the University of Minnesota's political science department. Humphrey's teachers were adherents of pluralism, a theory that gave government an integrative role, bringing various elements—no matter how marginalized—into the political sphere. This political conception also had a significant place for political parties: they were the democratic forces that kept totalitarian temptations at bay. Humphrey's commitment to pluralism as well as to the Democratic Party helped to launch his political career. He took advantage of the Farmer-Labor Party's divisions to weld a new, fused Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL).

At the core of this party's platform was a strong commitment to civil rights. According to Delton, by adopting civil rights as their issue, pluralistic, progressive Democrats built a consensus behind politicians such as Humphrey. Of course, this helped Democrats win the small black vote in Minnesota. Additionally, it allowed politicians such as Humphrey to take advantage of the charged national discourse about race and antiracism. Finally, Delton maintains that civil rights helped to "reunite farmers and workers in anticipation of the [1948] election" (125). By establishing a powerful progressive alternative to Henry Wallace's Progressive Party, the DFL was able not only to elect its members to high office but also to gain clout within the national Democratic Party. Thus it was not surprising that Humphrey brought forth the civil rights plank in 1948 while boldly proclaiming that the "time has arrived for the Democratic Party to get out of the shadow of states' rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights" (xi). He was trying to do for the national party what he had done for the DFL and make political pluralism a national ideology.

Delton's book should draw the attention of historians and political scientists who examine the roots of the modern political culture. Moreover, it should spark more investigation into the themes that she develops. Did other midwestern politicians in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois such as Andrew J. Biemiller, Frank W. Murphy, or Paul H. Douglas take up the cause of civil rights for similar reasons? Likewise, did Humphrey's successes in Minnesota and in national politics motivate others to engage civil rights at the local level because of the issue's value as a unifier? Delton's work encourages more local and regional research on the historical nexus between civil rights activism and party politics.

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