Panamanian hands and the heated opposition these elicited within the United States. In the end, her work powerfully counters the sentiment that "we bought it, we paid for it, it's ours" (p. 373) by revealing that the Panama Canal was never a strictly U.S. enterprise and by prompting reflection on whether the ability to acquire something necessarily makes its purchase just.

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THOMAS J. SUGRUE. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. New York: Random House. 2008. Pp. xxviii, 666. $35.00.

Seeing the reviews of Thomas J. Sugrue's epic study of the civil rights movement in the North in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, I felt we had finally made it. After more than a decade of scholarship by historians including Adina Black, Martha Biondi, Matthew Countryman, Jack Dougherty, Johanna Fernandez, Douglas Flamming, Dayo Gore, Patrick Jones, Peniel Joseph, Matthew Lassiter, Annelise Orleck, Wendell Pritchett, Brian Purnell, Robert Self, Josh Sides, Clarence Taylor, Quintard Taylor, Heather Thompson, Craig Steven Wilder, and Komozi Woodard, a book providing a mountain of evidence on the varied battles and myriad figures of the northern civil rights movement along with extensive documentation of racial injustice and segregation in the North had commanded the attention of the *Times* and the *Post*.

The disquiet apparent in the newspaper reviews seemed to be evidence of the significant intervention that Sugrue's book was making and the important shift that an examination of the northern movement requires to our understandings of the postwar period. The reviewers' criticisms seemed to stem partly from their desires to hold onto a much simpler tale of postwar America with recognizable "good guys" (moral, upstanding southern blacks and their northern white allies) and "bad guys" (racist southern whites and alienated northern blacks) and decisive happy endings (the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the 2008 election of Barack Obama). Sugrue's text, however, forces us to move past a morality tale of social change to a more sober examination of the nation's race problem. In the midst of a presidency being hailed by pundits as "post-racial" and in an age awash in public celebrations of the civil rights movement (including the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial on the National Mall) that include no recognition of northern-based activists, *Sweet Land* is a book needed now more than ever. (I choose to shorten the book's title in part to evoke Toni Morrison's use of Sweet Home in *Beloved*—to get at the northern feign of racial innocence captured by Gunnar Myrdal and quoted by Sugrue in the introduction: "The social paradox of the North is exactly this, that almost everybody is against discrimination in general but, at the same time, almost everybody practices discrimination in his own personal affairs" [p. xv].)

Sweet Land begins in the 1930s and 1940s, highlighting the importance of the black Left and its white allies in raising the intertwined issues of jobs and racial justice during the Great Depression and World War II years. It moves through the heroic period of the civil rights movement with an examination of the many movements in northern cities and towns that grew up alongside their more famous counterparts in Nashville, Birmingham, Jackson, and Montgomery. It then traces the various outgrowths of Black Power and militant protest in the late 1960s and 1970s. The book proceeds with thematic chronology through some of the key battle issues of the northern movement: jobs, housing, public accommodations, education, policing, and public assistance.

Sugrue is strongest in his handling of the variety of places whose movements he chronicles throughout the text. Like a master juggler, he does not just detail struggles in Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago but also adds dozens of small cities, suburbs, and towns (schools in New Rochelle, New York; interracial housing developments in Deerfield, Illinois; lunch counters in Wichita, Kansas; pools in Cleveland, Ohio), thereby showing the dramatic sweep of the movement for racial justice across the entire United States. For anyone who might think the actions of Harlem mothers who kept their kids home in 1958 to protest New York's segregated schools were anomalous, Sugrue shows us parent boycotts in Long Branch, New Jersey, and walkouts in Hempstead, New York. He also reminds us that the move for community control in New York City in the late 1960s looks much different after acknowledging the longstanding movement for desegregation and educational equity headed by black mothers who had been thwarted time and again in the city.

One of the best chapters, "No Place for Colored," begins with Martin Luther King Jr.'s experience of being denied service in a restaurant in New Jersey in 1950 and chronicles the segregated nature of public accommodations in the North. The chapter offers a devastating rebuttal to the idea that the desire to segregate and the fear of race-mixing was a southern compulsion. "For colored only" signs were not needed at many pools, beaches, amusement parks, and movie theaters across the Northeast, Midwest, and West Coast for black patrons to be barred from these establishments.

Sugrue also shows the ways in which local, state, and federal officials "mixed the gravel of racism into the mortar of public policy" (p. 203) regarding schools,

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housing, jobs, and public services—a stark reminder that the racism imbedded in these policies was not an accidental flaw but rather a constitutive element of New Deal and Veterans Administration home loans, the drawing of school and electoral district boundaries, and the parceling out of government contracts, jobs, and public assistance. The book takes issue with the distinction between northern "de facto" segregation and southern "de jure" segregation, tracing the work of activists like black lawyer Paul Zuber who litigated many northern school cases. Zuber had his first major win in 1961 in New Rochelle when Federal Judge Irving Kaufman (who had ordered the Rosenbergs' executions a decade earlier) sided with the plaintiff's case challenging New Rochelle's unequal schools. Judge Kaufman contested the government's legal justification of "neighborhood schools," which "cannot be used as an instrument to confine Negroes within an area artificially delineated in the first instance by official acts" (p. 197). Sugrue persuasively argues that the cheaper the change, the more likely it was to happen—so northern public accommodations desegregated but on the whole schools and housing did not. One exception was welfare rights, and Sugrue includes a marvelous section on the campaign by poor women to open up public assistance, which helped reduce black poverty rates in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sweet Land captures a fifty-year chronology of the nation's Second Reconstruction (incomplete the first time not only in the South but throughout the nation) and the indefatigable nature of activists of varying ideology who, year after year, decade after decade, continued to press for equality and justice in the promised land of the North. In one twenty-page stretch, Sugrue describes the political philosophies of Urban League president Whitney Young, Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad, and former communist and reparations advocate Queen Mother Moore. He is particularly adept at analyzing what people conceived of doing rather than falling into the familiar trap of writing about what they should have done. Resisting the recent tendency to commemorate not-angry activists (as in the public funerals of Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King), Sugrue is not afraid to show the considered and considerable reasons behind many organizers' outrage. A number of them held allegiances to communism, racial separatism, or armed self-defense—ideologies more difficult for public celebration (and national mythology) than the life of a tired seamstress who refused to give up her seat on a bus.

Unfortunately Sugrue does not use this history of northern struggle to rethink the stories of the period that we assume we already know (Rosa Parks, for instance, also believed in self-defense and spent more than forty years fighting northern injustice from her Detroit apartment). He does not show us the African American riot in Birmingham in May 1963 after segregationists bombed the Gaston Motel where King and other Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) members were staying—an incident that provides an interesting counterpoint to the northern riots of the mid-1960s and that factored into President John F. Kennedy's endorsement of the Birmingham agreement the next day. We never see the parallels between the difficulties the SCLC encountered in Albany, Georgia, in 1962 and in Chicago in 1966 (and the ways in which officials in both cities reneged on their promises, drawing little national outrage of the sort the firehoses and police dogs in Birmingham did). We avoid reckoning with how Congress passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act only after its northern sponsors deliberately exempted northern schools by stipulating that " 'desegregation' shall not mean the assignment of students to public schools in order to overcome racial imbalance." We miss King being called a communist in 1964 for his opposition to California's Proposition 14, whose passage (which would overturn the state's recently passed fair housing law), he argued, would be "one of the most shameful developments in our nation's history." Nor do we see his attack on official claims of "surprise" surrounding the Watts Riots, given the conditions in Los Angeles and white intransigence to the demands of civil rights activists there. The book includes no analysis of how the New Right's allegiance to "taxpayer rights" and "law and order" and opposition to "forced busing" and "government interference" which gestated in the campaign around Proposition 14 and Ronald Reagan's election as governor in California eventually became the lexicon of conservatism in the South.

Sugrue's book provides much detail of the various battlegrounds of the northern struggle but does not always take enough time to step back and consider the wider canvas. While its subtitle highlights the "forgotten struggle for civil rights in the North," it does not fully explain how, even at the time, the northern movement was obscured. The idea of the South and the movement unfolding there—and its presumed *difference from* the North—served as a constant reference point that bedeviled northern activists in the 1940s, 1950s 1960s and 1970s. The obfuscation of the northern freedom struggle happened by design, not oversight, in part because of a strategic response by public officials and northern residents at the time to deny black grievances. In cities across the North, public officials regularly refuted black demands with the claim that "this is not the South" and expressed their shock at rising militancy and urban uprisings in the mid 1960s—all while willfully forgetting decades of civil rights struggles in their own cities that had produced negligible change.

Deep into the book, Sugrue zeroes in on northern claims of racial innocence: "[R]acial liberalism did bequeath to suburban whites a new language of color blindness that allowed them—despite the long history of deliberate racial exclusion in housing—to claim that they had overcome their racist past and to profess their innocence" (p. 248). But he does not fully explain how this process worked. Indeed, by the 1960s, there was a growing incentive for white northerners to support change in the South while resisting civil rights movements in their own backyards. As they viewed the public

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support of racial segregation as the distasteful purview of southern racists, "culture of poverty" discourse provided a socially acceptable rhetoric to harness many northern whites' opposition to housing, school, and job desegregation. Unlike many of their southern counterparts who defended segregation in the 1950s and early 1960s, northerners celebrated "colorblindness," were "surprised" by black anger, but still maintained school systems where the pupils and the resources were deeply segregated. To explain these discrepancies, they cast African American and Latino youth as "problem students" whose behavior (along with their parents) hampered their educational success— and framed their resistance to desegregation through a language of "neighborhood control," "taxpayer's rights," "free enterprise," and "forced busing." Such a frame proved to be a supple and effective means of thwarting the large-scale desegregation of schools or housing in the urban North. It continues to have currency today.

Deriving partly from the mid-century sociological theories of E. Franklin Frazier and Gunnar Myrdal (and gaining further prominence with the 1965 Moynihan Report), this culturalist formulation cast "northern blacks" as undone by the structural landscape of northern cities and untethered from the values of religion, family, and community that anchored southern black communities. The phrase "northern blacks" thus came to signify a different kind of black community from those in the South, one now hampered by dissolution and dysfunction. Arguing that the structures of American racism and urban political economy produced black cultural responses that led to educational and job underattainment, many white liberals, with support from some black middle-class leaders, sponsored programs addressing juvenile delinquency, job readiness skills, and cultural remediation to facilitate black educational and economic attainment. They could thereby claim attention to racial concerns while maintaining that educational, housing, and job structures in these cities were not discriminatory.

Attempting to counter this discourse of cultural pathology, northern civil rights activists regularly pointed out the similarities between their actions and those of the southern movement. They stressed the righteousness of the southern struggle not only because they were inspired by the bold actions taking place there but also because they were trying to demonstrate the national character of racial inequity and to challenge the cultural frame that rendered the problems of their own communities so very different from southern ones. Indeed, highlighting the moral urgency of Southern battles became, for many northern activists, a way to demonstrate the righteousness of their own struggles.

This cultural paradigm also helped shape the very different way that the press covered southern and northern civil rights struggles. Northern movements garnered quite a bit of media coverage (even on the front page) but were treated as episodic (individual events rather than as a cohesive movement) and often described less righteously (as "protests," "disturbances," or "clashes"). While many young journalists like Howell Raines, Claude Sitton, and David Halberstam built their reputations by chronicling the southern movement, much of the celebrated journalism about the North took its cues from a new wing of urban sociology that sought to plumb the depths of black ghetto culture. Because a sharecropper could occupy a place of dignity in the American imagination that a welfare mother did not, a very different story of race in the North emerged in the nation's top newspapers.

The previous observations are not meant to detract from the importance of Sugrue's book. *Sweet Land* provides an opening for a much broader discussion of race and democracy in postwar—and even "post-racial"—America. Let us hope that we are listening.

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