to keep African American farmers uninformed about USDA financial assistance programs and new research on farming techniques. USDA officials in Washington consistently looked the other way as their white Southern counterparts egregiously discriminated against African Americans (and women, Latinos, and Native Americans as well) in terms of crop allotments and loans.

Even as President Lyndon Johnson and a liberal Democratic Congress repeatedly passed antidiscrimination laws, USDA officials filed obviously fraudulent reports indicating compliance with new civil rights requirements, phony paperwork that went unchallenged. As a result of department discrimination, the number of black farms in ten Southern states (minus Florida, Texas, and Kentucky) declined 88% in the 1960s alone. "The civil rights and equal opportunity laws of the mid-1960s prompted USDA bureaucrats to embrace equal rights rhetorically even as they intensified discrimination," Daniel argues (Daniel, xii). This was part of a larger decision by the federal government to encourage corporate farming, which also dispossessed white farmers who were not affluent or whose holdings were small, a trend reinforced by changes in the tax code that turned farm losses into write-offs for wealthy investors. As Daniel enumerates, as the USDA grew in size, the number of farmers it served dwindled, but he proves that the USDA at the local level clearly intended to, in many cases, rob African Americans of family farms. Department officials punished African Americans who participated in the civil rights movement by illegally denying them financial aid, and subjected them to discriminatory "character tests" when they applied for loans.

Daniel tells a fascinating, in many ways surprising, but completely infuriating story. His archival research is creative and impeccable. He shifts our attention from the usual civil rights battleground to where the post-Civil War African American freedom struggle began during Reconstruction: the Southern farm belt. His work and Mantler's are intelligent and indispensable, greatly expanding the boundaries of civil rights inquiry. They belong in the library of all serious students of American race relations.

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Brian Purnell, *Fighting Jim Crow in the County of Kings: The Congress of Racial Equality in Brooklyn*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013. Pp. 353. $40 cloth (ISBN 978-0-8131-4182-4).
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Brian Purnell's important *Fighting Jim Crow in the County of Kings* chronicles the Brooklyn Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) from 1960 to 1964.

In these years, Brooklyn CORE's interracial membership launched creative, nonviolent, direct action campaigns that sought to make visible and to eliminate racial discrimination in housing, employment, sanitation services, and public schools in New York City. Purnell skillfully builds on earlier scholarship, including Harold X. Connolly's 1977 *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn* (New York University Press), Craig Steven Wilder's 2000 *A Covenant with Color: Race and Social Power in Brooklyn* (Columbia University Press), and multiple works by Clarence Taylor, to demonstrate why there was a need for a social movement to address racism in Brooklyn, and why its battles were necessarily both political and ideological. CORE members combated not only the entrenched systems of privilege that ensured that whites enjoyed better housing, schools, and jobs, but also the widely shared assumption that African Americans themselves were responsible for the inferior condition of majority-black neighborhoods and schools, and for the disproportionately high rates of poverty in the black community.

In this highly detailed study, Purnell draws on organizational records, newspaper reports, and oral history interviews with former CORE members, including twenty-eight interviews that he conducted, to provide a close examination of social movement dynamics. The interviews themselves constitute a major contribution to historical knowledge about the civil rights movement in the North, and Purnell has generously made them available at the Brooklyn Public Library. Excerpts from these rich interviews, along with chilling letters written by white opponents, constitute some of Purnell's most compelling evidence, allowing him to document the courage and ingenuity of CORE activists, as well as the willingness of white Northerners to employ violence to preserve their monopoly on good housing, schools, and jobs. CORE members argued that African Americans and Puerto Ricans experienced similar discrimination, and published some of their flyers in both Spanish and English; however, Purnell reports that in the early 1960s Brooklyn CORE failed to attract Puerto Rican membership for reasons both "varied and speculative" (188).

One of *Fighting Jim Crow's* most interesting themes is the complex relationship between Brooklyn CORE and the Southern civil rights movement. The formation of the Brooklyn CORE chapter in 1960 was inspired by the student sit-down movement, and its first campaign was a sympathy strike against Woolworth's in Brooklyn. However, Brooklyn CORE's goal of achieving parity for black New Yorkers in housing and city services, especially sanitation, schools, and jobs was hindered by the dominance of television coverage of the Southern civil rights movement and the violence directed at African American protestors by Bull Connor and his ilk. Purnell observes that "pictures of events in the South defined the 'reality' of civil rights protest for most people" (269). Therefore, when Brooklyn CORE announced a "stall-in" to block traffic attending the 1964 World's Fair in order to draw attention to the myriad

forms of racial discrimination in the North, most whites rejected CORE's assertion that they were implicated in maintaining systems of oppression, instead perceiving themselves to be the victims of this "violent" action. Mayor Wagner and other white New Yorkers declared their city to be a progressive bastion of exceptionalism in contrast to the backwardness of the South. While affirming his sympathies for the goals of the civil rights movement, Wagner and other municipal and union leaders refused to act on CORE's demands to take concrete measures to end racial discrimination against African Americans and Puerto Ricans by enforcing existing laws.

Brooklyn CORE succeeded in gaining extensive media coverage and in winning significant community support; it also opened up some housing in previously all-white neighborhoods and buildings to African Americans, and secured improved sanitation services in Bedford-Stuyvesant. After a protracted campaign against inferior schools in predominantly black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods that focused on the children of members Elaine and Jerome Bibuld, and that included a 7 day sit-in at the Board of Education with more than 300 participants, the Bibulds won the admission of their children into P.S. 130, a school outside their district that met their academic requirements. P.S. 130 was 20% black and Puerto Rican, had satisfactory performance in reading and writing, and offered programs for academically talented children such as the Bibulds' (206). A tremendous personal victory for the family, this settlement with the Board of Education did little to address the larger pattern of poor performing schools in black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods. Although black nationalist sentiment, particularly a preference for black leadership and a base in the black community, had coexisted with CORE's integrationalist ideal in the early 1960s, Purnell argues that these "piecemeal and incomplete" victories led activists increasingly to question the usefulness of nonviolent, direct action protest and paved the way for Sonny Carson, who espoused an assertive black nationalism, and who, at times, employed strong-arm tactics and incendiary polemics, to assume leadership in 1967 (277).

Befitting his subject matter, Purnell's prose is direct and engaging, and the dramatic photographs of CORE actions complement Purnell's vivid descriptions. Purnell argues that for the young black men from Bedford-Stuyvesant who took part in the 1962 Clean Sweep Campaign to secure improved sanitation services, the experience was transformative, leaving them empowered and further radicalized. Purnell also emphasizes the "vital" leadership of women within Brooklyn CORE, particularly in its 1962 school campaign, making me curious about whether their participation was similarly transformative, as well as about what lessons they took from their experiences in CORE (182). Here, additional excerpts from the oral histories would be useful in assessing the subjective experience of CORE members.

Fighting Jim Crow is a major contribution to our understanding of the black freedom movement, recovering the varied repertoire of Brooklyn's activists in

the early 1960s and how their claims were overshadowed by the unfolding civil rights movement in the South and the myth of Northern exceptionalism. The intransigence of the City's liberal power brokers led to escalating racial tensions, and the polarizing confrontation between advocates of local control and black nationalism and the United Federation of Teachers at Ocean-Hill Brownsville in 1968. Brooklyn CORE members had envisioned a very different future, one that remains compelling today.

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Jeffrey Bloodworth, *Losing the Center: The Decline of American Liberalism, 1968–1992*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013. Pp. 384. $50.00 cloth (ISBN 100-8-131-42296).
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All historians writing about the United States in the 1970s address, in some way, liberalism's decline. Jeffrey Bloodworth's *Losing the Center* focuses solely on this decline and offers a single cause: "New Politics" liberals ignored traditional New Deal coalition voters and pandered instead to elites and social movement activists. Although he is mostly silent on the shifting political allegiances of white Southerners, Bloodworth laments Democratic Party leaders' abandonment of white, mostly working-class, voters, many of who lived in Rust Belt cities or inner suburbs. Liberals dismissed these voters' cultural conservatism and robust Cold War stance. Consequently, Democratic candidates lost elections. The emerging conservative movement framed national political discourse.

What Democrats needed, Bloodworth argues, was "a centrist, yet liberal, middle way between the New Politics and the Reagan Revolution" (227). What they delivered instead were outsized welfare programs and statist solutions; they left behind what Bloodworth calls "opportunity liberalism." This brand of liberalism, dominant in the 1940s and 1950s, privileged individual initiatives and sensible, targeted government programs to promote economic growth and assist the most needy. The key moment in this transformation, he contends, came in the late 1960s, when New Politics liberals undertook ham-handed reforms to increase the importance of state primaries and open up delegate selection processes to the national presidential nominating conventions. When put into effect during the 1972 presidential campaign of George McGovern, this understandable goal of democratizing the Party marginalized party stalwarts, especially labor leaders and big city politicians. Party regulars, disgusted by their marginalization and the