

tionary . . . his cropped hair . . . is meant to make one think of prison and guerrillas; probably terrorists." Having thus defined "revolutionary," she is nevertheless at pains to expose "reactionary" as a word escaping definition. Janna, in due deference to her creator, doesn't like that word "reactionary." It is one of those words (like, among others, "revisionist," "bourgeois" and "fascist") utilized by the unsleeping Shammat to the undoing of even the agents of Canopus. By such devices Lessing seeks to discredit the *mot juste* for her position these days.

The Good Terrorist has to be taken seriously because it comes from the same hand as *The Golden Notebook*, which—written before her capitulation to Sufism, when, being of the world as well as in it, she encompassed so much of the world—crowns the period ending (ominously, in retrospect) with *The Four-Gated City*. How far Lessing has

traveled since that period, *The Good Terrorist*, in its wholesale negation of the large humane intelligence, the honesty of mind and feeling, which informed her engagement then with what she called the great debates of our time, bears sorry witness. But that is not to say she has trodden a downward path all the way in the years between. Though no work she has produced in these years approaches the stature of *The Golden Notebook*, or of *The Four-Gated City* for that matter, her power to confront and render in her fiction the seismic shocks of our time, to enlarge and intensify our consciousness of them, has still made itself felt intermittently. She can still turn out a book—*The Diary of a Good Neighbor* is the most recent example—free of cant (amazingly so, given the deluge of it in the Canopus series). Perhaps *The Good Terrorist* is not, after all, the death rattle of the writer in Lessing, much as it sounds like it. □

articulating that desire for "civic democracy," and in founding the Tuskegee Civic Association (T.C.A.) in 1941. Along with other dedicated associates such as William P. Mitchell, the Rev. K.L. Buford and Jessie Parkhurst Guzman (whose recent organizational history of the T.C.A., *Crusade for Civic Democracy*, is also useful), Gomillion built the T.C.A. into a model voter registration group which slowly increased black electoral strength in Macon County. Fearful of the growing black electorate, whites tried to retain control of the Tuskegee city government in 1957 by convincing the Alabama State Legislature to gerrymander Tuskegee's boundaries so as to exclude almost all blacks. The T.C.A. called a boycott of white businesses and filed suit against the gerrymander, ultimately winning the case in the Supreme Court. Justice Department and Civil Rights Commission investigators began taking an active interest in Macon County's discriminatory voter registration practices, and T.C.A. activists also began a successful court challenge against the county's segregated schools.

A small band of white liberals worked with the T.C.A. and struggled to maintain white support for public schools, but within the black community there were younger activists who wanted to move beyond the traditional integrationist ideals of the T.C.A. leadership. The protests in nearby Montgomery and Selma in 1965 activated Tuskegee Institute students, and passage of the Voting Rights Act broadened Macon County's electorate to include substantial numbers of poorer rural blacks. The killing of Sammy Younge, a student activist, by a white Tuskegeean in 1966 brought racial tensions to a new peak. Much of the black community mobilized around Lucius Amerson's candidacy for sheriff. Amerson's militant appeals to race and class drew open opposition from T.C.A. leaders. Despite this he became the first black Southern sheriff since Reconstruction, and leaders of Gomillion's generation, disillusioned that the politics of white racial solidarity were being replaced by calls for black racial solidarity, retreated from the field.

In 1972 Tuskegee elected its first black mayor, Johnny L. Ford, who quickly made a name for himself by endorsing Richard Nixon for President and George Wallace for Governor. Ford contended that such actions were

The Second Reconstruction

DAVID J. GARROW

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee. By Robert J. Norrell. Alfred A. Knopf. 254 pp. \$19.95.

RACIAL CHANGE AND COMMUNITY CRISIS: St. Augustine, Florida, 1877-1980. By David R. Colburn. Columbia University Press. 258 pp. \$30.

IN PURSUIT OF POWER: Southern Blacks and Electoral Politics, 1965-1982. By Steven F. Lawson. Columbia University Press. 391 pp. \$30.

"Very few studies have examined the civil rights movement at the local level," David Colburn notes in his book on St. Augustine, Florida, a town that experienced black protests and white violence in the mid-1960s. "Even fewer," he adds, "have looked at the effects of the civil rights revolution on race relations after 1965." Colburn's volume and Robert J. Norrell's study of

Tuskegee, Alabama, focus on single towns; together with Steven Lawson's examination of Federal Voting Rights Act enforcement in the South since 1965, they offer insights into a subject now no longer fashionable in the media.

As Colburn observes, "There were many small towns which were only slightly affected by the civil rights revolution" in the South, but historians and journalists keep returning to the most famous ones, leaving the story of the South's great social upheaval largely untold. Certainly Norrell's book on Tuskegee is a valuable contribution to that story. Beginning with the interracial compromises of the 1870s and 1880s that led to Booker T. Washington's successful creation of Tuskegee Institute, Norrell skillfully describes the increasing black activism in Tuskegee and surrounding Macon County over the next hundred years.

Washington's philosophy of educational betterment, economic self-help and political quiescence was modified in the mid-1930s by the Tuskegee Institute faculty's firm desire for political participation in Macon County, where only a handful of blacks were registered despite its 80 percent black population. Social science professor Charles G. Gomillion was the key figure in ar-

David J. Garrow teaches political science at City College in New York. His book on Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, *Bearing the Cross*, will be published next year by William Morrow.

in Tuskegee's economic self-interest. In 1974 Gomillion, "the person most responsible for bringing change to the community," moved to Washington, D.C., taking with him "many doubts about the success of his almost fifty years of 'activism.'" Indeed, Norrell says, "the outcome of the civil rights movement in Macon County had disappointed everyone"—the white conservatives, whose political dominance vanished with the advent of real democracy; the white and black liberals, whose "unrealistic expectations" of interracial harmony and shared power were largely dashed; and the black poor, who learned that economic empowerment did not follow from political rights.

On the other hand, Norrell also contends that Washington's philosophy was vindicated by Tuskegee's evolution and by Johnny Ford's ongoing mayoralty. In a sense, Washington's strategy had worked in Macon County: "a group of blacks who had acquired education and economic independence—largely as a result of Washington's own efforts—carried out a successful movement to gain full political rights," and then learned in the aftermath that while political gains can follow from economic power, political control could not necessarily insure economic betterment.

Colburn agrees that "the Second Reconstruction has yet to provide a quality of life for black citizens that even closely approximates that of whites" in Southern towns such as St. Augustine. The movement there emerged in 1963 through the courageous efforts of a black dentist, Robert B. Hayling, who left the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (and its opposition to direct action protests) and invited Martin Luther King Jr. to bring his Southern Christian Leader-

ship Conference staff to town. Hayling and King's demonstrations dramatized St. Augustine's rigid segregation and unveiled the friendly relationships between local lawmen and the Ku Klux Klan. Only when state highway patrolmen were sent in to take over from local officers did civil rights demonstrators get protection from the crowds of white toughs who ambushed their nighttime protest marches.

Although the white attacks on peaceful protesters drew extensive national news coverage, local white business and political leaders refused to meet Hayling and King's principal demand: creation of a biracial committee to begin a dialogue between St. Augustine's black and white communities. When an opportunity to save face and escape that no-win situation presented itself, King took advantage of it and pulled almost all his staff members out of town, leaving Hayling and other local activists somewhat embittered. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference "left local blacks in a precarious position," Colburn accurately notes. "They failed to develop or encourage a grass roots movement which would provide the black community with leadership and direction following their departure." The lack of such an organized base hindered the political mobilization of St. Augustine's black community in ensuing years, though in time Henry Twine, one of Hayling's closest associates, became an influential member of the city commission.

Over the past fifteen years, the election of black officials, rather than black voter registration gains, has become the common yardstick for measuring black political progress in the South. Steven Lawson's *In Pursuit of Power* emphasizes that the 1965 Voting Rights Act "aroused great expectations that have yet to be fulfilled," and highlights how the impressive-sounding numbers of black elected officials obscure the fact that the percentage of elected black officials in the South is still disproportionately small.

Lawson observes that "the second phase of enfranchisement—the search for a greater share of political representation—has engendered a new round of racial conflict," which has been heightened by the voting rights policies of the Reagan Administration. While the presence of black mayors in such major Southern cities as Atlanta, Birmingham, Charlotte and New Orleans

receives a good deal of attention, few people bother to point out that more than twenty Southern counties with black majorities have no black elected officials. Those places receive little journalistic or scholarly attention, nor do the economic ills that almost always accompany such political segregation. "The franchise has been a marginal instrument for black economic advancement," Lawson rightly concludes, and even the election of black officeholders has in many locales had a more symbolic than substantive impact. City councils and county commissions can, if prodded, insure the fair provision of government services and pursue economic development initiatives, but few local governments have the opportunity to effect a redistribution of wealth. Economic change remains the largely untouched progressive agenda for the rural South, an agenda that the right to vote will not insure by itself. As Lawson observes, Southern blacks "still stand on the threshold of political power"; whether they will be able to achieve fairer representation, and cross over into the distant land of economic power, remains to be seen in the years ahead. □

FILMS.

ANDREW KOPKIND

Compromising Positions Jagged Edge

My father used to say there were two kinds of doctors. Stand-up doctors had medical degrees, so you stood up to greet them when they entered the room. Sit-down doctors had doctoral degrees of some other kind, but you needn't bother to rise. Dentists were sit-down doctors. I can't think of a movie where a dentist is the romantic lead or even a respectable and sympathetic minor character. Mostly, they are figures of fun (Alan Arkin in *The In-Laws*; Steven Wright in *Desperately Seeking Susan*) or symbols of sadism (Laurence Olivier in *Marathon Man*; the demented driller who obligingly tortures the masochistic Jack Nicholson in *The Little Shop of Horrors*). Dr. Fleckstein, played by Joe Mantegna in *Compromising Positions*, combines both disreputable traditions. He's a ridiculous Long Island Lothario, sporting a prominent pinky ring and flaunt-

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