

directed at forcing the various southern states to live up to the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, however, symbolizes local grass roots pressures taken in concert with legal challenges and thus highlights a multipronged approach to democratizing the South and ultimately the rest of the country. It is, as Parker points out in his conclusion, an ongoing struggle.

In this reviewer's opinion, some of Parker's concluding remarks in Chapter Seven seem overly optimistic about the prospects for pushing ahead along the civil rights front. For one thing Reagan's support of the 1982 Voting Rights Act was grudgingly given and under enormous pressure. There is no credible evidence that the current administration is committed to much more than grand stand gestures in the area of civil rights or related fields. Whether the election of more blacks to office will have positive effects on U.S. politics depends on a number of factors, for example, what kind of political currents emerge within the black community by the end of this century, what kind of coalitions African Americans can build with other groups, and, the future ideological direction that this country takes in the near future. While events of the past decade are not totally negative, there are some danger signals not sufficiently noted in Parker's analysis. Racism and neo-fascism are not on the decline but still pose a threat to our country. The present composition of the Supreme Court does not bode well for African Americans or many other groups. In fact there seems to be a pressing need to fight to protect the gains made over the last thirty years. In short, we seem to be in a period of retrenchment, and how long it will last will depend on how well we learn from the past and whether enough people can be mobilized at the grass roots level.

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**David Pilgrim. *Race Relations "Above the Veil": Speeches, Essays, and other Writings.* (Bristol, IN: Wyndham Hall Press, 1989) v, 255 pp., \$14.95 paper.**

This is mostly a collection of speeches delivered to high school and college students by Pilgrim, who teaches sociology at Saint Mary's College/Notre Dame. A few of the talks were given to community and business groups in several Midwestern states, and thus each selection reflects the appropriate style and content level of the audience being addressed. The content of all the pieces, including the few essays and short stories, focuses on racial prejudice, but also deals with general biases pertaining to gender, ethnic group, and class.

From the effective ways the speeches are constructed, there is no doubt that Pilgrim is a forceful instructional speaker. The fact that he has given

numerous addresses to schools, business groups, and civic organizations indicates that he is a public speaker who is in great demand. A major part of his success must come from his dynamic oral delivery, which unfortunately cannot be appreciated fully through the written word. However, some of the spoken effects can be felt by reading the well-constructed sentences containing lively language and meaningful thoughts.

Another means by which the reader can pick up Pilgrim's speaking effectiveness is through his talent for creating vivid, interesting stories that underscore the main points of his talks. In fact, much of his rhetorical strength lies in his ability to tell a story and use language in a poetic manner. There are two selections that are labeled short stories, and many of Pilgrim's talks are interspersed with poems—of his own and others. These metaphorical devices give his expressions the concreteness and vitality that save his spoken lessons from being taken for dull, didactic sermons on racial bigotry.

However, despite the interesting stories and importance of Pilgrim's message, a whole book of speeches centering on a few topics does impose a tedious exercise upon the reader. Inevitably, the pieces are marked by repetitious material and constant instructional hammering of key ideas. One can read and digest a few of these written addresses, but going over a score of them on the same theme challenges one's ability to continue reading.

Many times Pilgrim demonstrates that he is a courageous speaker and writer. He does not hold back on what he regards as valid criticism of the racist and sexist attitudes held by both black and white Americans. He attacks Reagan's America of the 1980s as being a time when social opportunity and equality took a backward step because of political indifference to the minority rights of men and women. Pilgrim's courage is especially strong when he takes on the administrative policies of the educational institution that employs him. St. Mary's College is a lily-white place because of the absence of blacks among the college's administration, faculty, and student body. It is to Pilgrim's credit that he not only criticizes the practices of the college, but offers a careful analysis of the situation and a list of suggestions for dealing with the problems.

Pilgrim's book of speeches and essays can serve as an instructive and provocative work for young readers. He can reason and move them in ways that will serve to guide their lives. There is no doubt that it would be better for the reader to hear him by being present at one of his dynamic deliveries; but in his absence, these written talks will have to do.

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