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Richard Pierce. *Polite Protest: The Political Economy of Race in Indianapolis 1920-1970.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. x + 127 pp. $39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-253-34587-5.

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In this fascinating and valuable collection of essays on African Americans in Indianapolis in the twentieth century, historian Richard Pierce portrays a black community unique among both northern and southern cities. While lacking the brutal rigidity of a Birmingham or Memphis, Indianapolis was a Jim Crow city with segregated schools and housing, and where blacks were largely limited to low-level jobs with little chance of advancement. Yet Indianapolis outpaced African-American communities in neighboring states in quality-of-life measures like home ownership and educational advancement, and organized white violence toward blacks was rare. Indeed, throughout much of the twentieth century race relations were governed by the concept of "civility." Indianapolis blacks did not take to the streets, even in the 1960s, and their leaders preferred consultation with white leaders to confrontation. The results of this strategy were mixed, at best.

Pierce begins his book with a look at the state high school basketball tournament in 1951, where for the first time Crispus Attucks, the all-black Indianapolis team, made a major impact. Unlike in the South, where Jim Crow had always held sway in the schools, Indianapolis did not force black children of high school age out of white schools until the late 1920s, when a movement that included the Ku Klux Klan pushed through a local ordinance that ultimately affected elementary schools as well. The state high school athletic association refused admission to Attucks until the 1940s (although by definition the association was open to all public high schools), white public schools refused to play the team, and Attucks could not participate in the state tournament, an event in Indiana that surpassed Sunday church in devotion and attendance. When all that changed after World War II, and Attucks beat the white Indianapolis teams in the 1951 sectional and eventually won the state finals, it was a noteworthy event celebrated by the entire city. But, as Pierce wisely observes, Indianapolis whites taking a black basketball team to their hearts had little impact on the daily lives of African Americans. While a 1949 law made school segregation illegal in Indiana, it was not until the 1970s that the courts "settled" the issue in Indianapolis, with the public school system reflecting the familiar urban pattern of blighted ghetto schools and affluent suburban educational institutions, with limited busing of students going only one way.

Black Indianapolis had qualified leaders like Henry J. Richardson and Willard Ransom, but what is striking in Pierce's account is the absence of ministers from the ranks of the activists and an NAACP branch that was for the most part ineffective. The Urban League did not even have an Indianapolis chapter until 1965. Other national civil rights groups did establish a base in the city during the late 1960s and 1970s, but there was never a "Movement" that embraced and inspired the entire black community. As a result, whites were able to offer token concessions without sharing power. This imbalance was most noticeably evident in the successful attempt to expand the municipal borders of the city in 1969.

Unified Government, or "Unigov," as it came to be known, was a complicated merger of city and country government functions. It was the brainchild of young Republican mayor Richard Lugar who, aware that city and county administrative offices often had overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of services, set out to combine all policymaking structures of the city and the county, with the exception of police and fire departments and, most notably, the school system. Many blacks and Democrats saw Unigov as a Republican attempt "to secure suburban, largely white Republican voters while purposely diluting the political clout of African-American votes" (p.113). In 1960 blacks constituted about 27 percent of the city's population, and demographers projected this would rise to 30 to 40 percent by 1970. It was clear that many northern cities would soon have black mayors, and with a strong black presence on the city councils. After Unigov, the incorporation of the largely white suburbs reduced the black presence in the city to 18 percent, and insured Republican control of In-

dianapolis for the next generation. Moreover, the failure to incorporate the township schools into the city system freed white suburbanites from supporting the inner city schools, thereby perpetuating racial inequities in education that have only increased as the years have passed.

African Americans were ill-equipped to challenge the Republican move to preserve white political supremacy in Indianapolis. There was no umbrella organization in the black community to counteract Lugar's organized campaign. Pierce concludes that "Instead of uniting a city and county, [Unigov] widened the gulf between the African American and white communities. Masterfully orchestrated by Lugar, the Unigov campaign demonstrated how politically impotent the black community was and how removed their leaders were from the halls of power (p.122)." Today a Democrat occupies the mayor's office, and blacks are more visible in Indianapolis politics than before. But after finishing Pierce's thoughtful and solidly researched monograph the reader is left with a feeling not of how racial politics have changed over the past 35 years, but of how much things remain the same. Whether it is schools, housing, or economic opportunity, Indianapolis's black population lags behind the white majority. In opting for civility instead of militant protest, black leaders in the twentieth century confused peace with progress, and left a political vacuum in the African-American community yet to be filled.

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