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Dona Hamilton, Charles V. Hamilton. *Dual Agenda: Race and Social Welfare Policies of Civil Rights Organizations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. xiii + 225 pp. \$24.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-10364-0.

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Early in the New Deal era, civil rights organizations—primarily the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League (NUL)—opened a second front in their struggle to achieve justice for black and poor Americans. This front has long been overshadowed by its legal battle for civil rights, which is so amply chronicled that it is widely perceived as the organization's only purpose. Over the years, however, civil rights groups have also endeavored to attain economic parity for African-Americans and the poor. This effort often goes unnoticed or misread. The purpose of this book is to isolate and thereby to make visible the sixty-year effort by civil rights groups to achieve economic justice for all Americans, black and otherwise.

The New Deal created a two-tier system of federal social support. The first tier, retirement and unemployment insurance primarily, required at least limited participation in the economic system. The second tier of social security consisted of relief payments and make-work federal jobs. Second-tier programs reeked of welfare, charity, the handout. The difference between the first tier and the second was a real job, which meant an opportunity. From the beginning, civil rights groups explained that second tier benefits were second class, creating dependency and stigmatizing recipients. What the poor wanted was not the stigma of second class status but meaningful work. Over time, allies came and went, the national mood fluctuated between liberalism and conservatism, civil rights groups came and went, tactics shifted, and government social policy swung wildly. The NAACP and NUL hammered the same themes for sixty years. In their publications, Congressional testimony, and meeting after meeting with uncertain coalition partners, they ad-

vocated a single tier social security system with fair and full employment. For sixty years, they failed, and those doomed to the second tier became increasingly stigmatized.

When in 1996 the much-maligned welfare programs finally began to die, their replacement was block grants and state-controlled workfare, an inferior version of the public relief programs of the New Deal. Sixty years of effort had gained nothing. The block grants to the states also overthrew the other requirement of the civil rights groups: federal control. State and local control often meant discrimination, even for federal programs. And benefits were not standard because some states were poor; others were wealthy. Entitlement programs, standard across the nation, historically were more equitable, thus the consistent demand that the federal government control both welfare and entitlement programs.

Civil rights groups failed to achieve their economic agenda. Most of the time, their efforts were invisible. The NAACP, NUL, and other groups got attention only when engaged in specific civil rights activities for African Americans. When they petitioned or lobbied for jobs for all and reclassification of tier two programs into tier one, their calls for economic justice were misread as race-specific programs. Unable to transcend their racial identity, they failed to sell their class-based programs. Their efforts were further hampered by the higher priority of civil rights. They often backed off their economic demands for fear of alienating civil rights supporters, whose backing was lukewarm, fading in response to the requirements of more powerful constituencies or the threat of economic reform to their own interests.

