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**Ronald H. Bayor**. *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996. xvi + 334 pp. $16.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-2270-8; $39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-4898-2.

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The stark contradictions that exist in Atlanta have probably never been better highlighted than this year, when the city's poverty and homelessness were triumphantly cosmeticized by Olympic commercialism. It is partly because of countless such contradictions that, since Floyd Hunter's 1953 book on the city's community power structure, Atlanta has been the subject of numerous academic examinations. Amongst such studies, Bayor's stands out as one which makes the starkest contrasts truly palpable, because he deals in the effects of race and race relations on the city's physical development and institutional structure. He covers the foundations of these contradictions in city planning; park and highway placement; health, police, and fire services; and public schools.

The impact of race on city politics is nowhere more concrete than in the building of the city. Even in the 1980s Atlanta ranked amongst the twenty most unequal cities in terms of home loans to minorities as compared to whites, and these groups are likewise segregated by parks, cemeteries, and streets in almost unequalled ways. Interstate 20, an east-west highway just below downtown, for example, was "understood" to form a "boundary between the White and Negro communities." Public services followed the same structural pattern: In 1931 less than 20% of black homes had running water compared with 70% of (otherwise) comparable white homes. Exceedingly gradual improvements followed the abolition of the poll tax and the white primary in 1945 and 1946, respectively, but real change in these conditions didn't come about until strikes and riots in the 1960s, some initiated by members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and other activists, finally mobilized the white power structure to preserve the good business climate for the "city too busy to hate."

While water and sewer services came to black neighborhoods partly because whites were afraid they would be contaminated by unsanitary blacks, other health services lagged even more. Hospital space, for example, was such that the infant mortality rate amongst blacks was nearly three times that amongst whites. The patterns were the same in other services: It wasn't until 1948 that blacks were hired as police officers–but of course they weren't allowed to arrest whites until the 1960s. Perhaps most egregious because of its continuing effect, is the matter of schools. Teachers in black schools had nearly twice as many students per capita as their white counterparts and such few facilities as to necessitate double sessions, and of course fewer grades. It was only as a result of white flight that blacks finally gained some control over the system–but now it is really a resegregated one with practically all black students. And so it goes.

Students of urban politics will not be surprised by Bayor's general conclusions, but they will be decidedly impressed by the unprecedented detail in which he documents the role race has played in shaping a city. This is particularly flagrant in a city which claims to be a progressive "New South" metropolis and a model of racial comity (and turns out to be worse than even its southern sister cities). The other element that will impress them is how richly he documents what blacks did for themselves and how much they actually did achieve despite these extremely circumscribed conditions. When they did have the vote, they used it to block bond issues which gave them a bargaining chip to gain some of their own goals; when they didn't, they set up, for example, their own recreational areas such as Luna Park (in 1931 the city spent $6,000 for black recreation and $2.33 million for white). And of course they developed an entire community of their own which has made Atlanta a leading center of black organizations and activities, from the civil rights movement to higher education.

Today blacks exercise broad authority in Atlanta, and some readers may be surprised to learn that many who have attained such positions of authority are now also protecting their neighborhoods–against poor blacks. In

the end we must therefore ask ourselves if this is deplorably ironic or if it is really just–as the urban renewal brought about by the Olympics might suggest–business as usual for a "city too busy to hate," to hate anything but good business?

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