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Apostles of disunion by charles dew

The Apostles of Discord: The Southern Separation Commissioner and the Causes of the Civil War. By Charles B. Dew. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001. Pp.vii, 124, \$22.95 (hbk), ISBN 0-8139-2036-1 In his memorable and eloquent second inaugural address, President Abraham Lincoln observed the cause of the Civil War, North and South, observing that all people somehow stood at the center of America's riveting central event. This was a powerful somehow, and Lincoln's utterance cast an ominous shadow over the Civil War legacy in the collective consciousness of victory, and conquered as well. Southerner rejected his interpretation of the causality of war in the long run, just as he rejected Lincoln's promotion to president. Prominent Southerner people like Jefferson Davis and Alexander Stevens worked religiously to recast the legacy of the war against the North. The myths and religions of lost causes are so deep that, in fact, Charles Dew strived to dispel and discredit the dubious assumption that efforts to protect state rights caused a separation crisis in the winter of 1860. As a native Southerner and the distant son of a Confederate veteran, Dew writes of the remorse measured in issuing this lament for his legacy. He finds a once-indisputable answer to the power problems that precisely caused the separation crisis in the activities and written records of Sessesión Winter's Southern Separation Commissioner. At the core of Dew's argument and narrative framework is this basic fact: The separatists of 1860-61 certainly talked much more openly about slavery than modern neo-conference seemed willing to do (10). People in the South, Dew argues, were separated primarily to protect racial slavery and the purity of the white race. Dew follows the activities of the Deep South commissioners (where they spoke, who they talked to, who they gave speeches with, who they responded with) and shows how entirely Southern people perceived Lincoln's presidential campaign as an apocalyptic event. With Lincoln's election and the prospect of a black Republican administration, southerners feared three things: first, the unthinkable and disgraceful prospect of racial equality. Second, the constant threat of race wars and mass violence (as revealed in Sandminghe). And third, to rebel against white purity through racial amales. Overall, about 52 Southern men represented the Deep South as separation commissioners in the weeks leading up to the Civil War (19). Surprisingly, they did not constitute the south's best political voice. They say, as Dew puts it, a relatively obscure person - a judge, a lawyer, a doctor, editors, and peasants. All had talent and knack for internality and rhetoric (19). Many won appointments as commissioners based on connections to those states where Congress has yet to resolve the issue of secession. Together, they represented the spread of moderate and radical political factions within the Democratic Party and the Whig Party. All talked enthusiastically and relentlessly about the issue of protecting the purity of the white race and protecting Southern civilization from political tyranny, blackness, and coyness, all of which formed a singular presence in southern minds. Alabama and Mississippi dispatched the first wave of commissioners that Dew outlines in Chapter 2. These people went as north as to Maryland. Some even went to South Carolina if it only prompted the issue of immediate secession in a state that did not want feelings of extremism or separatism. The commissioner's initial furost lasted four days from December 17 to 20, 1860. When South Carolina formally cut ties with the Coalition on December 20, 1860, it moved quickly to improve political and geographic isolation. Dew dedicates his third chapter to the Karolinics who made the first call to form a constitutional convention in Montgomery, Alabama. The work of these commissioners is, in the author's words, similar to the Campaign for Southern Unity (45). Importantly, Dew draws attention to the reality that the Confederates were barely foreseen in December 1860: South Carolina's long rush to secession required some explanation and justification, especially in light of its reputation as the most radical state of all slave-holding states (49). Dew focuses on Alabama's commissioner in Chapter 4. Stephen Fowler Hale made the special distinction of winning Kentucky for reasons beyond his abilities, a mission that failed because of his own ability. Nevertheless, Hale's mission to Kentucky helps bolster Dew's broader agenda, which shows how Southerner people were racially charged with the issue of racism and explicitly looked at it for the maintenance of racial purity and superiority (a letter Hale wrote to Governor Magofin of Kentucky said, I am very pleased with the fact that the people of the South have been racially charged. it contains a useful window to interpret the motives for southern segregation loaded with racial language and appendixes.) Dew dedicates his final chapter to evaluating the commissioner's mission to Virginia, the jewel in the crown of the future Allies. This is a powerful book that leave little doubt about the motives of separatists in the south. Importantly, historical communities and ordinary readers do a great service in reestablishing racial slavery as a cause of the Civil War. It dealt a fatal blow to supporters of the lost cause, and doctrine of the right. Nevertheless, the book seems bound by some limitations. Dew, of course, is entitled to identify the driving force of Southern segregation as the preservation of racial purity and the permanence of institutional slavery. But it doesn't necessarily last that the North had no racial bias in 1860, as southern states seek to dissolve union ties. It also followed the willing stand-up of the northern people to fight the war for the complete eradication and abolition of slavery in December 1860, and abolitionists remained very much on the fringes of political respect. In fact, living in the United States, north and south in December 1860, was to live in a racist world with attitudes about the purpose, limitations, and possibilities of racial equality that were erable in this era. Mitchell G. Klingenberg Texas Christian University _By Charles B. Dew. (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2001. Pp. ix, 103. What caused segregation and the Civil War? in his brief theme, Apostles of Discord: The Southern Separation Commissioner and the Cause of the Civil War, Charles B. Dew, turn his attention to a source of neglected insight. Dew acknowledges the mound of books already written on the issue, emphasizing that he contributes another aspect to the multiple causes that led to segregation, rather than undermining previous history on segregation. Racism, Dew explains, spurred segregation - it was a defense of white supremacy. It's not a completely novel argument, but Dew's conclusion, the basis of the withdrawal commissioner's words, is noteworthy. Dew begins by recalling the ongoing controversy over the Civil War and its causes (around the 2001 publication date of a recent book) and shows views that are fiercely inconsistent with the intense emotions that many Southerner still hold. Southern people candidly acknowledged the importance of slavery to their cause before and during the Civil War, but then insisted that they fight only for state rights, freedom and constitutionalism. To cut through contradictory claims, Dew offers a source of neglected insight: the words of the Secession Commissioner, a man appointed by some southern state governments in late 1860 or early 1861, travels in areas that justify and promote segregation. A total of 52 men served as evangelists for segregation, delivering public speeches and writing letters to prominent officials. The separation commissioner was not usually a particularly famous man, because they are chosen for their language skills and often have some personneto the state they visited. By the end of November 1860, Mississippi had moved to send commissioners to other slave states before separating. Alabama followed suit in December. Other states followed. In addition to warnings of imminent doom, south Carolina's commissioner encouraged the state to be separated so that it would gather in Montgomery in February 1861 to write a new constitution for the Southern Coalition. The Withdrawal Commissioner had the job of explaining to the people of the South the dire threat of needing secession as a response. Their great theme is that Abraham Lincoln and the so-called black Republican Party intended to eliminate slavery and establish racial equality. Separation was the only way for the South to avoid a brutal slave revolt, they declared. Fear, anger, racism and pride were all on display in the passionate discussions of the segregation commissioner. Wealthy and populous Virginia held a prominent place in the separatist dream, which attracted special attention from commissioners. The commissioner worked to squeeze hints of compromise by insisting that the sharm between north and south was so wide that only permanent separation could save the South. What caused segregation and the Civil War? The white race was in deadly danger, a clash of two civilizations, and the commissioner preached the gospel of salvation by separation. The book's brief conclusion clearly looks at the postwar rhetoric of some separation commissioners. They quickly became ardent defenders of the lost cause, appearing to forget warnings of degradation before black assassins and fanatics, and claimed that the South fought only for freedom with constitutional government. Dew consults various archives and employs speeches and letters of the separation commissioner (appendix includes texts of these couples) along with newspapers and published major sources. He found texts and detailed summaries of 41 speeches and letters by various commissioners. The opening chapter is a petty long rewind, and while the conclusions are surprisingly un cutting edge, this short book is worth reading. Dew correctly observed that the causes of the Civil War remained widely disputed, made the evidence he presented, and made a valuable contribution to historical knowledge. Jonathan T. Engel Engel

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