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*Brother Bill: President Clinton and the Politics of Race and Class* by Daryl A. Carter

The 2016 presidential election cycle stands out as unique in several ways. Both major party candidates are disliked by large percentages of the voter including those in their own parties. Billionaire Donald Trump has split a major segment of the Republican Party away from the establishment with a blunt, forceful style and hardline policy positions. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton defeated a challenge from the left by Senator Bernie Sanders in the primaries. Throughout both the primaries and general election race was front and center as Trump promoted what some called a White nationalist agenda and Clinton rallied the Black and Latino voters that were a key part of her husband's constituency. Late into the campaign Trump portrayed Black voters as poor, unemployed victims of violence who had nothing to lose by voting for him. Clinton, on the other hand, was forced to pay increasing attention to class issues (the wealth gap) by Sanders supporters.

Helping us understand some of these dynamics is Daryl A. Carter's timely book *Brother Bill*. Carter contends that Bill Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) moved away from traditional Democratic liberalism with the support of middle- and upper- class African Americans. Moreover, Carter believes Clinton helped pave the way for the elections of George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Carter places the rise of Bill Clinton in the context of two rightward shifts in the national political arena. Although at its establishment in 1986, the DLC had few Black or Latino members it moved quickly to embrace a number of southern Black Democrats. They would supply political cover for Clinton as he pushed the Democratic Party to reform welfare and toughen criminal sentencing laws. They also blunted Jesse Jackson's challenge to this rightward shift within the party. The Republicans, in turn, promoted a new Black leadership group nurtured during the administration of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush. According to Carter, the rise of Black Republicans is evidence of the increasing stratification between elites and lower-class African Americans.

Within this new political environment Carter details Clinton's actions on three controversial issues of importance to the Black community—crime, welfare reform, and affirmative action. Clinton was able to act on these issues and maintain his popularity among African Americans in part because of his record

number of Black appointments and in part because of his style that led him to being labeled the “first Black president” by Toni Morrison.

The discussion becomes more muddled as it attempts to link Clinton to the two following administrations. There is very little that was centrist about George W. Bush as he moved away from his father’s positions and toward Reagan’s and Obama’s cautious foreign policy would seem more Clinton-like than this domestic policy. Finally, any analysis of class and race should examine the major CBC efforts to pass a full employment bill that were essentially undercut by Jimmy Carter, perhaps, the prototype for a DLC leader.

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