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When America Liked Ike: How Moderates Won the 1952 Presidential Election and Reshaped American Politics. By Gary A. Donaldson. Rowman and Littlefield. 2016. vii + 137pp. $38.00.

With *When America Liked Ike*, Gary A. Donaldson, Keller Foundation Chair in American History at Xavier University (New Orleans, Louisiana), argues that the 1952 presidential campaign and election marked a turning point in US electoral politics. In his analysis, it solidified a gradual post-World War II shift away from liberalism while laying laid the foundations for the more visible changes of the 1960s and beyond.

To support this claim, Donaldson examines the different stages of the campaign – from both parties' 1948 efforts to recruit General Dwight David Eisenhower through to Eisenhower's November victory. Donaldson defines the campaign broadly and the text therefore examines its background and political context with chapters on the 1948 election (Chapter 1), each of the major candidates – and their party rivals – for the 1952 nominations including the Republicans Eisenhower and William Howard Taft as well as the Democrats Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson, Richard Russell, and Estes Kefauver (Chapters 2-5), the ways the campaign laid the foundations of modern US politics (Chapter 6), the Republican and Democratic conventions (Chapter 7), and the 1952 campaign itself and the factors responsible for Eisenhower's victory (Chapter 8).

While Eisenhower is – understandably – central to both the narrative and argument, Donaldson takes care to examine the other major players in the 1952 campaign situating them on a spectrum from Taft's isolationist Republicanism to Kefauver's New Deal liberalism. In selecting moderates Dwight David Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson, both parties, in Donaldson's analysis, rejected their more ideological wings. And while this worked for the Republicans in 1952 and 1956 – America really did "like Ike" – Donaldson sees the Republican embrace of moderates such as Eisenhower as ultimately galvanising right-wing Republicans. Donaldson argues that the Democrat's choice of Adlai Stevenson marked a sharp break from the New Deal and Fair Deal politics of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman without a viable replacement.

Beyond the internal schisms in the major parties, Donaldson examines the broader trends in American politics which he argues are rooted in the 1952 campaign. Key among these, Donaldson argues, is the shift of white voters in the formerly "Solid South" from the Democrats to the Republicans. Challenging conventional political wisdom with his decision to be the first Republican to actively campaign in the South, Eisenhower's surprising popularity there encouraged future Republican candidates, notably Richard Nixon, to court southern voters with great success. Donaldson also discusses other shifts which would come to define domestic politics: women and African Americans as contested voting groups, the growing suburban middle class and the "sunbelt" as well as the decline of the broader "New Deal coalition" and organised labour. All were important in 1952, but Donaldson's main demographic focus is the south.

Donaldson implicitly ties these shifting coalitions to the growing importance of image and public relations in US politics. By identifying with the average voter through a detailed – and humiliating – exposure of his personal financial situation, Richard M. Nixon not only salvaged his place on the Republican ticket, but effectively linked the Republican party with

the “forgotten Americans.” Conversely, Democrat Adlai Stevenson’s image as a member of the social and political elite contributed to the impression that it was his party that was out of touch. The stark contrast between the two presidential candidates – the genial war hero Eisenhower and the urbane, intellectual Stevenson – meant that for “most Americans, the election was between the General and the Egghead”(86). Stevenson’s use of television – while innovative – did little to dispel this impression: the Democratic candidate bought large blocks of time to air his famously clever speeches while Eisenhower’s team instead aired short, to-the-point 15- to 60-second “spot” advertisements. The effectiveness of Eisenhower’s “spots” – the audience did not have to actively seek them out so they reached a larger share of voters – would dramatically change US politics.

Despite concluding that Eisenhower’s 1952 victory was more a reflection of his personal appeal rather than a political realignment, Donaldson makes a convincing case that the central elements of the eventual Republican resurgence and Democratic decline – including coalition shifts and the growing importance of both image and identity politics – first appeared in the 1952 election. In this way, *When America Liked Ike* provides readers with a useful overview of the contexts and legacies of the 1952 campaign. Engaging, readable, and brief, it would be a useful resource for anyone seeking to acquaint themselves with the basics of the election rather than for experts in the field.