



DR. VAN GOSSE

Van Gosse (he/him) is a Professor of History at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He is the author of numerous articles and books on post-1945 politics and social movements, including *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America*, and *the Making of a New Left*. More recently, he has written on African American politics in the antebellum era, including his 2021 book, *The First Reconstruction: Black Politics in America, From the Revolution to the Civil War*. He is also co-chair of Historians for Peace and Democracy (www.historiansforpeace.org).



THE PROGRAM

Lancaster Interchurch Peace Witness is pleased and honored to sponsor a program featuring Dr. Van Gosse with a presentation on his recent book *The First Reconstruction: Black Politics in America, From the Revolution to the Civil War*.

Sunday, October 23, 3:00 pm

Grandview United Methodist Church
888 Pleasure Road, Lancaster

ABOUT THE BOOK

It may be difficult to imagine that a consequential black electoral politics evolved in the United States before the Civil War, for as of 1860, the overwhelming majority of African Americans remained in bondage. Yet free black men, many of them escaped slaves, steadily increased their influence in electoral politics over the course of the early American republic. Despite efforts to disfranchise them, black men voted across much of the North, sometimes in numbers sufficient to swing elections. In this meticulously-researched book, Van Gosse offers a sweeping reappraisal of the formative era of American democracy from the Constitution's ratification through Abraham Lincoln's election, chronicling the rise of an organized, visible black politics focused on the quest for citizenship, the vote, and power within the free states.

Full of untold stories and thorough examinations of political battles, this book traces a First Reconstruction of black political activism following emancipation in the North. From Portland, Maine and New Bedford, Massachusetts to Brooklyn and Cleveland, black men operated as voting blocs, denouncing the notion that skin color could define citizenship.

QUESTIONS?

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