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**Robert Cohen, David J. Snyder, eds.** *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. 368 pp. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4214-0849-1; $29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4214-0850-7.

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**Student Activism, Southern Style**

*Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s*, edited by Robert Cohen and David J. Snyder, is a nicely assembled collection of essays detailing with considerable skill the contributions that southern students made to the 1960s movement culture. Coming on the heels of Jeffrey Turner's regional study, *Sitting In and Speaking Out: Student Movements in the American South* (2010), *Rebellion in Black and White* is a welcome addition to the developing historiography of student activism in the South. It joins such other vital works on the southern sixties experience as Doug Rossinow's *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (1998) and Gregg Michel's survey of the Southern Student Organizing Committee, *Struggle for a Better South: The Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964-1969* (2004).

In his introductory chapter, Cohen states plainly the collection's intent. "These essays attest," he writes, "that, on both black and white college campuses south of the Mason-Dixon line, there was, in the 1960s, considerable liberal and radical ferment and a southern New Left that was active enough ... to generate fear, espionage, and dirty tricks by the FBI, segregationist state and local police, and their confederates" (p. 1). The book's next twelve chapters explore the range of southern student protest from roughly 1960 to the mid-1970s. Such topics of study include the inspirational role played by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in motivating the New Left; differences between black and white campus protest; the National Student Association's Human Relations Project; sexual liberation activism; the duel tides of antiwar and conservative protest in the latter half of the 1960s; counterculture as a nexus between national issues and local customs; government repression initiated by authorities at the federal, state, and local levels; and the campus as a caldron for Black Power radicalism. The collection concludes with some "historiographical reflections" from Rossinow and an afterword by David Farber.

The book's strengths derive in part from the cohesive feel of the volume itself. The chapters, different as they are, tend to complement one another, following a typically chronological progression that makes it read like a single, coherent study as opposed to twelve discrete essays. The editors accomplish this by hanging their collection around two dominant themes. One, that southern student activism followed a different "trajectory" than campus activism in the North and West, and two, that campus protest in the South was very heterogeneous, with some states and colleges experiencing greater levels and expressions of activism than others. As Farber notes in his concluding essay, "Southern student activists moved always through multiple frames of reference as they worked in local settings structured by specific historical circumstances, even as they both created and reacted to regional, national, and even international conditions, opportunities, and challenges" (p. 321). This attention to detail–to the plethora of local, regional, and national forces informing student protest–reveals itself in the range of activism that the contributors discuss. For instance, readers might not be surprised to know that southern students organized their own campaigns in defense of First Amendment protections. But they will no doubt find Joy Ann Williamson-Lott's comparative analysis of student free speech activism on black and white campuses in Mississippi and the Carolinas illuminating in the way it reveals how "each state's political and racial reputation" determined the limits and consequences of student protest (p. 72). Similarly, Turner's essay, "The Rise of Black and White Student Protest in Nashville," illustrates how white students at Vanderbilt University were much slower to embrace sit-ins as a form

of protesting segregation than black students at Fisk, despite both institutions' shared conservatism. Fisk's campus culture might have been strained by conservatism, argues Turner, but it existed in tension with a tradition of cultural and political defiance rooted in the black experience, a heritage that white Vanderbilt students lacked.

Equally welcome is the editors' inclusion of two chapters on the "human relations tradition" by Erica Whittington and Marcia Synnott. Their essays force the reader to re-conceptualize how student activism developed outside the North and West. Whereas student protest is often remembered for the direct action techniques employed at Berkeley and Columbia, Whittington and Synnott each make the case for studying the human relations movement, which, through its emphasis on interracial dialogue in organized seminars, did much to advance the civil rights struggle on southern campuses. "While these human relations groups did not generally provide for training activists per se, they promoted consciousness-raising that encouraged moderate white students to break with Jim Crow," Synnott explains (pp. 106-107). The human relations movement points to the reformist nature of southern student protest, broadening our understanding of how moderates contributed to sixties activism.

If the book's first half is dominated by essays dissecting the civil rights and free speech movements, its second half aims to show readers that late sixties developments, like the counterculture, second-wave feminism, the antiwar and conservative movements, and Black Power, did not go unnoticed by southern students. Among the more interesting chapters in this regard is Kelly Morrow's "Sexual Liberation at the University of North Carolina," which considers the supportive role men played in the development of second-wave feminism. Showcasing the efforts of Takey Crist, a young physician in the university's OB/GYN Department, Morrow examines how his partnership with student activists like Lana Starnes helped to launch a sexual liberation movement on campus premised on "the dissemination of sexual knowledge, gender equality, and the acceptance of diverse sexual identities" (p. 211). Most compelling are her paragraphs detailing how Starnes was empowered by her partnership with Crist, becoming, in Morrow's words, "a lay practitioner and educator and one of thousands of feminists around the country reclaiming medical knowledge of sexuality and the body for ordinary people" (p. 205). Likewise, Christopher Huff's essay offers another good example of how plugging familiar subjects into the southern context offers new insights. His work on conservative student activism at the University of Georgia is commendable for its assessment of the diversity of conservative thought on southern campuses where right-wing activists, steeped in the principles of regional identity and white privilege, battled not only liberals and leftists, but moderate conservatives as well.

*Rebellion in Black and White*, to be sure, is not wholly unblemished. Certain chapters, for example, read like abbreviated versions of longer, more developed drafts edited down to get in under the required page limit. Nicholas Meriwether's fascinating essay on Columbia, South Carolina's counterculture head shop, The Joyful Alternative, is a case in point. Meriwether's thesis, that hippie outposts like the Joyful "uncover powerful and perhaps surprising connections between national issues … [and] local institutions, people, and events," is well-reasoned but in need of stronger analysis (p. 219). His argument that the Joyful's relationship with local African American lawyer Tom Broadwater signified a connection between the counterculture and the civil rights movement comes across as underdeveloped, as does his discussion of the Grateful Dead. I have no doubt Meriwether is correct in asserting that "Appalachian and folk roots informed" the band's sound, but one wonders if Joyful proprietor, Dale Bailes, played their records so obsessively because they "cemented the Joyful's status as both a national conduit of the hippie experience and a uniquely southern-inflicted instantiation of it," or simply because of the Dead's popularity in counterculture circles (p. 225). Greater scrutiny on both accounts would have strengthened his case. The same goes for Jelani Favors's chapter on Black Power activism at North Carolina A&T, which while persuasive, could have benefited from more detail when the author discusses grassroots projects like the Malcolm X Liberation University and when she notes that "race consciousness … was infused into [the students'] curriculum" (p. 275).

Also puzzling is the absence of any discussion of religion. Given the significance of Christianity not only to the civil rights movement, but also to the South in general, one wonders why there are so few references to it here. Turner's essay on student activism at Vanderbilt notes how Divinity School students were on the vanguard of white protest against segregation in Nashville, yet little else is said regarding such religious reformers in the rest of the text. This omission is made more perplexing when we consider the introductory chapter, wherein Cohen notes the significance of "alliances between secular radicals and religious groups and leaders on campus," especially at white colleges (p. 23). A more thorough investigation into the dynamics of these secular-religious

partnerships would have greatly augmented the collection.

These quibbles aside, *Rebellion in Black and White* is an engaging volume of essays surveying the continuum of student activism in the South as it developed and evolved over the period of the "long sixties." With its keen insights and range of study, it acts as a valuable contribution to the literature, accessible to students and scholars alike.

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