

cases the wonders of current color technology. Each of the seventy-eight paintings receives respectful “breathing room” in the form of exclusive page placement conducive to the diverse painting styles. Listed alphabetically by artist name, the essays reveal careful research with notes conveniently placed in the side-margins. Fascinating details spice up the factual writing, such as Ivan Albright’s penchant for signing both the tops and bottoms of his paintings to facilitate upside-down hanging.

An awkward size to carry and read, the book is bound with lami-

nated soft covers that mitigate price but discourage coffee-table permanence. A checklist with artwork provenance enhances the publication’s value for serious collectors as well as for curators.

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Prairie Power

Voices of 1960s Midwestern Student Protest

By Robbie Lieberman

(Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004. Pp. xvi, 264. Bibliography. \$44.95.)

In this regional perspective on what radical-turned-scholar Todd Gitlin called the “years of hope and days of rage,” Robbie Lieberman explores how the student New Left manifested itself in “working-class institutions in rural, conservative areas of the country” (p. x). Through a collection of oral histories from former activists affiliated in varying degrees with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) chapters at the University of Kansas, University of Missouri, and Southern Illinois University (SIU), Lieberman attempts to present “Prairie Power” activism not simply as a disruptive contingent of SDS—the most high-profile and influential New Left group

of the Vietnam era—but as a distinctive ethos, value system, and style of protest based on a genuine commitment to organizing around local issues and on a penchant for complementing direct-action politics with cultural rebellion. Concomitantly, by giving voice to these midwestern radicals, Lieberman intends to challenge orthodox perceptions of Prairie Power (advanced by SDS leaders such as Gitlin) as having been little more than a collection of unsophisticated, long-haired, dope-smoking anarchists whose ascendancy within SDS after 1965 derailed that organization and helped steer what is loosely referred to as “the movement” down the path

toward hedonism, violence, and nihilistic excess.

As a matter of personal preference, this reviewer finds the technique of compiling largely undigested oral histories to be somewhat problematic. Admittedly, the book grew out of a forum discussion entitled "I'm on the Pavement, Thinkin' about the Government': Vietnam, Carbondale, and the May 1970 Riot," and it retains that basic panel feel throughout. Lieberman, a professor of history at SIU-Carbondale, facilitates by providing a timeline of pertinent "sixties" events and an introductory historiography of the New Left, including the rise and fall of SDS. Her footnotes identify key people and events of the generation and offer a brief history of each campus. But students and casual readers seeking historical context with which to evaluate these stories would be well served by consulting monographs by scholars such as Terry Anderson, David Farber, or James Farrell beforehand. The book also falls somewhat short in its aim of vindicating Prairie Power; many of Lieberman's local activists speak less to her organizing theme than to the amorphous nature of being a part of "the movement," a process that involved picking and choosing those aspects of the "sixties experience" most applicable to them.

These things said, Lieberman does deliver on her objective of letting the activists speak in their own words. Her work faithfully follows the prevailing trend in sixties scholarship of rejecting, as historian Kenneth

Heinemann puts it, the traditional perception of the United States in the 1960s as a "cultural entity defined by the West Coast and the Northeastern seaports, with points in between consisting of Ann Arbor, Chicago, and Madison" (*Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* [1993]). While national developments often established the broad parameters in which Vietnam-era protest unfolded, localism determined the substance of, and gave enormous variety to, activism. In bringing together often heartfelt and thoughtful reminiscences from these grassroots rebels, Lieberman expands our knowledge of the sixties by offering what women's labor historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has called, the "partial truths": a more textured and nuanced picture of less familiar events and lesser-known actors—such as the "the Moo and Cackle riots" in Carbondale and the "February Sisters" of Lawrence—that went largely unnoticed by a national audience ("Disorderly Women: Gender and Labor Militancy in the Appalachian South," *Journal of American History*, 73 [September 1986]).

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