The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice. By Hans L. Trefousse. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969. Pp. xiv, 492, xviii. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. $10.00.)

Designed to fill the need for a comprehensive study embracing the findings of recent scholarship, *The Radical Republicans* succeeds admirably within the limits of this objective. It is a widely researched, well organized, and carefully written reappraisal of the role of the rather amorphous group of individuals who functioned, as the subtitle and Trefousse insist, as "Lincoln's vanguard for racial justice."

Identifying radicalism by a determination of "which leaders constituted its core" (p. 5), Trefousse traces the movement from its beginnings in the antislavery crusade through its great triumphs during Civil War and Reconstruction to its eventual decline in the controversies of the 1870s. Composed of "determined opponents of slavery, who had often held progressive ideas long before the founding of the party" (p. 33), the Radical Republicans emerged in the election of 1856 as "a permanent force in national politics" (p. 102). They struggled to keep the Republican party true to their principles. They were satisfied with Lincoln's election, and Radical "backbone enabled Lincoln to stand firm" (p. 167) in meeting the great menace of disunion. With the outbreak of war the Radicals became "the vanguard of the nation" (p. 168), working with the President in order to advance their common aims. In the Emancipation Proclamation this "interaction between the Radicals and the President—a relationship marked by similar goals but different methods—had proven productive of great good" (p. 230). Despite continuing political differences and the Radical effort to replace him as the party nominee in 1864, Lincoln remained willing to cooperate with this element of the party and by early 1865 was "approaching the radicals' position on reconstruction" (p. 304). Without Lincoln it was to be greatly different. Andrew Johnson spurned the Radical Republicans and failed to "implement successfully a policy of his own" (p. 334). Determined as ever, the Radicals, increasingly divided and frustrated, were "unable to carry their program to its logical conclusion and give land to the Negroes" (p. 370). They blundered seriously in the impeachment of Johnson, although a few last victories were still to be theirs. "If their attempts to enforce racial equality failed at the time, these efforts were nevertheless remarkable" (p. 435) and "laid the foundation for the achievement of their goals in the twentieth [century]" (p. 470).

The Radical Republicans goes far toward reversing the traditional view of the place of the Radicals. Trefousse makes good use of the important primary sources as well as numerous monographs and biographies that emphasize their contributions. He has produced a sound synthesis but one overly favorable to his subject . In Trefousse's estimate the Radical Republicans were morally right and politically progressive for the noblest reasons. He grants

them too great credit for triumphs—only partly deserved—and suggests that even failures were actually victories since they made possible the racial advances of a century later. It is as if without the Radicals nothing was possible but with them all things were.

The book provides a convenient survey of the Radical Republicans, but for full understanding it is still necessary to consult the more exact and exacting sources. The work needs more precise definitions, more critical analysis, more judicious balance. Finally any judgment of this work, as of the Radicals themselves, must applaud the intent but question the execution.

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The South and the Sectional Conflict. By David M. Potter. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968. Pp. xi, 321. Notes, index. $7.50.)

Eleven essays are gathered in this volume, two dating from the 1940s and the remainder from the 1960s. The nine here reproduced in their original form were scattered widely in books and journals. One previously unpublished essay, "John Brown and the Paradox of Leadership Among American Negroes," and one newly revised bibliographical treatment of Civil War background add to the usefulness of the collection. The author has grouped his writings into three categories. Three essays are on the nature of southernism, one of which is the well known analysis of "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa." Three others classified as historiography include the author's 1947 inaugural lecture as Harmsworth Professor at Oxford, "The Lincoln Theme and American National Historiography." Five concern the crisis of the Union: a 1941 article on "Horace Greeley and Peaceable Secession," the new piece on John Brown, a very recent commentary on "The Civil War in the History of the Modern World: A Comparative View," and two already widely used items, "Jefferson Davis and the Political Factors in Confederate Defeat" and "Why the Republicans Rejected Both Compromise and Secession." Professor Potter's many admirers will rejoice that these eleven are now so conveniently available.

The title of the volume is probably no worse than any other would be but nevertheless is inadequate to describe the wide ranging of a brilliantly perceptive and doggedly persistent mind. If there is a unifying theme at other than a superficial level, it probably arises less from the fact that southern history provides the bulk of the examples employed than from the identity of the real object of scrutiny, the historian. The author labels as "a reality about history" the proposition that "the determination of truth depends more perhaps upon basic philosophical assumptions which are applied in interpreting the data than upon the data themselves" (pp. 146-47). And he describes the "supreme task of the historian" as seeing the "past through the imperfect eyes of those who lived it and not with his own omniscient twenty-twenty vision" (p. 246). In a sense, throughout these essays he is either patiently