

mented digest of what pre-Civil War politicians said. Foner's next book should put Republican words to the test of Republican deeds.

*Indiana University, Bloomington*

Robert G. Gunderson

*The Slave Power Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style.* By David Brion Davis. *The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969. Pp. ix, 97. Notes. \$4.00.)

The 1969 Fleming lecturer at Louisiana State University applies to the slavery controversy Richard Hofstadter's concept of a "paranoid style" in American politics. David Brion Davis points out that the polemics of antislavery and antiabolition had some striking similarities to the propaganda directed in the first half of the nineteenth century against Freemasonry, Roman Catholicism, and Mr. Biddle's Bank. All identified a vast conspiratorial movement that was seen as threatening the fundamental values of American society.

Drawing upon sociological concepts developed in Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Davis suggests that the fluidity of status and role in this period made Americans singularly sensitive to the poses unconsciously assumed by the members of various classes and professions. In assuming the manners and style of a status or role, a man joins the "conspiracy" of his "team" to project a certain definition of themselves and the social situation. At a time when so many men were new to their roles, they were more conscious of this kind of conspiracy in themselves and in others. Hence, Davis suggests, the pronounced "paranoid" tendency to interpret conflicts in conspiratorial terms.

Within this conceptual framework Davis has some fresh and perceptive things to say about the slavery controversy. But his analysis reveals more about the social conditions encouraging a "paranoid" view of conflict than about the slavery conflict itself. He cautiously ducks the question of how much justification the antagonists had for viewing each other as conspiratorial and subversive. Nor does he attempt to measure the causal force of the paranoid disposition.

Davis is cautious, too, about the conservative implications of this kind of analysis. Perhaps, he concludes, "the image of the Slave Power was a necessary means for arousing the fears and galvanizing the will of the North to face a genuine moral and political challenge" (p. 85).

This conclusion raises some doubts about the whole concept of a "paranoid style." The parties to a conflict usually exaggerate each others' malignancy and conspiratorial potency. At what point does this normal human tendency become a "paranoid style"? And the

very concept creates a pejorative presumption of irrationality about those who protest social evils.

*University of California, Berkeley*

Charles Sellers

*Radicalism, Racism, and Party Realignment: The Border States during Reconstruction.* Edited by Richard O. Curry. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969. Pp. xxvi, 331. Notes, maps, tables, bibliographical essay, index. \$10.00.)

Richard O. Curry argues in his Introduction that Reconstruction cannot be understood by focusing on events only in Congress and the South: "The crucial battlegrounds in the epic struggle of 1865-67 . . . were not located in Washington or the South, but in New England, the middle west, the border states, and the Middle Atlantic states" (p. xiii). He sees the present collection of essays as one step toward correcting the imbalance prior scholarship has created. Included are six state studies and three topical pieces, each written especially for this volume by ten historians familiar with the problems of border state history. Curry and his colleagues stress the continuity between antebellum and Reconstruction border state politics, especially noting its conservative essence. In states where Republican rule was established during and just after the war, it was made possible only through disenfranchisement of Rebel "sympathizers" and by playing on wartime animosities. By 1870 most Republican power crumbled before a coalition of conservative Unionists, reenfranchised Rebels, and liberal Republican defectors.

Not much holds the state studies together besides this major theme. Each scholar goes his own way with varying degrees of comprehensiveness and success. Charles Wagandt's essay on Maryland, Ross A. Webb's on Kentucky, and Curry's own piece on West Virginia stand out for their treatment of the broader issues of Reconstruction as integral factors in state politics. The other state chapters, though they get bogged down in detail, still make competent introductions to Reconstruction in Tennessee, Missouri, and Delaware.

The topical essays vary widely in quality. W. Augustus Low's survey of Freedmen's Bureau activities suffers from trying to cover six states in twenty pages. On the other hand, William Gillette acutely analyzes federal enforcement of the Fifteenth Amendment in the border states from a variety of perspectives. Ari Hoogenboom and Jacqueline Balk account for the rise and fall of border state liberal Republicanism in a generally impressive piece. The authors, however, allow their dislike of Radical Republicanism and sympathy for the liberals to get in the way of a realistic assessment of political