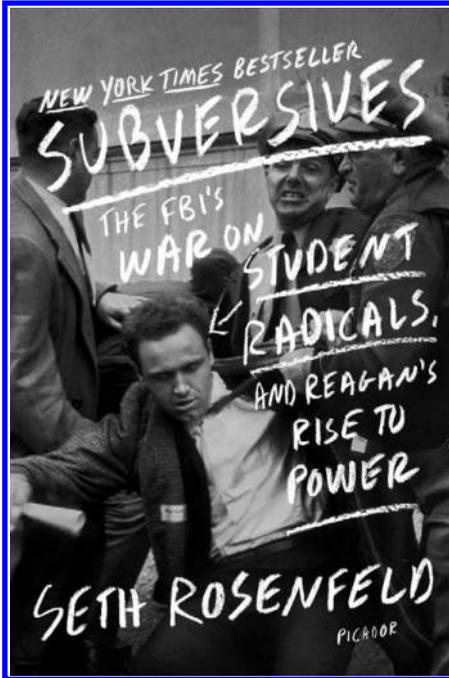


meaningfully and convincingly with the twin issues of politics and religion, that are so important for the art and culture of this region, would be, I am sure, enthusiastically welcomed. Indeed what this book calls for is a whole new series of volumes devoted specifically to this extremely compelling and complicated subject that Dr. Landau has now drawn to our rapt attention.

*Victoria H.F. Scott is the Theodore Randall International Chair of Art and Design at Alfred University.*

*SUBVERSIVES: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power.* By Seth Rosenfeld. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012. 734 pp. \$40.00 cloth.) Reviewed by John T. Donovan.

Seth Rosenfeld's *Subversives* is an impressive work, boasting about 500 pages of text, 162 pages of notes, and a seven-page appendix detailing his almost 30-year fight with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for documents he requested under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Previous work on Reagan has stressed his reaction to the Watts Riot and the protest after a San Francisco policeman shot a young African American at Hunters Point. (The work of Lou Cannon, Matthew Dallek, and Ethan Rarick examined the racial tensions.)<sup>1</sup> Race is certainly a factor in *Subversives*, although the terms "Hunters Point" and "Watts" cannot be found in Rosenfeld's index. Instead, Rosenfeld focuses on student anger over the war in Southeast Asia.



Ronald Reagan tapped into the resentment many Californians felt over the Free Speech Movement (or FSM) at the University of California, Berkeley and the rising opposition there (and at other

campuses) to the Vietnam conflict. Rosenfeld looks at three major figures: Reagan himself, the former actor who used the tumult at Berkeley to further his political career; Clark Kerr, the economist who became the University of California president, only to be vilified in the 1960s by right-wing politicians for not cracking down on student dissent, but demonized as well by student protestors for his perceived

1. See Lou Cannon, *Governor Reagan: His Rise to Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), Matthew Dallek, *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), and Ethan Rarick, *California Rising: The Life and Times of Pat Brown* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

failure to stand with them; and Mario Savio, the student activist who never graduated from Berkeley despite his impressive intellect. As Rosenfeld explains, “Each of these had a transforming vision of America and exerted extraordinary and lasting influence on the nation. By tracing the bureau’s involvement with these iconic figures, this book reveals a secret history of America in the sixties” (8). Rosenfeld demonstrates “how the FBI’s dirty tricks at Berkeley helped fuel the student movement, damage the Democratic Party, launch Ronald Reagan’s political career, and exacerbate the nation’s continuing culture wars” (8).

Of course, this necessitates looking at a fourth figure, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who had taken a jaundiced view of the Berkeley campus since Robert Oppenheimer was hired from the physics department to work on the Manhattan Project (23-27). Nor was Hoover pleased with a 1959 English aptitude test for University of California students that contained an optional essay question reading, “What are the dangers to a democracy of a national police organization, like the FBI, which operates secretly and is unresponsive to criticism?” It was denounced by the FBI as “communist propaganda,” and Hoover launched a campaign to embarrass the University. An agent met with Gov. Pat Brown, who expressed his unhappiness with the question (64-67).

Already perceiving the University of California as a problem, Hoover was happy to assist Reagan. The FBI had few reservations about stretching the law to help him. Reagan’s son Michael had become a friend of Joe Bonanno, the son of an organized crime figure. Two agents proposed to interview Reagan in January 1965 to learn if his son had provided any information, but Hoover wanted to spare Reagan the embarrassment of the meeting and privately warned him about Michael’s friendship with Bonanno. “Here was Reagan, avowed opponent of big government and people’s overdependence on it, once again taking personal and political assistance from the FBI at taxpayer expense,” writes Rosenfeld (299). After his election as governor, Reagan was given a form to fill out which included the question, “Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of any organization which has been designated by the United States Attorney General as required under the provisions of Executive Order 10450?” Reagan, who had belonged to two suspect organizations, either committed perjury or forgot, answering “no.” The FBI’s Los Angeles field office caught the incorrect statement, but the bureau approved a report omitting the messy details (363).

*Subversives* drew some attention in part because of Rosenfeld’s writing on Richard Aoki, the highest-ranking non-African American in the Black Panther Party. After high school, Aoki served in the army, and following his discharge he enlisted in Merritt College, where he befriended Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. With his army background, he could train the Panthers in the handling of weapons. Aoki is the subject of a biography by Diane C. Fujino,<sup>2</sup> but Rosenfeld interviewed a retired FBI agent who confided that he had “developed him”: Aoki was a paid FBI

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2. Diane C. Fujino, *Samurai among Panthers: Richard Aoki on Race, Resistance, and a Paradoxical Life* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

informant. When interviewed, Aoki was evasive on this point, but Rosenfeld's research affirmed the FBI connection (418-446).

Unquestionably, the final chapter in this book, on the protests over "People's Park" in Berkeley, is the saddest part. In April 1969, students occupied the site. Reagan took note of it, and on May 15 ("Bloody Thursday") Alameda County Sheriffs and the California Highway Patrol moved in to force the students out. Rosenfeld points out that "it is clear from a wide range of evidence . . . [that] Reagan and his top law-enforcement aide, [Edwin] Meese, were poorly prepared for the events of May 15" (453-454). The overreaction of officers (who were provided shot-guns) killed a bystander and left another blind. Nevertheless, no law enforcement personnel were fired or prosecuted (474, 483). Later, as President, Reagan blamed his predecessor when Americans were targeted in Lebanon, saying his administration was "feeling the effect today of the near destruction of our intelligence capability in recent years before we came here." Jimmy Carter was not the first former official Reagan blamed for his own ineptitude: after Bloody Thursday, he blamed Clark Kerr. "The police didn't kill the young man. He was killed by the first college administrator who said . . . it was all right to break the laws in the name of dissent," Reagan told an Orange County audience (469).

The only possible criticism that this reviewer can offer is that *Subversives* might have been edited more closely. For example, the writer Ken Kesey surfaces in the book, but he was rather peripheral to 1960s California. However, this is a very minor complaint. Future historians and Reagan biographers need to consult this very fine work.

*John T. Donovan is a lecturer in the history department at California State University, Los Angeles. Among his publications is a paper on the strained relations between FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and LAPD Chief William H. Parker, published in the summer 2005 issue of this journal.*

ON THE EDGE: *Water, Immigration, and Politics in the Southwest*. By Char Miller. (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2013. 248 pp. \$17.95 paper.) Reviewed by Mike Sonksen.

In *On the Edge*, Char Miller masterfully explores the meaning of place along with environmental and water issues along the U.S.-Mexico border area with particular focus on San Antonio, Texas, and Los Angeles. The book is divided into four sections and composed of 45 short essays almost all previously published by Miller in different journals, magazines, newspapers, and online columns. Miller weaves historiographical and autobiographical elements to write a compelling narrative that in essay after essay urges readers to raise their awareness to the many environmental challenges growing every day.

In the introduction he delineates further, "The chapters navigate between its [the Southwest's] two coasts, the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific; their often turbulent waters in turn help frame some of the book's geographic orientation and narrative structure" (xiii). His considerable understanding of complex ecological