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might think, he is bound more closely to approach a genuine conservative posture. After all, he wishes to balance the budget; and the Cold War has ended. Will he not call for a reduction in military spending and a return to the traditional American policy of non-intervention?

Gingrich, I fear, views the situation in an entirely different way. "The simple fact is that with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet empire, the need for American leadership has become greater" (p. 187). To rule the world, constant military investment is necessary: the imperative of technological development is indeed a demanding one. We can take heart in our struggles from the achievements of the Gulf War. Superior technology enabled American troops to plow under untold numbers of Iraqis. Who could ask for more?

Faced with views so abhorrent, one naturally asks: how has Gingrich arrived at them? If his program cannot be accepted, does he at least support it with arguments that bear consideration? Our author's manner of reasoning, like his enthusiasms, has not much progressed beyond the bounds of late infancy.

In a chapter on illegal immigration, he writes: "First, anything illegal is by definition wrong. We are opposed to illegal drugs, to illegal violence, to illegal immigration. It

is against the law, and it should be stopped" (p. 155). So much for the American Revolution.

Gingrich is not concerned at all with undue immigration: quite the contrary, he supports a liberal immigration policy. It is the *illegality* of the immigration that bothers him: "Anything illegal is by definition wrong." This, I readily acknowledge, has a certain resonance; so let us not mock the Speaker any further. Rather, here is a suggestion that will enable him to achieve his aims more efficiently. Why not declare all immigrants legal? Then, "by definition" we would no longer face the problem of "illegal immigration." How readily may difficult social problems be solved when a devotee of Buck Rogers takes the helm. ♦

## *The Old South as Exemplar*

THE SOUTHERN FRONT: HISTORY  
AND POLITICS IN THE CULTURAL WAR  
Eugene D. Genovese  
University of Missouri Press, 1995,  
x + 320 pp.

**E**ugene Genovese is a Marxist historian, but he is a Marxist of a most unusual kind. In this excellent collection of

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essays, he continually advocates conservative views, often expressed more trenchantly than is customary among rightists themselves. A specialist in the history of the American South, he is especially sympathetic to the conservative thinkers of that region.

In "The Slaveholders' Contribution to the American Constitution," he offers a brilliant defense of the Southern strict constructionist interpretation of the Constitution. Contrary to liberal legal theorists like Ronald Dworkin and alleged conservatives like Harry Jaffa, the Constitution does not enshrine a commitment to equality. "Among the shameless pretensions that now inundate us, my personal favorite is the so-called deferred commitment to equality. A product of the imagination of ideologues, it rests on the extraordinary claim that the Declaration of Independence should be considered part of the Constitution—a claim made popular by the abolitionists, sanctified by Abraham Lincoln, and now happily promoted by the media. If the Founders had intended any such thing, they would have said so" (p. 115).

And the Declaration of Independence itself does not promulgate equality as this is understood by contemporary leftists. "The rights of the individual, to the extent considered,

were defined within particular corporate structures, to which submission was required. The rights asserted were, first and foremost, the rights of historically evolved communities to which all individuals owed loyalty and obedience" (p. 121).

In the Southern view, preservation of inherited liberties depended on a strictly limited central government. Thus, Genovese maintains, the Bill of Rights limits Congress, not the states. The "much-touted" First Amendment, for example, does not bar the states from supporting religious institutions. "The recent Supreme Court decisions that have tried to legislate a wholly secular society have no foundation . . . in the Constitution that was written, ratified, and accepted by public opinion for more than a century" (p. 122).

One may readily imagine how leftists would respond to Genovese. Was not the Southern defense of states' rights merely transparent apologetics for slavery? Genovese does not support slavery; indeed, he thinks it is a fundamental failing of the Southern thinkers he admires that they failed adequately to confront its evils. But he never makes the mistake of reducing ideas to the class interests they represent. In his review of Larry Tise's *Proslavery*, he criticizes the "idealist method"

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and tells us that arguments must be analyzed in their social context (p. 84). This does not prevent him from taking the ideas of antebellum Southerners with complete seriousness.

Among Genovese's essays on Southern intellectuals, I found especially compelling his account of James Henry Thornwell, a Presbyterian theologian from South Carolina. Thornwell met head on the assaults by abolitionists on slavery. He argued (successfully in Genovese's opinion) that the Bible permits slavery. One may condemn ill-treatment of slaves, or call for reform, as Thornwell did; but how can a Christian hold immoral an institution that the Bible allows? To do so is to open the way for unchecked private conscience to replace Biblical authority. If God and the Bible are neglected, Thornwell held, the foundation is laid "for the worst of all possible forms of government—a democratic absolutism" (p. 39). Once more, Genovese obviously does not agree with Thornwell's position: he is not a Calvinist and defender of slavery but an atheist and Marxist. But he treats Thornwell with the utmost respect.

On the strength of Genovese's recommendation, I read a volume of Thornwell's *Collected Writings*. Genovese seems to me entirely

**Genovese never makes the mistake of reducing ideas to the class interests they represent.**

right in his high estimate of Thornwell, who pursues an argument with relentless logic. I suspect that Genovese, himself an ardent polemicist, finds this "hyper-hyper-high Presbyterian," as Charles Hodge called him, a kindred spirit. (In passing, Genovese suggests that Thornwell's "Relation of the State to Christ" influenced T.S. Eliot's "The Idea of a Christian Society" [p. 40]).

Genovese's strong interest in religion emerges in the volume many times. He especially finds wisdom in the Christian doctrine of original sin. He scorns liberal theology: "Liberal, not to mention liberationist, theology, whether in white or black, should warm every atheist's heart. . . . If God is finite, progressive, and Pure Love, we may as well skip church next Sunday and go to the movies" (p. 169).

Genovese's comments on Christianity reflect a wide knowledge of theology. In his long essay "The Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Its Political Implications," he criticizes King's professors for

failing to note the changes in Karl Barth's theology after the appearance of the second edition of his *Epistle to the Romans* (p. 177). Elsewhere, he rightly praises Nancey Murphy's excellent *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning* (p. 9), as well as John Crowe Ransom's *God Without Thunder* (pp. 168–169).

Although an admirer of King, Genovese faces the issue of King's plagiarism with characteristic forthrightness. "The scandal of King's well-documented plagiarism reveals only part of an even greater scandal of an academic career that will not bear scrutiny. Theodore Pappas has chronicled that scandal and the even worse scandal of the reaction of the media and Academia in *The Martin Luther King, Jr., Plagiarism Story*, which deserves more attention than it has been getting" (p. 172).

On a few points, I venture to disagree with Genovese's theological interpretations. He seems to me to accept uncritically Hans von Balthasar's thesis of a movement from dialectics to analogy in Barth's theology (p. 177). Murphy's book does indeed claim that theology uses probable reasoning, but it tests theology through Lakatos's Methodology of Scientific Research Programs, not probability theory (p. 9). The "Given" in the system

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of Edgar Brightman is not prior to God, but part of Him (p. 168). But these are minor matters.

Genovese respects not only the Old South, but present-day Southern conservatives as well. I found especially moving his tribute to the late M.E. Bradford: "Notwithstanding deep philosophical and political differences, I counted Bradford a dear friend and as fine a human being as it has ever been my privilege to know" (p. 258). He finds in Bradford "an almost unerring instinct for the essentials. He posed and faced the hard questions and rarely if ever wrote a page that did not contain valuable insights" (p. 258). His keen evocation of Mel Bradford's personality will delight anyone who knew Bradford and instruct those who did not.

Our author shows full awareness of the problems of Marxism. In the book's most controversial essay, "The Question," Genovese indicts his fellow Marxists for condoning Communist atrocities and pleads

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guilty to the failing himself: "What did we know, and when did we know it? We knew everything essential and knew it from the beginning" (p. 296). And mass murder was no aberration, but stemmed from deep flaws internal to Marxism. "Our whole project of 'human liberation' has rested on a series of gigantic illusions" (p. 298). In another essay, he finds "too much truth for comfort" in Eric Voegelin's identification of the leftist worldview as a variety of gnosticism (p. 13).

After reading the volume, readers may well be puzzled why Genovese remains a Marxist. That he remains one admits of no doubt. He selects as the book's epigraph exactly the passage from Dante of which Marx said in *Capital*: "The maxim of the great Florentine is mine." In a laudatory essay on Herbert Aptheker, he refers to the "family quarrel that I have with Aptheker and other Marxists" (p. 215).

I suspect that, in part, Genovese's continued Marxism stems from his finding plausible Marx's analysis of capitalism. In an essay on Sam Francis, he refers to "capitalism's inherent tendency toward the concentration of capital in which the most dynamic entrepreneurs are generally the most socially destructive" (p. 268). I hope that Genovese will reexamine Marx's economics in the same

critical spirit that he elsewhere so admirably displays. If he does so, I think he will find Marx's arguments "utterly rotten."

Genovese's firm and muscular style conveys his enormous intellectual energy and his impatience with nonsense, from whatever source derived.<sup>1</sup> I wish there were more Marxists like him. ♦

## *Neither Content Nor Character*

THE END OF RACISM: PRINCIPLES  
FOR A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY

Dinesh D'Souza

The Free Press, 1995, xi + 724 pp.

D'Souza's massive tome is structured by a simple message. Relations between whites and blacks in the contemporary United States are deep in crisis, but a way out exists. The crisis stems from the practices of large numbers of blacks, whose lives D'Souza describes in scathing terms that have already led to accusations of racism against him.

What prevents adequate measures to deal with such problems as

<sup>1</sup>One quibble about usage—Genovese constantly writes "alternate" when the sense requires "alternative."