

quences of policies that were supposedly designed for “pro-natalist” purposes, Carlson raises the very pertinent question of whether it is proper to say that the Myrdals “failed.” The answer, it seems, is no. Carlson makes clear that their “pro-natalism” amounted to little more than a healthy fear of economic collapse and national extinction. Their concern for marriage and family was entirely consequentialist, as can be seen from the failure to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate unions: whatever produces children is good for the state. Human beings were not valuable in themselves (the Myrdals countenanced forced sterilization for the mentally ill, the “genetically defective,” and criminals) but as instruments of the state: human beings were necessary to fill jobs, to pay taxes, and to breed more job-filling taxpayers.

Alva Myrdal liked to condemn the “unbridled individualism which char-

acterizes the . . . bourgeois culture” of capitalism. Yet her militant feminism and hostility toward the traditional family made her sing the praises of “individual self-sufficiency.” She failed to realize that, as Joseph Schumpeter put it, “feminism is an essentially capitalistic phenomenon.” In the battle between social welfare and feminist individualism, feminism won. Thus, the family wage, formerly part of the Social Democratic Party agenda, became oppressive in the eyes of Alva Myrdal. In 1971, the Swedish Commission on New Marriage Law claimed a need to form “a society in which every adult takes responsibility for himself without being economically dependent on another”—bourgeois individualism in a socialist welfare state.

The Myrdals’ analysis of the Swedish birth dearth reveals the extent to which they bought into the materialis-

tic premises they condemned. Their plan to increase fertility fostered rather than combated selfish individualism. It capitulated to selfishness by attempting to make children compatible with purely economic self-interest. They ignored the wise objection of Sweden’s husband-and-wife social-policy team, Eli and Ebba Heckscher, who said that fertility rates would never be raised by taking children from their mothers and giving them to the state. The Heckschers’ objection points to a profound truth: the state can only flourish by recognizing the essential preeminence of the family.

The Swedish Experiment in Family Politics should be required reading for anyone interested in Sweden’s present situation, but it is perhaps most interesting as a cautionary tale for policy-makers in the United States who, in the name of “family policy,” are tempted to turn their backs on the family. ◊

The Life Fitting

by Dick Allen

“Make it last long, if possible,”
You tell the tailor mumbling through
The silver needles in his mouth for you
To hold still and stand tall

While he adjusts for waistband slack
And proper cuffs. “And let it be
Nothing awfully dull or cheaply flashy,
Thumb-pinned out of the rack.”

Since you’ve inherited the curse
Of likening books to gods and men,
And library tables wear elbows thin,
You’d like them reinforced.

Let its weave show, but not show off:
Far better glances than cold stares
Dismissing you for putting on false airs
With the cut of your cloth.

It should be something that can go
(Down any street your fancy runs)
As well with old school ties as newer ones,
Silk cravat or string bow.

And it should jump at chances, yet
Not chase them round too far a bend,
Be something to relax in at day’s end,
Its wrinkles smoothing out.

“What, you want miracles?” he asks,
“Love, money, fame—the whole shebang?
Step to the mirrors, let’s see how it’ll hang
And how much fat it masks.”

Your body, soul and mind obey,
Split into left and right and straight ahead.
He frowns and plucks your sleeve for one loose thread.
“Not looking bad today,”

He tells you, writes down measurements
In his spiral-ring pad, then nods
To his assistant, as if taking odds
Against all comers’ bets,

Chalkmarks the shoulders, tacks the neck,
Checks the interlining’s full
(So hidden that it can’t be seen at all),
Then, eyes rolling, steps back.

“You’ve been told,” he says, “that whether
It’s sharkskin, wool, poplin, or tweed,
Such special orders can’t be guaranteed
Against improper wear?”

You have. You shake his outstretched hand,
Your numbered claim check safe and sound
Inside your billfold (slim and leather-bound),
And feel, at last, name brand.

A Representative Man

by Eugene D. Genovese

"A well-written life is almost as rare as a well-spent one."

—Thomas Carlyle

Carolina Cavalier: The Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew
by Clyde N. Wilson
Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press; 303 pp., \$35.00

Even in these dreariest of days in academia, when American history has largely become a plaything for canting ideologues, the Old South continues to attract outstanding talent. Fine books and articles continue to appear, as Clyde Wilson's *Carolina Cavalier* attests, notwithstanding the pressure from a kind of Gresham's Law. The times call for adherence to the correct ideological line, which at its increasingly popular extreme regards the Old South as a rehearsal for Nazi Germany and demands for the eradication of all traces of the conservative voices that have loomed so large in Southern history. And in our leading professional associations, their journals, and college classrooms the correct line prevails.

The continued interest in the Old South proceeds from the worst and best of reasons. The worst includes the step-by-step domination of departments of history in our Southern as well as northern universities by those for whom the Southern Tradition, as Richard Weaver aptly called it, and all its works represent an evil past to be exorcised by all means, fair and foul. It is no longer enough to reject slavery, segregation, and racism. Virtually every positive feature of the mainstream Southern experience must be rejected as well in order to avoid charges of indulging in racist and pro-slavery apologetics. We are being lavishly entertained by a new philosophy of history that has the supreme merit of reducibility to four words: "Black, good; white, bad."

The prevalence of this view in the

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

north need not agitate us, for it has ever been thus. Its prevalence in the South is another matter, about which prudence dictates silence from carpetbaggers like myself. Prudence never having been my strongest suit, however, I shall risk the suggestion that my fellow carpetbaggers, who today inundate Southern universities with generally unfortunate consequences, have

much less to answer for than do the scalawags who seem to think that a search for identity requires total repudiation of a great and noble, if deeply flawed, regional culture. That such a total repudiation could only flow from transparent self-hatred does not seem to deter them. Nor do they seem to understand that self-hatred is no more attractive in white Southerners than it is in Jews, blacks, Sicilian-Americans, or anyone else.

The best reasons for the continued interest in the Old South include not only a perennial quest for the origins of the War that remains our greatest national trauma, but a strong sense that there is much to be learned here about the tragic nature of the historical dimension of the human condition. Honest historians, whatever their specific viewpoint, cannot avoid a confrontation with that tragic dimension, for there is abundant evidence of a hegemonic slaveholding class (and a yeomanry) that, notwithstanding its full share of ogres and timeservers, boasted a host of extraordinary men and women: God-fearing, courageous, socially and morally responsible, and tough. Such historians cannot avoid a confrontation with the lives of the slaveholders who embodied those qualities and yet proved to be the agents of the greatest enormity of the age—men and women who, whatever their virtues, were periodically, if not daily, driven to the acts of savagery toward black people that their very survival as owners of human flesh required.

The coexistence of these qualities, which defined the slaveholders—and even many of the yeomen—who accepted the slave society into which they were born, manifested itself differently in accordance with region, income, social status, personal temperament, and much else; still, in one manifestation or another, those qualities constantly recurred. The elite slaveholders of the Virginia tidewater or the Carolina low country might not qualify as "typical," but they did em-