

Letters to the Editor

Unfair to the Confederacy?

Re: "Time to bury the dead culture of the confederacy" [by Frederic Henderson, in the Aug. 28, 1992 issue].

First, as one active in pursuit of justice and liberty for all people, your service has been a good resource. So, it is not lightly that I write to express my utter surprise and disdain for your editorial and the feature article in the 28 August *EIR* . . .

As to the feature "documenting" southerners were brainwashed into dying for "free trade," observe, no such *documentation* is given. Referencing one's self, as Mr. Henderson does, is not documentation. As to the "Civil War" being "America's Second War Against Britain," does anyone recall the War of 1812? Documentation? Hardly!

Ironically, both you and Mr. Henderson, while ostensibly seeking to bury a "dead" culture, actually serve only to arouse it by the attempt to link "free trade" to it. Indeed, Mr. Henderson's exegesis of Article I, Section 8 of the C.S.A. Constitution seems to be the real inversion of history here. He reads, Clause (1) "nor shall any duties or taxes on importations from foreign nations be laid to promote or foster any branch of industry" as assuring "free trade" with foreign nations. In fact, it is self-evident this language assured duties and taxes on imports from foreign nations will be laid but prohibits the use thereof to favor any one branch of industry over another. *That's free enterprise not "free trade."* We should be so blessed today!

Likewise, he also reads Clause (3), "neither this, nor any other clause contained in the Constitution shall be construed to delegate the power to Congress to appropriate money for any internal improvement intended to facilitate commerce" as assuring "free trade" with foreign nations when, again, it does otherwise. It leaves fully to each state the power to decide "any internal improvement intended to facilitate commerce." *That's States' Rights, not "free trade."* Considering our present profligate federal government: its deficits, debt, bloated pork barrel, and bureaucracy, largely rationalized on the basis of Congress running the internal affairs of each state, one must wonder if maybe the Confederacy had at least the sense of a better idea for assuring limited central government after all.

Finally, on the reason for the war, there is neither space nor time here and now to fully address that question. Yet, I would submit to any candid mind, that our orthodox northern dogma, "slavery," suffers from numerous frailties. As to the American founding fathers loathing slavery, yes, some did. Yet, it is clear that a large portion of them didn't, North and South. What else explains the original U.S. Constitution accepting slavery? Or is it your view that those who held slaves were not among our founders and first patriots?

As to suppressing the truth, consider, "How many school texts reveal Robert E. Lee and other southern leaders had freed their slaves, seeing slavery as a moral and political evil?" How many ask "Would such men go to war to preserve something they had already rejected?" How many note Lee, et al. believed the gentle influence of Christianity, rather than war, would resolve the issue with the remaining slaveholders, given time? As much as one may loath to hear it, the suppressing of truth that is occurring is that the war was over States' Rights and secession (limited central government and voluntary union), not slavery. If one looks, Lincoln also proves this.

"Time to bury the dead culture of the Confederacy?" One would do well to fathom it instead. An honest look shows it still has much to offer to any discussion of the relationship between a citizen and a state, and between both of those and a central government.

Semper Probitas!
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The Author Responds: Unfortunately, the viewpoint expressed in your closing paragraph has become more prominent these days, as citizens of this nation become ever more cynical about a government in Washington that shows itself to be ever more bankrupt in its policies and thus less and less theirs, in terms of those interests and needs they believe to be most important. However, to resurrect the doctrines of states' rights, free trade (or if you wish to call it such, "free enterprise"), and slavery (yes, slavery, for it was a logical part of these other two, and therefore, try as one might, it cannot be wished away as some sort of historical aberration) of the Confederacy would be as foolish, and as immoral, as the attempt to resurrect the doctrines of the Nazis to deal with

our current problems.

While I will not respond to your *seriatim* arguments as to the "true" nature of the Confederacy, I will refer you to the forthcoming sequel to my article in *EIR*, on "Free Trade, the Confederacy, and the Political Economy of Slavery," and note the following. As both articles make clear, the American South of 1860 was, despite the view of all historians to the contrary, a system based not in doctrines of states' rights, opposition to big central government, or any other similar niceties, but on the principle of oligarchism, with the institution of human slavery and the pro-British notions of a feudalistic economic "paradise" known as "free trade," or "free enterprise" as its cornerstone. (For those who still doubt this, I recommend the writings of such "states' rights" prophets as Alexander Stephens, Robert Barnwell Rhett, and Richard Yancey.)

Despite your, and a great many others', view of what our problems are in this nation today, we have, like the Confederacy, become a nation that has accepted the principle that we are really no better than the beasts, that we as men are not potentially divine, and thus self-perfecting. Once we have been conned into believing such, any horror becomes acceptable. Thus we watch as our nation self-destructs.

We tolerate the enslavement of our population to drugs. We tolerate their enslavement to the only slightly less destructive narcotic that passes for popular culture. We tolerate their enslavement to the violence and bestiality these produce. We tolerate their enslavement to poverty, disease, dead-end jobs, or none at all, to the hell that has been produced by a "post-industrial society." Certainly few of us support this, fewer still would advocate or defend this; neither you nor most others are advocates of such slavery; yet if we waged war (even a defensive one), to defend such, what would we be? Proponents of the principles of freedom, individual rights, states' rights, the right to "do your own thing," of the doctrine of absolute freedom, the anarchy of "free enterprise"? No, we would be the proponents of slavery, no matter what name we gave it.

This is the true lesson of the Confederacy, whose so-called war for independence, a defensive war to be "simply left alone," as Jefferson Davis phrased it, was the war of a society rotted by the doctrines of oligarchism, and because of this, inevitably an offensive war against republicanism.