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Reading the Reasons Why Eugene Genovese and David Horowitz Move Politically from Left to Right

INTRODUCTION

Two Marxists Make a Move

If you believe the “make the rich pay” mantra of the political left, Eugene Genovese and David Horowitz have some news for you: the Marxist foundations for this notion of spreading the wealth around isn’t fairness but an evil devoid of its more profound cousin, justice. The ubiquitous nature of this form of redistributionist economics has deep roots in the Marxist/socialist notion that everyone should share exactly the same amount of wealth. Eugene Genovese and David Horowitz cut their teeth on the Marxist agenda – Genovese as a historian and college professor and Horowitz as a college radical who defended and worked with numerous leftist organizations throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Were economics the only implications of a Marxist ideology, a study of two relatively unknown individuals might be nothing more than smoke in the wind, but the devastation brought about in some countries by its ideas demands that the voices of dissent be heard.

Each man’s scrutiny of the agenda that had become an ingrained way of life for them led to an awakening and rejection of the left’s political and economic ideology. Theirs was not an overnight change, and it involved the kind of soul searching that many of us are forced to make when confronted with a new set of truths. It often demands a seismic shift in friendships, professional associations, and way of life. Eugene Genovese taught history full-time at Rutgers University, the University of Rochester, and the University of Georgia, Emory University and several others part-time until his retirement. He became editor in chief of the *Marxist-Leninist Quarterly* where he wrote editorials and commissioned articles to promote Mao Zedong believing that the long-awaited world socialist revolution would come because of him. (Mao was a communist revolutionary and founder of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, a one-party state controlled by the communists; it has been documented that he instituted mass executions early in the formation of this new government, and later during the Cultural Revolution an

estimated 40 – 70 million people, who had been labeled “enemies of the state,” died from mass starvations; it was his Marxist/socialist theories that attracted people like Eugene Genovese before his atrocities came to light.) For most of his career Genovese maintained a Marxist perspective in both his teaching and his writing. His most well-known work is *Roll, Jordon, Roll*, an examination of the society of slaves in the American south. In 1978 he became the first Marxist president of the Organization of American Historians. His life and teachings did not merely flirt with leftist notions, he was grounded in them.

David Horowitz perhaps was even more so a child of the left. He grew up in a family fully infused with a belief in communism and socialist principles. His parents were ardent believers in Communism during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s although their passion for it was hidden behind a veil of respectability.

My parent’s political choices were carefully hidden behind their middle-class façade, and their political opinions artfully couched in sanitized phrases. In part because they took themselves seriously as revolutionaries, they never broke a law or committed a violent act, or gave any public indication that they would . . . Their real politics were conducted far from view, in the neighborhood cell meetings with the Communist Party. It was in this subterranean activity that the romanticism of their youth finally got to express itself. Here they lived outside the norms of other mortals, breathed the intoxicating air of a world revolution, and plotted their impossible dreams (*Son* 36).

When he finally left this environment, he continued on the same revolutionary path but took a more visible approach. As a student at University of California Berkeley, for example, he organized protests and defended a conscientious objector in a public debate. Later he became an editor of *Ramparts*, a publication of New Left politics. The New Left became the renewed movement of the Marxist and communist left that had imploded due to the revelations of the Khrushchev Report in the mid-50s which detailed the monstrosities committed by Josef Stalin. In the 1970s he got involved with the Black Panthers, a radical group that protested the treatment of African-Americans but later was exposed as a front for drug-trafficking and implicated in the death of one of Horowitz’ friends. His DNA was

communist to the core. As with Eugene Genovese, to embark on the change that took place in Horowitz' thinking required a dramatic shift not only from a way of thinking but also from family, friends, and work.

Many people are likely unaware that the political agenda founded on fairness and class warfare stems in part from the philosophy and writings of Karl Marx (1818-1883). His ideas played a major role in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and still reside not only in the political left's ideology today but also in many institutions of higher learning. Perhaps because his name is seldom associated with his ideas today, many have swallowed the agenda without analyzing or even knowing the Marxist source of his economic, political, and social theories. Genovese and Horowitz provide a necessary foil to the lack of analysis needed to uncover its roots and the violence associated with its ideas. From the killing fields of Cambodia to the assassinations and imprisonments of Castro's Cuba to Stalin's murderous rule in Russia, the consequences of Marx and the thinking of the left is strewn with bodies, blood, and economic hardship.

The experiences and writings of Eugene Genovese and David Horowitz demonstrate the weaknesses of those ideas. Because these two were ardent "believers" in the Marxist agenda found still in today's political left, this examination seeks to give a wider audience to many of the falsehoods underpinning much of politics in the United States today. Critics of anyone's decision to turn his life in another direction, especially those critics who remain loyal to the tenets of the system, often fail to hear their reasons clearly. Many people jump to a defensive mode when friends turn away. Furthermore, those on the other side of the aisle who welcome the newly converted also may welcome them without hearing exactly why they crossed over. A closer analysis of both men will clarify their reasons and may even be an eye opening experience for some who may be unaware such issues affect them.

A full analysis of why these two ardent believers in Marx left their philosophy behind provides a challenge to those who still cling to Marx's legacy as well as a wake-up call to the undecided and uninformed. I am providing a "voice in the wilderness" (assuming John the Baptist won't mind my

adapting his title for another use, although not as good a one) for two voices that deserve a podium. The negative reaction of Eugene Genovese's colleagues provides sufficient grounds to let him speak for himself. The continuing resistance, furthermore, that David Horowitz endures every time he steps onto a college campus ought to at least encourage people who believe in free speech and the free exchange of ideas to want to hear him out. That Genovese made the leap all the way to Christianity and that Horowitz has found renewed interest in his Jewish roots provides another intriguing aspect to two men who in many other respects have followed a similar path. I invite you into a whole new world of experience and ideas with the hope that you will be forever challenged to consider some ideas that rule your life.

If you are a politically active reader I hope you'll continue with an open mind especially if you already lean politically to the left. Perhaps you find the rhetoric of equality and fairness often associated with the left to be appealing. However, you may not realize the totalitarian impulse inherent in the Marxist ideas that undergird the political left. As Horowitz notes, even some of Marx's supporters recognized the danger. "In 1844, Marx's collaborator Arnold Ruge predicted that Marx's dream would result in 'a police and slave state'" (*Illusions* 143). Horowitz and Genovese reveal the ideas behind the rhetoric. They expose what fueled and continue to fuel the political movement whose only goal is power.

If you are reading some of these ideas for the first time, I hope this essay will inspire you to read the writings of each man, become savvy enough to recognize the destructive ideas that you may have already encountered in your life, and be challenged to address them. Not only will we examine the ideas and experiences that they confronted, but we'll also consider how their changed life came about. A complete change in outlook doesn't occur often and doesn't come easy for anyone. It usually happens during a time of upheaval when a person's outlook becomes untenable and he feels as if the very foundations of his life are being taken from under him. The story of these two men identifies how change can and does take place. If you are just a curious reader I think you'll find enough here to stir

your imagination with how two men sought to expose the lies and ideas they had espoused for many years. Whatever your interest, there is enough drama, thought-provoking discussion, and controversy for any of you.

THE PRODIGAL'S PERSONAL CRISIS

People don't change easily. Every human being begins life with a set of personality traits. We tend to view them as genetically driven or as determined by socialization or parental nurturing. Certain of those traits are with us from an early age and will always characterize who we are, but there are behaviors and beliefs that can change over time and with some effort. I've always said that everyone grows old but not everyone grows up. Furthermore, I am not sure where on a scale of one to ten how often a person makes a complete change in their outlook on and philosophy of life. That people can change at all makes the lives of Eugene Genovese and David Horowitz compelling. "The myths of death and renewal, destruction and re-birth; how they haunt and entice us" (Sandborn 27)! In order to explain the causes we need to establish a baseline to gauge the nature of the change. What caused it? How long did it take? What was their initial response?

The baseline that I'll use is the Story of the Prodigal Son, narrated in the *Gospel of Luke*. Known also as the Parable of the Lost Son (prodigal means wasteful, but either word fits) it is a story of launching out in life, failing, and returning with nothing but the realization of failure. Jesus of course narrates the tale to describe his mission to seek out and receive back fallen humanity as well as present a model of sin and redemption. But the story is remarkably flexible and rings true for anyone who has had to reevaluate his life. It portrays the features of most anyone who finds that he has spent his life pursuing the wrong things but realizes he must seek another direction.

In the parable the younger of two sons obtains his inheritance and sets off on a journey away from home, family, and the community of his upbringing. His new-found freedom comes to a grinding halt when his money runs out and his friends desert him. Alone and hungry he finds work feeding swine.

There with his empty stomach and empty pockets as he longs to eat what the pigs are eating he has an awakening. It is the moment he realizes that his father's servants are better off. The story dramatizes the experience of failure, redemption, and renewal.

At the risk of confusing the religious implications in the Lost Son too closely with Horowitz and Genovese, I assert with confidence that the life of each man at least fits the same mold of an awakening and a change of life. The New Testament story depicts a young man whose desire is to be free from the life of his parents, but his awakening and his realization of failure are what have implications for our two subjects. These three lives reach a crossroads that looks familiar. Several things opened the eyes of the Lost Son: his personal economy, his hunger, and most importantly the realization that his choices and way of life had led him to his predicament. Though the predicaments of Genovese and Horowitz formed in different circumstances, each man was similarly driven to reevaluate his life.

Money and wealth drive all of us to one degree or another. When the Lost Son sought to pursue a life of his own, he had a ready supply of it in his inheritance. When his money ran out, he discovered that his new friends had deserted him and he had been irresponsible with his father's wealth. He realized that even the servants were better off under his father's economic system. Lack of money can lead to all kinds of awakenings. Without money and longing to eat swill, the Lost Son opened his eyes to his failed monetary policy. Because the narrative tells us "he squandered his wealth in wild living," (*Gospel of Luke* 15:13) we can guess that his personal monetary policy demonstrated lack of restraint and responsibility. Money issues can lead to personal problems and even social revolutions. Ask any couple how they fare when one is a spendthrift and the other a tightwad. At the very least money issues fuel tension and intense debate. How entire societies and governments regulate money, goods, and services has always played a significant role in the ebb and flow of political movements. For David Horowitz in particular, the final outcome in socialist economies proved to be a significant problem.

Though he did not come to personal financial ruin, he saw that Marxism wrecked economies and left most people without even the possibility of accessing their basic needs.

Hidden between the Son's poverty and his hunger was the problem that his way of life failed. His philosophy seemed to be "eat, drink, and be merry." That such a way of life is rooted in a belief system about the world should not escape us, nor should the utter bankruptcy of such a way of thinking escape us. His hunger and his money problems drove the young son to examine his way of life, and when he realized that his father's servants had it better than he did, he drew the appropriate conclusion: go home. More importantly he had to admit that his father's way was right. Realizing that he was hungry enough to eat swill struck a blow to his pride. The humility that he felt drove him to make a complete about face. The decision to return home came from a very deep and profound awareness of his mistakes. He went back to his father and asked only that he might become one of the servants. Such is the beginning point for a redeemed and changed life.

The real drama is in the awakening. He experienced a gnawing hunger that made even pig food appealing, and the drama of that moment made him realize the emptiness of his life and the bankruptcy of his philosophy. This "pig food moment" is the realization that one's way of life has led to deprivation, degradation, or some intolerable situation. Such a terrible hunger revealed that his own way of life had made him what he had become. In essence not only had his life deteriorated to the level of creature far below him on the food chain, but his system of beliefs had been the very thing that caused the deterioration.

For Genovese his "pig food moment" came when he began to wonder about the violence perpetrated in the name of Marxism and its socialist mentality. In places where his beliefs had been practiced, violent dictatorships characterized the government. When he could no longer explain away the violence done by those who espoused the Marxist ideals, and when his fellow Marxists turned a blind eye, he saw the "pig food" for what it was. He wrote an article and asked them, "What did you

know and when did you know it" ("Question" 371)? He was referring to the enormous body counts that had been piling up in places where Marxism had taken control of the political environment, Stalin's Russia, Mao Zedong's China, and in Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos. He asserted that more people perished in the purges and attempts to escape such places at the hands of Marxist dictators than had been killed in the Viet Nam war. Genovese could no longer ignore that what he was being asked to eat sickened him. Although this represents his revelatory moment, it took a long time to take shape and finally come to the front. But as with the Lost Son his balance reached a tipping point and he could no longer stand on the principles he held so dear.

Horowitz' awakening also took a long time to form though he, too, experienced the "pig food moment." The revelation in the mid-1950s that Stalin had murdered millions under a Marxist philosophy was for him the seed that formed a full plant when more water had been added. He was a teen when the Russians admitted the truth about Stalin's atrocities, and like many true believers in the Marxist agenda he sought to maintain his admiration for socialism despite these revelations. He provided much of the intellectual foundation for the New Left that formed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Though many tried to cope with the reality of Russia's socialist failures under Stalin, others, like Horowitz, believed socialism just needed to be tried in a different way. Horowitz finally recognized what he was eating when he got deeply involved with the Black Panthers, a radical group in the 1960s, and when he experienced the death of one of his acquaintances by their hand. He had recommended Betty van Patter to them for a job as bookkeeper. She was murdered; her death affected him. The violence perpetrated by the Black Panthers came more sharply into focus, and it reeked of pig slop. His stomach churned and his own awakening began to dawn.

The Lost Son returned home. Genovese and Horowitz may not have gone home but their lives took a dramatic turn. Like the Son, each man saw the foundations of his philosophy shaken. There was no escaping the truth of what each had digested. Whereas hunger and loneliness drove the young man

to see his faulty way of life, the violence that accompanied Marxism and socialism drove both Genovese and Horowitz to reexamine his way of life. To them the violence was not merely an unfortunate by-product of a philosophy but rather an inherent feature. More weaknesses of this way of life came into focus after their initial disillusionment, and it can be argued that once they recognized the truth it was only natural that they would see clearly to dissect many more falsehoods so prevalent in what they had cherished for so long.

A BLIND EYE TO VIOLENCE

Sickened! Repulsed! Outraged! A jumble of such emotions rage through us when we hear about teenage girls abducted, held captive, and abused for years, or about children starving in war-torn countries, or about discrimination against minorities, or about mass murders and ethnic cleansing. Normal people possess an inherent sense of justice which chafes under the weight of things that violate it. Sometimes the rawest and most passionate emotions spill over when bad things happen to others. We are unfortunately also prone to selective indignation: the other guy is always wrong; our personal sensibilities have been violated; our anger spills over when our set of ideals is violated, but not necessarily when someone else's is. A recent TV show asks unsuspecting people "What would you do?" and puts them in situations to test their determination to see the right thing done.

The true test of justice comes, however, when we discover that our own set of values has been revealed as the cause of injustice, atrocity, or merely some minor slight. When an accusatory finger is pointed in our direction, we tend to look the other way. We face the challenge of asking ourselves if our values have been wrong. We face the challenge of seeing where we have gone wrong. In the religious language of redemption, we face our personal sins. Such was the challenge for Genovese and Horowitz when confronted with the end results of their cherished beliefs. They not only embraced the conclusions, but they also met them with full bore intent to change them accordingly.

Eugene Genovese and David Horowitz saw what others refused to see though it took them years to make a clean break and walk away. The violent tendencies of Marxist regimes seemed to them as plain as day, but their fellow Marxists and socialists turned a blind eye preferring instead to either justify it or ignore it. Neither man could tolerate such behavior; furthermore, each man recognized that the violence was not an aberration in an otherwise benign philosophy but rather an inherent and essential end product of an evil system of thought. This violent tendency tied both men to the same awakening. It was the pig food they could no longer stomach.

Although Horowitz encountered his “pig food” moment years before Genovese, let’s consider Genovese first. His confrontation with fellow leftists has a memorable flair. He formulated his challenge in “The Question,” an article published in *Dissent* (Summer, 1994, 371-376). The question was “What did you know and when did you know it” (*Dissent* 371)? The same question used in the Watergate scandal to expose President Nixon’s failures was now turned against those who refused to admit to the violence perpetrated in the name of Marxism and socialist regimes. Genovese thus attempted to bring to light the culpability of those who supported such regimes around the world. All he wanted was honesty. Did they and could they admit that Marxism was responsible?

By his own testimony he became a Communist as a teenager, and despite being kicked out of the party at age twenty, he continued to support the international Marxist/socialist movement. As he watched the former Soviet Union unravel, he couldn’t ignore the bloodshed accompanying the Marxist agenda wherever it had seized the government. He commented:

Now, as everyone knows, in a noble effort to liberate the human race from violence and oppression we broke all records for mass slaughter, piling up tens of millions of corpses in less than three-quarters of a century. When the Asian figures are properly calculated, the aggregate to our credit may reach the seemingly incredible numbers widely claimed. Those who are big on multiculturalism might note that the great majority of our victims were nonwhite. Never having been good at math, I shy away from quibbles over statistics. Still, all quibbles aside, we have a disquieting number of corpses to account for. (*Dissent* 371)

He referred, of course, to the millions slaughtered under Stalin's purges and Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution, along with the extermination of Communism's enemies in Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos. That he could claim such atrocities was due to the fact that they could not be denied. News reports about the slaughter of innocent people simply because they were "enemies of the state," or that they refused to be "re-educated" under the Marxist banner, had become commonplace. The atrocities could be seen in those seeking to escape East Germany, the boat people fleeing Cuba and Cambodia, and in the suppression of dissent in Latin America. As he saw it, the problem resided as much with those who ignored it as with those who perpetrated the crimes. Defenders of Marx's philosophy tended and still tend to reside on the political left, and most of them couldn't muster up any answer to his question except to wonder if Genovese had lost his rational faculties despite the fact that he had been a well-respected historian, writer, and supporter of the Marxist cause. Such was, in his estimation, the blindness associated with most of those who espoused and continued to defend the Marxist cause.

Genovese pointed out the unwillingness of his leftist allies to admit the truth of such revelations. Long before he finally exited the Marxist ranks he claims that he was "trying to raise these questions on the left for more than a quarter century, only to have them ignored or to find myself pilloried" ("Question" 371). When he finally raised the question, he challenged his comrades to come clean. He made a determined effort to critique the violence that had always been associated with socialism, and because of his honest assessment, he could no longer adhere to it. Though he had been thinking about it for many years, he finally crossed a border beyond which he could not return. He made his rejection of Marxism complete in the early 1990s, coincidentally about the same time the old Soviet Union crumbled and communism was seen as the failure that many had predicted.

Eventually David Horowitz faced the same conundrum: adhere to Marxism and ignore the violence or admit that violence always followed Marxism and reject a belief he had held since childhood. For him it became personal. The seeds of his march from Marxism were sown early. As a teenager he

witnessed the effect on Marxists when Stalinist atrocities were revealed by Nikita Khrushchev in 1955. Even Khrushchev, then president of the Soviet Union, could not hide the atrocities than many knew or at least suspected had taken place. “I was shaken by the confusion of my parents’ generation, and by their demoralization in the face of what Khrushchev had revealed. I was looking for a moral compass that would help me to avoid their fate” (*Son* 89). This initial bump in the road of Horowitz’ personal journey festered within him for many years but at the time only led him to reassess his beliefs and become a major thinker and leader in what became the New Left of American politics. His attempt to rescue Marxism from its inherent tendencies crumbled further when the violence not only continued but hit close to home.

More seeds of doubt were sown along the way. In 1957 political activists Saul Landau and his wife Nina spoke in Sunnyside, the neighborhood in Brooklyn where Horowitz grew up. They spoke “as representatives of the Labor Youth Club, which was a Communist youth organization” (*Radical Son* 114), and they had just returned from the Moscow Youth Festival and from China. Someone asked them about capital punishment in China: “Nina explained that executions were different from capitalist ones since they were conducted on behalf of the ‘people’” (*Radical Son* 113). Though Horowitz made no comment about it at the time, the memory of that statement stuck with him. What sounded like a righteous justification must have needled his latent awareness that violence not only existed but was legitimized by the left.

By the late 1960s he was involved with the Black Panthers. Years of ignoring warning signs about their behavior culminated in the death of his friend, Betty van Patter. He had recommended her for a job as accountant for the group, but when she ended up floating in San Francisco bay with her skull crushed, the evidence led back to the Panthers. Though the case was never brought to trial and the former leaders of the Black Panthers denied involvement, the evidence pointed to them. Horowitz felt responsible. He had ignored the signs that suggested the Panthers and their leader, Huey Newton, were

nothing more than thugs and drug dealers. Evidence since then has affirmed his suspicions though no case has been brought against them for Betty's murder.

The rotten pig food that Horowitz had to swallow took the flesh and blood form of the death of his friend. He devoted an entire chapter in *Radical Son* to the personal devastation of finding out about her death. Horowitz took her death personally and hard, "For a good year, I woke up in tears every day because of Betty" (Sherman 15). When Betty had first disappeared, the police questioned Horowitz if he knew anything about it. They told him that she was probably dead and that the Panthers had probably killed her. His mounting suspicions about the violence associated with them came crashing down on him. He couldn't deny it and suspected that the police were right. Though he wanted to protect the Panthers because they were an integral part of the left, denying what he knew they were became less and less an option. "I sensed that my life had changed, unalterably" (*Radical Son* 248). Betty's body was finally discovered, and on the day of her funeral, he sensed even more of a change within himself, "By now, I was in a state of internal free-fall" (*Radical Son* 250). An interview with Horowitz in *The Nation* (July 3, 2000) demonstrated that this was still a source of guilt and personal injury for him. Though the Panthers have persistently denied any part in her death, in 1984 Van Patter's family hired a private detective to look into her death. He concluded that they were responsible.

This incident awakened the sleeping giant that was his conscience. It opened his eyes and in the years after her death, he began to "see" the wake of violence that persistently followed the left and its Marxist ideology. Looking back on the history of the early 70s, for example, he recognized what happened in Cambodia after the United States pulled out of Viet Nam. Worst of all it had been the left's political influence in the United States congress that set policies in motion which allowed it to happen. Not long after Richard Nixon resigned over the Watergate scandal, a number of radicals gained seats in congress, and by their persistent efforts undermined the settlement in Southeast Asia brokered by Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. "The aid [to Saigon, South Vietnam] was cut, the

Saigon regime fell, and Khmer Rouge marched into the Cambodian capital . . . In the two years that followed, more Indochinese were killed by the victorious Communists than had been killed on both sides in all thirteen years of the anti-Communist war” (*Son* 303).

Even before Eugene Genovese asked his “question,” Horowitz was able to see the many bodies after he had seen the one, Betty van Patter. Blinded in part by his own desire not to see his political vision destroyed Horowitz finally had to admit that something was wrong. Betty Van Patter’s body became his ideology in ruins. Though it would take a number of years for his new identity and ideology to form, he knew that he had reached a turning point. He had to leave the pig sty.

INHERENT WEAKNESSES

Both men began to see that this violence was not just some errant blip on the radar screen. Rather, the violence stemmed from ideas inherent within the system. Genovese even suggested that “all the crimes of white southerners, at least if we restrict ourselves to the period since the emancipation, would be worth no more than a footnote in a casebook that starred us” (*Dissent* 373). He went on to assert, “The horrors did not arise from perversions of radical ideology but from the ideology itself” (*Dissent* 375). As a well-respected historian we can believe that he is not overreaching when he said, “social movements that have espoused radical egalitarianism and participatory democracy have begun with mass murder and ended in despotism” (*Dissent* 375). He believed socialism was no exception, and he believed the left needed to fully examine its ideology to determine why its violent tendencies persisted.

David Horowitz wrote about the horrors in great detail in a letter he wrote to a friend who still maintained his belief in socialism.

The revolutionaries we had supported in Indochina were revealed in victory as conquerors and oppressors: millions were summarily slaughtered; new wars of aggression were launched; the small freedoms that had existed before were quickly extinguished; the poverty of the peoples increased. In Asia, a new empire expanded as a result of our efforts and over the peoples of Laos and Cambodia and South Vietnam fell the familiar darkness of totalitarian night (*Generation* 335).

Even before he wrote the above words, he could see that violence, poverty, and oppression always attached themselves to socialist movements. Numerous Soviet dissidents had revealed the atrocities of Stalin, and Horowitz wrote that the political imprisonment and repression they revealed were “not a secondary issue, peripheral to the left” (*Son* 193).

The inability of the left to admit that violence followed Marx and socialism proved to be a stumbling block they could not ignore. They also recognized the totalitarian impulse that followed Marxist believers. Far from freeing humanity and ending suffering, Marxist regimes had become just another form of slavery to an impassive master. Furthermore, each man recognized that there was no moral foundation other than a desire for power. Looking at each man’s view well after the changes took place provides great clarity and insight. It took them time to fully absorb and process exactly how the change affected them.

Denial, Silence, and Selective Indignation

When Eugene Genovese in 1994 asked his liberal colleagues, “What did you know, and when did you know it?” he was referring, as previously noted, to the body count and atrocities that followed the left-wing, Marxist despots of the 20th century. He could no longer ignore the piling up of bodies perpetrated in the name of socialist equality. Almost as bad for him was the denial and silence that accompanied his attempts to broach the issue. As he noted, the initial responses to his call for a reevaluation of the left’s philosophy not only avoided the real issues but also deteriorated into ad hominem attacks. He characterized their approach by saying, “Instead of debating the current actions and political future of the left, let us debate Genovese: his authoritarian personality, his vile temper, his apostasy, his elitism” (“Riposte” 386). This is a common evasive way of arguing. Lawyers sometimes seek to discredit witnesses by bringing up questionable character traits. It doesn’t bolster their case; it seeks to discredit the opposition’s case. Some people call it character assassination. He further refers to his other critiques of the left that had been met with private encouragement and support but had

astonishingly been accompanied by public silence. He reflects on the continual silence, "Permit me to point out that I have been trying to raise these questions on the left for more than a quarter of a century, only to have them ignored or to find myself pilloried" ("Riposte" 388). Such silence indicated a sustained, inherent unwillingness to admit weaknesses and faults, and the attacks on his character indicated that he had struck a nerve.

The more that Horowitz delved into the chasm that was the violence of the left, he, too, began to raise the same questions about its unwillingness to change: "It was not even so much the feeling that the left would not be able to change society; it was rather the sense that, in crucial ways, the left could not change itself" (*Left Illusions* 103). On the other hand he observed how a democratic government made it possible to reassess its deeds and priorities. I have observed that western nations eventually outlawed slavery and racial segregation because they were willing, if ever so grudgingly, to recognize their mistake of elevating one race over another. England outlawed the slave trade under the pressure from a member of their own parliament, William Wilberforce. The United States eventually fought the Civil War over the same issue. An honest appraisal of justice and human equality demanded nothing less. The left's inability to make the same assessment and adjustments became a glaring problem for Genovese and Horowitz.

Two names exemplify the resistance of the left to hear its critics. Ron Radosh and Joan Baez were hardly right-wing extremists. In fact they were both well-known and well-respected names on the political left. Ron Radosh had joined the Labor Youth League, a communist organization for children, at the age of thirteen. He went on to become a respected historian, an author, and at one time an editor of the magazine, *Studies on the Left*. When he wrote a book in which he believed that Julius Rosenberg had been guilty of spying on the United States, Horowitz notes how the left vilified him for what they perceived was a betrayal of their cause (Julius and Ethel Rosenberg had been convicted and executed for spying in 1953). The left's reaction provided Horowitz with an example of their inability to challenge

certain “truths” they considered to be inviolable: “His oldest friends shunned him. *The Nation*, and other radical magazines he had written for, condemned him. At meetings of the American Historical Association, progressive historians turned their backs on him. His neighbors crossed the street when he approached” (Son 303). Ironically, on the very day the Rosenberg’s were executed, one of Horowitz’ mentors revealed that an important tactic of Nikolai Lenin, a major instigator of the Russian Revolution and icon of the left, was that “it was necessary to lie in order to advance the revolutionary cause” (Son 78). For Horowitz it must have been one of the seeds that later brought him out of his revolutionary shell for he said the notion “concerned me” (Son 78).

In addition to Ron Radosh, Joan Baez, a singer and well-known activist on the left, received criticism for her own “misdeeds.” When reports surfaced about killings, re-education camps, and millions of refugees in Southeast Asia after the Viet Nam War ended, she sent an open letter to the communist regime in North Viet Nam asking them to demonstrate humanity in the treatment of their opponents. She was “attacked by Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda as a tool of the CIA” (Son 303) while others on the left organized a campaign to praise the communists for their alleged peaceful administration. Once again the left resisted assessing the misdeeds of those they perceived to be their philosophical partners. Horowitz sums up the bloodbath that had been Indochina after the war: “In the two years that followed, more Indochinese were killed by the victorious Communists than had been killed on both sides of all thirteen years of the anti-Communist war” (Son 303). On the left this was consistently ignored. When more and more of the left’s atrocious deeds were revealed, they were met with more silence in the form of suppressing facts. Horowitz observed what was “a standard operating principle of the Left: The responsibility of progressive journalists was to suppress the facts that hurt the progressive cause, and to print only those truths that served it” (Son 321). He must have remembered the connection to what his mentor had revealed about Lenin’s tactic: it was necessary to lie.

Although the left was not, and is not today, without its indignations, Horowitz saw a double standard. As he says of his father and his father's generation: "The liberties they were willing to invoke in order to defend themselves, they elsewhere dismissed as 'bourgeois rights' designed to protect the rich" (*Son* 70). This double standard extended even to those who experienced firsthand the violence under Joseph Stalin: "My parents and other progressives would not think of invoking the political rights that had protected *them* [emphasis in the original] in behalf of the millions that Stalin had imprisoned in the Soviet Union whose only crime was to hold the wrong beliefs" (*Son* 70). When it came to the violence he saw among the Black Panthers and other radicals of the New Left, supporters excused them as victims of an unjust system or victims of oppression. Few and far between were those on the left who could admit that their violence was an abomination. Yet there were many who felt indignation when their own rights were violated but who felt nothing of denying others the same treatment. It happened too often to be merely coincidental.

The Totalitarian Impulse

In 1973 Horowitz attended a conference in Oxford University with the express purpose of examining the socialist idea. The organizer of the conference was a Marxist philosopher and founder of the European New Left named Leszek Kolakowski who read a paper examining the idea of a classless society which socialism attempted to institute. Horowitz summed up what he heard:

The catastrophic experience of Marxist societies, he showed, had not been an accident. It was implicit in the socialist idea. The forces required to impose the radical equality that socialism promised inevitably led to a new inequality and a new privileged ruling elite. The socialist unity of mankind we all had dreamed of could only be realized in a totalitarian state (*Illusions* 342).

Horowitz went on to say that many Marxists had made the same observation in every generation, had been proven right in every generation, and had now been proven right in his own generation. When he began at this early stage to ask his comrades about whether socialism was indeed a viable philosophy, he encountered the resistance that would characterize all of his attempts to expose socialism's flaws. The particular flaw in this case was its totalitarian impulse.

Genovese attested to the same observation. Some of those who criticized his own critique of the left, he claimed, “rank among the leaders of the thinly disguised totalitarianism in which the American left wallows” (*Dissent* 386). Jay Nordlinger, who had interviewed Genovese shortly before his death suggested that “Oppression was baked into the socialist cake” (Nordlinger 44). Even one from the left who had interviewed Horowitz admitted that we “were willing to turn a blind eye to the authoritarianism of any country that opposed the American empire” (Sandborn n.p.). Horowitz suggests in other places that repression had been the legacy of Josef Stalin. He reiterated Kolakowski when he said, “Socialist unity could only be achieved as a totalitarian solution” (*Son* 272). It was a glaring weakness that neither Genovese nor Horowitz could ignore.

No Moral Foundation

Several times Eugene Genovese repeated what he considered another grave weakness of Marxism. When he asked “The Question,” he raised the issue of moral foundations. He suggested that the left’s complicity in mass murder happened because of “a deep flaw in our very understanding of human nature—its frailty and its possibilities—and by our inability to replace the moral and ethical baseline long provided by the religion we have dismissed with indifference, not to say contempt” (*Dissent* 375). He mentioned the same criticism in an interview in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*. Even as an atheist and still a Marxist he was troubled by Marxism’s lack of moral foundation. “It wasn’t clear to me that you could have that foundation without a belief in God. I mean, you can be an atheist and live a perfectly moral life, but what is it grounded in” (Skube n.p.)? In a 1997 interview with *National Review* he suggested that rejecting the Decalogue may be all well and good because we might not believe it is God’s revealed word, but “we don’t have anything to put in its place” (Matthews-Green 55). Inherently Marxism had no moral code to stand on.

Horowitz also asserted that the left had no “mechanism of social conscience” (*Son* 279). Though they could muster up slogans about equality, their penchant for violence and revolution undermined any

grand notions of justice they might have imagined. Going through the early stage of questioning his beliefs, Horowitz wanted to “question radical theory itself, and specifically its destructive attack on ‘bourgeois’ culture and institutions in the absence of any practical idea about what to do when the destruction was accomplished” (*Son* 274). In his mind to annihilate anything seemed irresponsible, but to have nothing to replace it seemed utterly empty. “To carry the radical critique of the existing order without any practical idea of what would replace it was nihilism” (*Son* 274). Nihilism seemed, thus, the final destination of annihilation on behalf of the progressive cause. Once he and Genovese realized they had nothing solid to stand on, they sought firmer ground. The foundation had ultimately been shaken, dissolved, and blown away. Inherently Marxism collapsed in a storm as a house built on sand.

THE REALITY THAT IS HUMAN NATURE

Both Genovese and Horowitz recognized a glaring hole in the entire Marxist system. Genovese states it simply, “We were led into complicity with mass murder and the desecration of our professed ideals not by Stalinist or other corruptions of high ideals . . . but by a deep flaw in our very understanding of human nature—its frailty and its possibilities” (*Question* 375). Horowitz claimed that the “indifference to the gravities of human nature” was at the heart of the radical faith (*Son* 87). This is what led him as a radical to discount the violent tendencies in many of his leftist comrades. Because he once followed the left’s narrative, he had believed that if society changed, the imposition of new ideas would smooth out the wrinkles of these human tendencies to evil. “In the eyes of radicals, society was not a reflection of the needs and desires of those who inhabited it, but an imposition on their natures that politics could change” (*Son* 88), thus the misunderstanding noted by Genovese and the indifference noted by Horowitz. Guided as the left has been by this blind spot in their thinking, they developed a narrative to explain life, society, and the future of man. Genovese and Horowitz came to believe a different narrative.

A narrative is a story, one with heroes and villains, victims and perpetrators, conflict and resolution. But one that we use to define our lives is more than a story; it is an explanation, a way of

understanding and fitting together the episodes and conflicts of life. Whether we are aware of it, we construct a narrative about our own lives. Despite post-modern assertions that there are no larger narratives or metanarratives, all of us construct some story that explains life and guides our decision making. Some scientists construct the story from the fabric of evolution: we are here by the processes of natural selection. Other scientists explain life strictly in terms of the chemical processes and reactions in the brain. Although I can't determine just how many people take it seriously, some believe that life from outer space provides the key to understanding who we are and how we came to be. The movie, *Men in Black*, was more of a spoof on that notion, and it certainly created a unique and funny narrative about the nature of reality.

There are perhaps as many personal stories as there are people. Our experiences are strung together to weave a fabric that means something to us. However, many of us don't consider the larger issues—Who am I? Where did I come from? What's wrong with the world? To delve into such questions plunges us into philosophy and theology, but these are questions that we cannot avoid. Horowitz and Genovese found that the left's narrative did not address these questions. The left of yesterday and the progressives of today mistakenly believe that government control of economic and social life will create a utopia where conflict will cease and equality will become a reality. It is a story rich with hope and expectation, but it never considers the capacity of human nature to do good or evil. In fact it has to leave out these elements because it has no valid explanation. Any philosophy or explanation that transcends the Marxist vision is considered evil to a true Marxist, but it is taken for granted that human nature fits with and will succumb to the dictates of its beliefs.

Horowitz identified several elements of the narrative of Marxism. The first part of the narrative is that Marxists are champions of the oppressed. They carry on a romance with the poor and meek of the world. They make themselves the great protagonist of the story, righting every wrong and standing against every injustice. The political agenda takes on an air of self-righteous crusading and becomes

paramount as Horowitz sees it. However, he points out what's missing, "There were people who had a *will* to evil that no amount of political enlightenment could overcome" (*Son* 272). His observations on the violent tendencies of the left and the tendency of many of his comrades to overlook, even ignore, the violence led him to probe a deeper into the human capacity for evil. Socialism was sometimes described as a secular religion that "lacked any notion of original sin" (*Son* 272).

Another part of the narrative dangled the inviting belief that the left's political agenda could create a paradise on earth. He calls this "the serpentine promise of the Left" (*Son* 415). Because of his background and Jewish upbringing, Horowitz began to sense that the spiritual dimension of humanity played a significant role that political programs could not address. He commented, "The entire unhappy story of Twentieth Century revolutions seemed to me encapsulated in the first chapters of Genesis, which provided as profound an insight into the human drama as I knew" (*Son* 414). Those chapters describe the attempt by humanity to seek to build the perfect society apart from God, to go it alone, so to speak. The promise of the Left to program a desired result in society came up dead against what he had observed in his own children: "There was something irreducible in human character itself that rebelled against efforts to direct it too completely. You could encourage children, set an example for them, provide them with opportunities and support. But you could not program them to a desired result" (*Son* 205). Thus the promise of utopia on earth could never be achieved by a political agenda that could do no more than hold out a promise.

Theologians have long recognized that heresies are not wrong because of what they assert; they are wrong because of what they exclude. Explanations that do not take into account relevant facts will always come to false conclusions. Thus the political descendants of Marx failed because they didn't sufficiently account for the full scope of human nature. That they have sought to see everyone as exactly the same as everyone else betrays not only common sense but a simple observation of people's activities, desires, and talents. Everything Marxist governments sought had foundations in this restricted

notion of equality. Some philosophies may have seen that every person has rights to life and liberty, but they are not founded on the idea that everyone has the same abilities and talents and should therefore be reduced to a life of exactly the same outcome. In theory the Marxist narrative projects a favorable outcome, but if George Orwell's *Animal Farm* was a true indication of what will happen in any society, even one determined to reduce everyone to the same level, the outcome will always be inequality. Some animals will always elevate themselves as being more equal than others.

Horowitz sought some way of explaining the complexities of human nature. The violence and injustices perpetrated in the name of progressive, leftist causes left him unable to reconcile his beliefs in their causes with a pervasive, gnawing sense that something else was wrong. What human beings did to one another could not be explained by his Marxist narrative, and in the preface to a collection of Horowitz' essays, *Left Illusions*, Jamie Glazov suggested that Horowitz came to realize that "social engineers could not reshape human nature" (*Illusions* xvii). In Horowitz' own words he said, "I pretty well realized even at that time that you couldn't sit everybody down and re-educate them, make them good parents and good citizens" (*Illusions* xvii). Human nature is just too complex to squeeze into a simple explanation and a simple solution. When he made his philosophical and social move from liberal circles to more politically conservative ones he commented, "What impressed me was the tolerance of the conservatives I knew for human faults and failings, including my own. Some conservatives were like the flinty puritans of liberal caricature, but most of my new acquaintances and political associates were not. Over time, their tolerance became intelligible to me. What made one a conservative was recognition of the human capacity for evil, or for just plain screwing up" (*Son* 430).

Eugene Genovese returned to the narrative learned in his youth by returning to the story of Christianity. David Horowitz sought meaning in the stories handed down by centuries of his Jewish tradition. Both religions contained the same stories defining the nature of human beings, where they came from, and what is wrong with them. The Hebrew and Christian Bible both contain the stories of

Creation (where we came from, and who we are), the fall (what is wrong with the world), and the promise of redemption (things can be fixed with God's help). Marxism never sufficiently accounted for, and mostly ignored, the evils perpetrated in the name of its own agenda. The decision by these men to adopt something that gave better explanations and things that at least provided them with some answers, if not always the solutions, that they needed to make sense of their lives and political journeys. The need to construct such a narrative or to adopt one that more fully explains the complexities of humanity is one of the lessons their lives can teach us.

INNER KEYS TO TRANSFORMATION

What I've provided in this essay is a collection of snapshots of their journey, not so much a moment frozen in time but a compilation of a lifetime of experiences captured in a several momentary frames. As previously explained their experiences with the violent tendencies of the left created a strong dissonance between their conscience and their moral compass, but those experiences had to be collected in an album over a lifetime. Change may have seemed abrupt at the time, but it didn't happen overnight. Moreover, even as the violence and blindness of the left provided them with a tipping point and "pig-food" experience, certain characteristics of their personalities chafed the more they tried to reconcile their beliefs with the behavior they saw. The dissonant chords produced by these contradictions actually resonated with something deep within them and in some ways provided the final key to unlock their transformation. For example, as David Horowitz remembered his feelings about "The Pledge of Allegiance," he recognized the stirring it created in him even as a child: "I can still feel the tremor of excitement elicited by the words *and justice for all*" (*Son 47*, italics in original). Perhaps it was these words that began to chafe against the unethical and unjust behavior of his Marxist allies when he could no longer justify their behavior. More likely his innate sense of justice finally woke up. Such feelings can only be denied at great cost to our humanity, and the mingling of his sense of "justice for all" with the false notions of equality and fairness espoused by his Marxist comrades is what brought about a

changed life for him. Such is the process of change for many people. Dissonant feelings about a way of life are brought on by a conscience that only awakens when a troubling event triggers it or there is an awareness of a great contradiction in one's belief system.

Eugene Genovese possessed a similar love for the notions of justice and truth. Ron Radosh wrote about his acquaintance with him after Genovese's death, "He had what Princeton's Robert E. George calls 'a passion for justice' and a complementary 'passion for truth'" (Radosh 15). Those passions drove him on numerous occasions to disagree with his fellow historians about who should or should not be allowed to be included in the historical society of which he was president. When his colleagues wanted to refuse entry to those who didn't accept the left's version of historical events, he challenged them. Ideology alone was not sufficient in his mind to refuse entry for people who had otherwise distinguished themselves by their accomplishments. He even admits in "The Question," though he still harbored a degree of antipathy for the political right, that both sides of the aisle have to account for atrocities. Had he been asked his own question by his political rivals, he claimed he "would probably tell them what I have always told my classes, 'Your side has had its mass murderers, and we have had ours'" (*Dissent* 372). Such a dedication to truth and justice caused him to experience the same dissonant chords as Horowitz. Change demanded the very honest appraisal of himself and his political allies that revealed to him the weaknesses of his beliefs.

For both men the dissonant sounds grew louder the more the left maintained its silence. As noted in previous sections, it was the blindness and silence of their colleagues on the left which summoned up their indignation and repulsion over their cherished beliefs. Because both men seemed to possess a sense of justice that transcended mere ideology, the dissonance finally left them at an impasse: either ignore and maintain their beliefs like their comrades or be honest and admit the failures of the Marxist system. For each man a critical mass had been reached, and it finally exploded when they could not intellectually live any longer with the contradictions.

A movement toward a changed life demands both a changed mind and changed affections. Though the idea goes against the stream of culture, our affections and feelings are determined by our intellectual beliefs. Our mind, in other words, controls our heart. This flips on its head notions like “falling in love” or “following our heart” as if we are compelled by some emotional force that captivates us and determines our activity. When we tell people to follow their heart when deciding what they want, it suggests the emotional or intuitive component in making decisions. As is apparent with Genovese and Horowitz, the change they experienced demanded first a change in thinking. Because their thinking had shaped what they loved, their affections and willingness to change lagged behind what their minds had come to acknowledge. This is one of the reasons it took many years for their lives to change even after they were intellectually convinced that their Marxist direction had failed them.

During the time Genovese had begun to wonder about the violence that accompanied Marxist states, he also acknowledged a salient point but asked a relevant question, “Yes, I know the atrocities committed by Christian; but where outside the Christian West did concepts of personal freedom and limits to state authority arise and flourish” (*Dissent* 388)? The idea stoked his passion for truth while even as an atheist he wrote those words. His determination to be truthful lead him to admit this despite so many of his fellow leftist’s failure to do the same. Their antipathy to religion, especially Christianity, was, and still is, a given on the political left. Genovese’ trajectory to admit that Christianity’s philosophy had value coupled with its description of the problem of human nature fueled his conscience even more. Many years of thinking about such things pushed him eventually to the point where he had to decide whether he would remain on the left’s side of the fence. These ideas continued their relentless pressure on his conscience.

All of David Horowitz’ experiences with violence and blindness had also led him on a journey to a changed life. The pressures on his conscience mounted as a result of several other things. One such pressure occurred when he and his friend Peter Collier attempted to confront the AIDS epidemic in San

Francisco in the early 1980s. In 1983 they wrote “The Origins of a Political Epidemic” (*Generation* 251) exposing the unwillingness of leaders of the gay community to admit that the gay lifestyle in the bath houses and practices of unsafe sex were the primary cause of the epidemic. The blindness of the left came into even sharper focus the more Horowitz and Collier studied the issue. They considered the gay leaders to be criminally negligent, and they noted how many of the opponents of the gay agenda were routinely intimidated into silence. Even one gay journalist who sought to expose the dangers of the bath houses, Randy Shilts, a reporter for the San Francisco Examiner, suffered from their attacks. “Shilts described an atmosphere of political intimidation on the gay community so thick that people were afraid to speak out” (Son 339). Shilts died from AIDS not long after that. The suffering imposed by this intimidation and silence cemented a shift for Horowitz to more conservative values that had been a long time brewing.

The early 1980s also saw the administration of President Ronald Reagan. Though Horowitz had voted for Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election, he began to appreciate and admire the staunch anti-communism of Reagan, who was incessantly reviled by the left. Many years of reflecting on the outcome of communist governments had finally taken their toll on Horowitz’ Marxist philosophy. His desire for “justice for all” drove him further and further away from the beliefs that he no longer felt possessed the ability to provide that. In 1984 he took one giant step away from the left: he voted for Reagan. He maintains that there are a number of other life experiences that influenced his nudge toward more conservative values, and the accumulation of such things bore fruit when he began consciously and publicly to espouse them.

The Nuts and Bolts of Transformation

Not only has the essence of how people change emerged before us, but the overwhelming reasons for Genovese’ and Horowitz’ change from left to right now stare us in the face. Returning to the Prodigal Son analogy we have uncovered the process as it has taken place in the lives of these two men.

Both experienced challenges to their philosophy of life; both had to reevaluate the truth of that way of life; both decided that they had erred. Genovese admitted it with characteristic bluntness, “I supported the communist movement and the Soviet Union because I was convinced of the moral as well as material superiority of socialism over capitalism—convinced that the socialist countries could and would reform themselves and end their political brutality while preserving socialism itself. I was wrong” (*Dissent* 388). Just as the Prodigal Son admitted that his father’s servants enjoyed even the basics of food and clothing that he lacked and decided to return home, Horowitz and Genovese, over time, made the jump to another way of life because their beliefs failed. Horowitz even described his move to more conservative values as “coming home” (*Son* 397).

Coupled with their experience of what I earlier called “pig-food syndrome” these two men also possessed the sense of justice, the search for truth, and the integrity to compare their beliefs to higher standards of truth and justice. The ability to assess their beliefs based on an honest appraisal of Marxism’s record of violence, the reality of human nature, and the left’s persistent blindness to its own weaknesses provided them with the foundation they needed to make a radical and, in their minds at least, necessary change.

The transformation for Eugene Genovese turned him from atheism to Christianity. He became a Roman Catholic. Time does not allow me to assess the role that his wife, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, played in his conversion. Suffice it to say her influence provided at least one more attraction to Christianity. Genovese had already come to view the influence of Christian ideas in a positive way despite living as an atheist for most of his life, and he could see that human nature demanded assistance in controlling its impulses for amassing power and committing acts of evil. As usual with those who break ranks with the left and its religion-bashing agenda, many of his colleagues assumed some sort of mental breakdown on his part. In essence he had become something they despised, and they could find no logical reason,

despite his best efforts to provide some, why anyone would turn to religion. Yet his transformation helped him put some of the puzzle of life together.

David Horowitz' transformation wasn't all that far removed from what Genovese did: he "got religion" by learning to take his Jewish heritage more seriously. He provides some interesting indications that this may have been coming in his autobiography. He recognized the parallels between Marxism and several of the Biblical narratives but came to the conclusion that the Marxists didn't really comprehend them. All they could do was seek to mimic them. It was these ancient stories passed on through centuries of Jewish tradition that began to make sense to him. He admits that his parents were more Marxist progressives than believing Jews, but the connection to the Jewish heritage remained. Once he had passed through the purifying fires of his experiences, he still had these things to fall back on. He states, "I am comfortable being a Diaspora Jew, both in this present struggle with the enemies of America and Israel, and beyond" ("Reflections" 6).

Eugene Genovese died in October of 2012. From the time of his conversion to the day he died, he could be seen at church every Sunday, and his movement from Marxism to a more conservative philosophy stands as a model of integrity and truth seeking. David Horowitz continues to fight on against the tide of leftist beliefs. His books and pamphlets continue to skewer the illusions of the left, and he maintains a staunch belief that he has found his way home.

Reading the Left

As a final note to the reader, I urge you to read the resources I have provided. Take up the challenge provided by these two men to change when you have seen the failure of your own way of life. For those of you who consider yourselves progressives, you have to realize that the repository of all that Genovese and Horowitz experienced can be found on the political left in this country. Think a little more deeply, for example, about why the left aligns itself with the dictators of the world (Stalin, Pol Pot, Castro, Chavez), believes that government should control your life (the totalitarian impulse), and

maintains a distinct aversion for religion (Christianity in particular). These are the same impulses toward violence, totalitarian control, and lack of conscience that drove both Genovese and Horowitz into the arms of a different philosophy. More often than not these impulses and behaviors are hidden under platitudes about income equality and fairness.

Most people are incredulous when they read about horrendous acts of violence, so just in case you find it difficult to believe that Marxist regimes are in fact capable of some of the most horrific crimes of the twentieth century, you will want to read *The Black Book of Communism* by Stephane Courtois. It is just one among many books available that provides excruciating detail about the violence that always accompanies the Marxist view. I would also recommend a thoroughly readable account of one professor's attempts to address the ideology of the left in his students, *Letters to a Young Progressive* by Mike S. Adams. Throw these and a good dose of the other material presented in this paper onto your reading list, and you just might be ready to follow Horowitz and Genovese on your own journey from left to right.

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