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**NEW TITLES**


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*History*

**THE RULING RACE:  
A History of American  
Slaveholders**  
by James Oakes  
Knopf, 1982  
307 pp. \$16.95

American slaveholders justified their "peculiar institution" with the paternalistic belief that men were born to their stations in life—or so runs the interpretation advanced by Eugene Genovese and other scholars. But according to Oakes, a Purdue historian, the average Southern farmer, who owned fewer than five slaves, experienced considerable moral discomfort. Though he considered slaveholding an inalienable right, he championed democracy and free-market commercialism and accepted the Founding Fathers' belief that "all men are created equal." Protestant evangelicalism, with its stress that everyone—white or black—was equal in God's sight, troubled the conscience of many a small farmer. A few slaveowners were driven by guilt to release their slaves. Some were convinced of their own damnation. Others claimed that God had entrusted blacks to the care of white men. Most farmers swallowed their moral scruples for the sake of material advancement. Success in the Southern economy (whose workings Oakes thoroughly details) was virtually impossible without slaves. The absolute number of slaveholders grew to 400,000 by the Civil War, though the percentage of slaveholding white families actually declined. As abolitionist sentiment was spreading in the North, a rapidly growing white population and a declining number of slaves were already threatening the Southern economy.

**THE MUSLIM  
DISCOVERY OF  
EUROPE**  
by Bernard Lewis  
Norton, 1982  
350 pp. \$19.95

Just after the turn of the 19th century, Halet Efendi, the Turkish ambassador to Paris, warned in a letter home that any Ottoman who praised Europe was a "spy," "an ass," or a Christian. Efendi was a man behind the times: By the 19th century, the Muslim world had recognized the superiority of Western