

# THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## NEW FOLKWAYS FOR OLD

*A Review of Several Recent Stimulating Books*

THE world crisis continues. A new epoch impends. Communism takes Russia. Ever more rigid Fascism grips Italy and Germany. The New Dealers of the United States opportunistically try to speed the way out of the depression. Little wonder that this is a period when many a social philosopher tries his hand at proposing some sort of Utopia. Little wonder that these Utopias offer very different ways of living in the era that lies ahead.

To our surprise we find Walter Lippman, author of the *Preface to Morals*, the most conservative of them all.<sup>1</sup> He apparently believes that capitalist economy will work its way out of the present dilemma. He proposes for the United States what he calls a "compensatory economy" or "free collectivism" in contrast with sovietism and fascism. In this movement the government will be forced to take an increasingly large hand in the affairs of men. When the people are too extravagant, the government will save; when they are too saving, it will spend; when there is too much unemployment, it will employ, and so on through the whole gamut of economic-social functions. Capitalism and private initiative have given America and England such a fine flowering that capitalism may be expected to stay. The New Deal therefore is justified and a really planned economy is waved gracefully out the window with other dreams of the social reformers. The Aristotelian mean has again demonstrated its usefulness. Lippman's Utopia becomes a controlled capitalistic economy.

<sup>1</sup>Walter Lippman, *The Method of Freedom*. New York: The Macmillan Company. Pp. 117. \$1.50.

When we turn to George Soule, who earlier gave us *A Planned Society*, we find him presenting the possible "coming American revolution" and proving to us that we may enjoy a revolution, since, indeed, many revolutions are bloodless and slow in their operation.<sup>2</sup> For Soule, capitalism has collapsed. True, it has collapsed in former depressions and rebuilt itself. It may do it again. This defeat seems more serious, however; and in spite of strenuous efforts of Hoover and now of Roosevelt to save it, the case looks different. The New Deal, now dealt and played, has strengthened the moneyed class at the expense of the un-moneyed. The NRA has served the capitalist group, and now the Blue Eagle is garrotted by those whose fortunes it recuperated. In this dilemma shall we turn to socialism, fascism, or communism? The author gives no direct answer, but believes he clearly sees a social revolution within a generation or so. Then he believes that "government by private profit-makers" will be at an end and that the "new society will consist of men and women in a new bond of comradeship setting forth on still another voyage to the unknown."

With an English background but with a clear understanding of American history and economics, Harold Laski<sup>3</sup> in his lectures at the University of North Carolina is equally sure with Soule that "capitalist democracy" is doomed. The world has been disillusioned. It has sought wealth as a goal, found it, and lost it. *Laissez faire* has led to great market expansion, this to imperialism, and this in turn to a new pro-

<sup>2</sup>George Soule, *The Coming American Revolution*. New York: The Macmillan Company. Pp. 314. \$2.50.

<sup>3</sup>Harold Laski, *Democracy in Crisis*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: U. of N. C. Press. Pp. 267. \$1.50.



tective, militant nationalism. Representative institutions are in decay. The legislative and judicial branches of government are controlled by the capitalistic philosophy of life. The answer is not, as Lippman thinks, the remaking of capitalism and capitalistic democracy. It is socialism. Indeed Laski looks to the possibility of the "abrogation of the sovereign and national state" and the transference of its functions to an international control, at least where these functions—like tariff, currency, migration and so forth—are international in bearing. Socialist transformation will be difficult unless the socialist has persuaded the citizenry in advance that his rule is "inevitable and legitimate." Socialism, like Christianity in an earlier era, can no longer be suppressed. Man must be freed in the industrial relation as well as in the political. The profit-making motive must go before a true democracy can develop. At that, it will be very much better if the transition to socialism can come gradually and without violence.

The atmosphere changes when one turns to Troy J. Cauley's new book,<sup>4</sup> which breathes of cotton fields and the hard conditions of the soil in those great areas where in the past few years the tiller's reward has been a bare existence. He points out that government and education have conspired to enable the farmer to greatly increase his crop with the result that over-production has sent his present income tumbling below that of 1920. In general agreement with the Southern group of authors of *I'll Take My Stand*, Cauley finds that capitalism has failed the farmer. It has given him expensive interests. He has falsely worshipped the gods of money and wealth. What he needs is a Ford-less Utopia, a many-crop small farm, and a chance, relatively free from taxation, to work out his own problem.

<sup>4</sup>Troy J. Cauley, *Agrarianism*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: U. of N. C. Press. Pp. 211. \$1.50.

The New Deal, with its effort to bolster up a scarcity economy, may retard the inevitable change that is going on, but it can only retard it. Tariffs and the other ills of the capitalist, as well as industrial economy, must be so remade as to make farming possible. The old plantation and the corporate farm as well as non-resident ownership may, if need be, be taxed out of existence in order that the tillable land may be put in the hands of small land-owners who will learn to be self-sufficient. Agrarianism, at least for the rural sections, takes its place among possible solutions of the present crisis along with capitalism and socialism.

To round out the picture, let us note the concept of John Dewey in his yet unpublished lectures on the Page Barbour Foundation at the University of Virginia. Without committing himself to any of the -isms already proposed, we find his cure is liberalism. Liberalism has failed in the past because its advocates split between the *laissez faire* notion and the notion of collectivistic action. True liberalism will come as "experimental, cooperative intelligence" is brought to bear upon social problems, as it has been brought to bear upon nature in the phenomenal conquest of science. Violence and force must give way to the reign of intelligence. In this significant suggestion one sees the possibility that, little as we want revolution, it may be on us before so long unless the various Utopians sink their differences in the melting-pot of calm, deliberative, co-operative discussion, with the narrow interests of politics, of sectionalism, and of "vested interest" thrown into the discard.

W. J. GIFFORD

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"What makes you think you'll be a success in college?"

"I always beat the reading time in *Liberty*."