

C O M M U N I C A T I O N

Why One Woman Supports
La Follette

THE reasons for voting for any candidate are always difficult enough to formulate. But when one is a bird of no particular feather, as I am, shaping an answer to the voter's dilemma becomes a painful process of searching around in one's mind, to find the fragments of mental processes lying there, in order to set them up and make them look like orderly, self-conscious reasons. Some of this *ex post facto* reasoning even a particular bird may do and no doubt does. But if he be a professional "radical," a Leaguer à outrance, a "wet" or a "dry"—to say nothing of party Republicans and Democrats—he has at least some criteria ready to hand around which all his peripheral vagueness may sooner or later collect.

None of these helps have I. And being also a woman, I am without a single political habit or tradition, not even the pull of historical perspective, to fall back on. I know men whose considered judgment tells them to refrain from voting this year because there are no issues at stake of sufficient importance. There's also my friend who after giving the matter careful thought has planned to go hunting over election day. I know women, to be sure, who are loyal working Republicans or Democrats or self-styled Progressives. But I am what a woman voter may logically be expected to be, from her background and training and too-recent education, as shorn of pre-election ties as a new-born lamb.

And yet I have a vote.

One of the first things which brings me to La Follette is that I find I cannot vote for either Coolidge or Davis. Because I am a free-will voter, the reasons why are more relevant to my final choice than if I had a *parti pris*. What I call "personal" reasons figure rather prominently in these—a fact for which I have no apology, holding that they form some part of every voter's response to a candidate, legitimately enough, provided they are not carried to an extreme. We all know the woman who objects to a particular candidate's face, and I know one who thinks no lady could vote for a man named "Al" who is known to be a "wet."

If anything had been needed to strengthen an instinctive reluctance to follow Mr. Coolidge, the gradual revelation which the investigations last spring afforded of him would have been enough. For it was then borne in upon me slowly that the disclosures aroused no shock or surprise or burning moral indignation in the President. It was evident that he meant to dissociate himself from them as effectively as possible, as he and his spokesman did by constant reminders that he was not responsible for the appointments of the previous administration and by blanket announcement that no evil-doer should go unpunished—but that he would act so as to aid the speedy fading out of public memory, in pursuance of his policy of "getting by" by saying nothing. He was one of the first to minimize the scandals and so, instead of sharpening the public sense of what constitutes high character in public office, actually increased public indifference to it. This willingness to stifle moral sensitiveness for ends

shrewdly calculated in advance filled me with cumulative distrust. Unless my interpretation is wrong—and every voter is entitled to his own interpretation of the public acts of public men—I cannot see how I am to feel any other way. As for Mr. Coolidge's general outlook on life, his constant harping on "economy at home and abroad," and the dreary predominance of the small thrifty, New England virtues make me feel, though a Puritan off-shoot myself, spiritually alien to the movement which surrounds and is determined to admire and extol the President.

Mr. Davis meant nothing to me when nominated but an agreeable public figure with no salient features to attract or annoy. His speeches have left me in this initial apathy. None of his campaign views sound like his own warm familiar convictions. Even the indignation with which in his acceptance speech he clothed his comments on Republican corruption, sounded to me like heat generated for the occasion. In the fight which is being waged in certain quarters over the question whether or not Mr. Davis is a liberal, I find myself heartily with the sceptics. Mr. Davis's psychology seems to me a good deal like that of the small boy as Christmas approaches. The reasons which my friends give for voting for him—that he will "take us into the League," that he is a gentleman at last, that he uses such good English, that he is a very distinguished lawyer, that they cannot vote for La Follette—none of these moves me out of the direction into which I am settling with more and more ease as time progresses. Mr. Davis by his speeches reveals himself a person with a singularly "private" point of view, considering his rather many years in public life—a man who does not like to do his thinking in terms of the many rather than of the few, but would prefer to return to the comfortable narrowness of a private life, where he may indulge his likes and prejudices without stopping to care what anybody thinks.

In contrast to the stultification of one candidate and the unconvincing tepidity of the other, the concreteness of Mr. La Follette makes a clear appeal. He stands for definite ideas and practical applications of ideas to institutions. I may not "like" all of them. Some of them I do not understand and if they were explained to me would understand only as much as I were told—not enough to make my judgment worth anything. But I can understand what he has done in Wisconsin, and how. And I can grasp the implications behind the fact that so many of the legislative proposals presented to Republican conventions by La Follette and his followers in years past, and rejected by them, have since become law.

All this definiteness reveals an outlook that I like. *This* candidate has spent his life for causes in which he has believed. *There* is the record for anyone to read. Moreover, I believe the impetus behind his life has been devotion to causes and not ambition for selfish ends. If pressed, I could give reasons for thinking so, but the explanation is probably deeper than reasons. I have so often seen the same set of facts produce fundamentally opposite judgments in men that I have come to believe opinion is in the last analysis as inexplicable as instinct.

I like Mr. La Follette's "pacifism." It seems to me, a pacifist myself since the last war, a brave and clear-

sighted thing to have protested against our going into that war. No one suggests that he was an obstructionist after we went in, and not even the militarists suggest that it is unpatriotic to protest against war. When then, I should like to ask, is it pertinent to protest against a particular war, if not when a nation is pausing on the brink of it?

It is my interest in the future prospects of peace which leads me to think Mr. La Follette has a more fundamental grasp of international relations than either of the other candidates. Organization and machinery are vital to peace, but themselves depend upon a change in the motives which move nations to war. Therefore Mr. La Follette's long fight to curb the exploitation of the smaller nations of Latin America gives me hope that his method of furthering international coöperation will be one I can trust. His scepticism of the League does not trouble me because I partly share it. Moreover I do not believe any President can keep the United States out of the League if the people preponderatingly want to go in. All candidates, for the matter of that, stand on the Democratic platform.

Is he trying to "undermine the Constitution?" I do not know. But even a layman, or worse still a laywoman, can understand that the Constitution is a matter of interpretation, like the Bible. The interpretations are made by nine men, or rather, it may be, by five of the nine. Therefore what becomes sacrosanct and cannot

thereafter be touched forever and ever is but the opinion of one man, who happens to agree with one group of four of his brethren rather than with the other four. After I have thought this far, it does not seem so terribly dangerous to change the Constitution. The cries of "dangerous radical," "revolutionary," "wild man," which are hurled into the air do not frighten me, for I have a comfortable conviction which fortifies me against social-economic alarms. It is that revolutions, when they come, are produced by masses rather than by individuals, and its corollary, that there are enough forces of resistance in our world at least, to keep any revolutionary movement from going too fast. This may be mere phlegm, or the compensating optimism of one who is not a property-owner.

As I look back over this analysis of my voter's mind, I see that what I have said is substantially this: That I choose La Follette because he has concreteness, and because I feel he is, of the three candidates, the most generous-minded and unfettered—if the word weren't so cheap I should say, to be short-handed, the most democratic.

Thin and vague, and yet—I recall to mind some of the arguments of my intellectual friends, reasons to them apparently conclusive. And I feel less humble.

PHYLLIS MACDONALD.

Cambridge, Mass.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

What the A. A. U. P. is for

SIR: The review, published under the caption A Professorial Fiasco in the New Republic of May 28, on the report of a committee of the American Association of University Professors on the dismissal of seven professors from the University of Tennessee, rests in some of its essential parts on a serious misconception of the functions of the Association which inadvertently has led the New Republic to an erroneous interpretation of the attitude of the committee.

The objects of the Association are stated as follows: "To facilitate a more effective coöperation among teachers and investigators in universities and colleges and in professional schools of similar grade for the promotion of the interests of higher education and research, and in general to increase the usefulness and advance the standards and ideals of the profession."

The Association is a professional organization similar to the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association.

The function of the Association is to lead the way in raising our colleges and universities to the highest levels of efficiency in the diffusion and promotion of knowledge for the intellectual and material welfare of mankind. To this end its activities cover a vast field, which it has but begun to invade. When the foundations of an institution are shaken, as in the case of the University of Tennessee, it is important, as the New Republic insists, to know what it all means. To this end the Association undertakes to establish and publish the facts, with the coöperation of the faculty and of the administration. Neither is investigated in a prejudicial sense. We have no quarrel with administrations. The facts should speak for themselves. The New Republic's terse indictment of the policies of the University of Tennessee disproves the charge that the report lacked the information to which the public is entitled. Even if the New Republic had to read between the lines, it did not find it difficult to interpret the facts.

A little further reading of the lines of the report, not between them, I hope will convince the New Republic that the Association does not grant that an institution can avoid its obligations of considerate treatment to an individual professor by pleading its policy of making appointments only from year to year, although it may have the law on its side. Universities are the nurseries of ethics, not of technicalities.

It is difficult to reconcile the New Republic's statement that the Association is interested not in universities, etc., but in the professorial caste, as defined only by rules of tenure with the fact that the Association is constantly investigating problems relating to the high mission of institutions of learning, etc., as set forth in its constitution and that it has published notable contributions in this field.

The Tennessee report is the report of a committee. It was published for the information of the members of the American Association of University Professors, and of the public, and will be considered by the Association as a whole at the annual meeting to be held in December at Washington.

We welcome criticism and appreciate the interest shown.

A. O. LEUSCHNER,

President, American Association of University Professors.
Berkeley, Cal.

[We are very glad to be able to give to our readers the foregoing reply of the President of the American Association of University Professors to our editorial on the Tennessee case; particularly so in view of the fact that circumstances in no way connected with the case prevented the publication last June of any correspondence, favorable or unfavorable, relating to that editorial. The New Republic is well aware of the excellent work done by the Association in the past, and has often mentioned it with editorial approval. On October 1, 1915, commenting on the investigation of the University of Utah, we wrote: "As a piece of scholarly investigation and judicial analysis, the report is a masterpiece. The work is executed with the utmost impartiality and reserve, yet the reader is never left in the least doubt as to the bearing of the evidence. . . . If the Professors' Association lives up to the promise of this report, we shall have proceeded a long way on the road toward a sane and definite resolution of the problem of academic freedom." The report on the University of Tennessee failed to do so. A comparison of the text of that report with the text of our editorial will reveal a difference of emphasis which, whatever the information contained in the report, makes that document a weak description of a deplorable condition. It seemed to us important to note that fact, the more so because of our approval of the purposes and past performances of the Association.—THE EDITORS.]

The A. P. in Paris

SIR: Your correspondent from Ithaca, who attacked the Associated Press for a blunder in translation in connection with the winner of the Filene Peace Prize, evidently knows little about the business of gathering news, or he would be more tolerant; and nothing about the personnel of the Associated Press abroad, and especially in Paris, or he would not make such a grotesque misstatement.

A hundred and one separate items come daily over the desk of the Associated Press correspondent and of other correspondents of agencies and individual newspapers in a capital like Paris. It would be physically impossible for any man, no matter how clever, to supervise personally all the translations and condensations of the daily flash news except in items of primary news interest. Like every one else in any other business in the world subordinates have to be depended upon for translation and condensing cable news. Those who do this work under high pressure and it is remarkable how well they do their work. The blunders are few and far between, and it is unfair to impute general ignorance or carelessness to a great news service because of a blunder that any one might make. In fact, one who knows French well might easily make it in translating under pressure.

The statement of your correspondent that "The A. P. recruits its purveyors of news among people totally ignorant of the country on which they are supposed to be specialists" is false. I have had the privilege of knowing A. P. correspondents and their work during fifteen years of service in different parts of the world as a foreign correspondent. I am especially familiar with the situation in Paris. The A. P. correspondents everywhere are trained and carefully selected men whose work is beyond praise. In Paris the correspondent is Elmer Roberts, who has been constantly on the job in Paris, after service in Berlin and elsewhere in Europe, for fourteen years, and whose work is regarded by the French government and by his colleagues, French and foreign, as unrivalled for its accuracy, its insight, its sense of values, and its craftsmanship.

HERBERT ADAMS GIBBONS.

Princeton, N. J.

The Four Great Crimes

SIR: It is to be hoped that the New Republic has no intention of joining the conspiracy of silence by failing to comment in its usual vigorous fashion upon some of the latest pronouncements of the candidate it is supporting. May I call your attention to the enclosed report of a recent speech by Senator La Follette at Newark, N. J., and request full editorial explanation of the muddle-headedness exhibited in his account of the "four great crimes?"

After all, the New Republic knows something of credit and the business cycle, of the relation between national borrowing and inflation, of the influence of a fall in the value of money on profits, and of the just apportionment of responsibility for land speculation in the agricultural states. I seem to recall an ingenious and moderately plausible rationalization by the New Republic of the Progressive plank referring to credit and the Federal Reserve System. The New Republic knows, in short, that this account of the "four great crimes" shows the worst sort of economic ignorance, equalling and, I believe, possibly surpassing the ignorance on the tariff exhibited by Mr. Coolidge.

Your attention is likewise called to the enclosed editorial from the New York Times of October 8 which discusses the Senator's "gigantic bribes" of pensions, bonus, etc. One sentence at least from this editorial should win your unqualified assent: "If anybody but a professed idealist had made these proposals, they would have been condemned as unblushing and debauching bids for votes." The crusade for the New Republic to lead is one against special privilege and class grants to whomsoever offered and not one which aims at substituting wholesale lower middle class or proletarian favors for the plutocratic variety to which we have been accustomed.

CHRISTOPHER ROBERTS.

Cambridge, Mass.

[The four great crimes to which Mr. La Follette called attention in his Newark speech were those of "depreciating the price of Liberty bonds and forcing weak holders to sell them at a loss, of seeking in 1920 to take advantage of the industrial depression to destroy organized labor, of utilizing the same de-

pression to increase the monopolistic control of industry, and finally of destroying the prosperity of agriculture, through a conspiracy of the banking agencies of the country." The New Republic has repeatedly declared that it does not believe that the economic losses and sufferings emphasized by Mr. La Follette were caused by a conspiracy of banking or any other groups, but it does believe that some of this undesirable and undeserved suffering would have been avoided if the industrial and financial policy of the country had been dictated by people who were as solicitous of popular economic welfare as they were of their own private and group interests.

As to Mr. La Follette's stand in favor of the bonus, we take it to be a mistake, but it is not an "unblushing and debauching bid for votes." He has from the beginning sincerely believed that the enlisted men were entitled to some additional compensation from a government which permitted so many of the men who did not enlist to reap substantial rewards from the labors, the dangers, the anguish and the sacrifices of their fellow countrymen.—THE EDITORS.]

The Vanishing Voter

SIR: Messrs. Schlesinger and Eriksson recently stated in your columns that the basic influences accounting for the "vanishing voter" were the lessening differences between the parties and the increasing complexity of modern life. Any person who has watched recent American elections closely will agree that these factors have made important additions to the numbers of the non-voters, but that they are "basic influences" or new tendencies is another matter. In his first edition of *The American Commonwealth*, in 1888, Bryce commented upon the sameness of the two major American parties. A study of the ratio of active to eligible voters in the various states at different elections shows that it was not so much a lack of issues as it was a lack of competition between the two major parties that lead to a falling off of the vote. In the "peak" elections of the seventies and eighties, the balance between the two major parties was a very even one. Some allowance was made by the writers for the apathy of the voters in the one-party states in the South, but nothing was said about the inertia of the voters in such states as Pennsylvania and Vermont. The development of one party states in the North as well as in the South and the overwhelming preponderance of power held by the Republicans in some of the elections since 1896 are factors that the writers overlooked. In the alarming election of 1920 the voters in some of the "doubtful" Northern states showed few signs of "vanishing." In the state of Indiana, for instance, 75 percent of all the adult citizens voted. If allowance is made for the factor of woman suffrage, the ratio of eligible voters that turned out in this state in 1920 would certainly meet the objective test of efficient voting set up by the authors.

Some of the "minor" factors enumerated by Messrs. Schlesinger and Eriksson were: the complexity of the American election system, the mobility of the population, and the newness of woman suffrage. The reader was not allowed to enter the inner chamber where the significance of these factors was evaluated. The lack of proper safeguards to the ballot prior to 1890 may partly account for the hugeness of the vote that was cast in the seventies and eighties. On the other hand, the burdensomeness of the personal registration systems now in operation in some localities is beyond question an important cause of non-voting. Furthermore, the class of absentee voters has been increased by the growing efficiency of the means of transportation. Regarding the failure of many women to exercise the suffrage there can be little doubt. A recent study of non-voting in Chicago undertaken by Professor Merriam and myself shows something about the quantitative importance of these factors. An analysis of the reasons for not voting given by six thousand non-voters interviewed revealed the fact that physical difficulties, administrative obstacles, and disbelief in woman's voting accounted for one-half of the abstentions.

The purpose of this letter is not to minimize the importance of the problem discussed in your columns, but rather to point out another line of attack. Devices of a mechanical nature would effect but would not completely alter the present situation. A system of education is needed in the social sciences which will enable the great mass of the electorate to depend more upon judgment and less upon tradition in making up their election day choices.

HAROLD F. GOSNELL.

Chicago, Ill.

With Benefit of Fiction

The Philosophy of "As If," by Hans Vaihinger, translated by C. K. Ogden. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$7.50.

TRUTH, we have been told again and again by the philosophers, is the object of all thinking. But is it? Thinking is part of living. It would be strange indeed if the object and the reward of thinking were at odds with the necessities of life. A broader definition must take account of the contribution of thinking to living: the object of thinking is to facilitate living. This does not mean that whatever does so is true; but it may mean that any thinking which safeguards or enhances life is successful thinking, to which questions of truth are quite subordinate.

Indeed, that is precisely the contention of this book. Vaihinger's idea, at bottom as simple as it is startling, is that many of the most prominent and fundamental conceptions of human thought are consciously false. As conceptions they have a meaning and a value; but the things they represent do not exist. Nobody supposes that they exist. They are deliberate fabrications which men employ to facilitate their other dealings with actual reality. Vaihinger does not mean hypotheses. Neither does he mean myths. He means acknowledged falsehood. When he insists that far off, divine events are fictions in the minds of thinking people he intends to say not that they are guesses at what may be true, nor that they are legends of dubious though perhaps convincing authenticity, but that they are not true at all even in the minds that hold them. They are consciously imaginative constructs in a region of speculation that is known to be beyond the power of the intellect to establish any sort of truth. The hypothesis is a picture, formulated upon scanty data, perhaps, by constructive imagination, yet intended as the closest approximation of actuality that is possible under the circumstances. If it proves out, it will take its place among the "facts" as a true picture of genuine reality. A myth is a traditional account of certain events no longer subject to verification. But here again its character is determined by the fact that some people take it to be factually true. Fiction, the "als ob," is quite different. It is not a guess at the unknown. The thinker who employs it has no expectation of bringing it to verification. On the contrary, he intends it as an artifice, an intellectual scaffolding that will never solidify into masonry however invaluable it may be in all the building operations that go on in its vicinity.

The fictions which Vaihinger is aiming at are, of course, the sublime make-believes of religion and philosophy. Those matters of faith, about which human thinking has always turned as upon an axis, are myths in the minds of many people. For some they may even seem to be hypotheses. But their most persistent definition has been in terms of faith. Now faith, the belief in things "which you know ain't so," is precisely the artifice of "als ob." It is not a picture of the actual; it is a representation of the necessary. Logically, this discrimination is very simple. Any irrational number illustrates it perfectly. Thus a moment's reflection will reveal to anyone that the number zero (let alone infinity, or the square root of minus one) is a different sort of figure from three or quintillian. Those numbers can be

reached by counting physical objects. Not so zero; it appears only through calculation, and there as an artificial entity, like the body of a corporation. For that purpose its meaning is clear; yet as a designation applying to actual objects it must always remain hopelessly absurd. "The milkmaid whistled as she milked her zero cows!" The very absence from the language of the ordinal corresponding to zero (as, third, second, first, "zeroth") shows that our habits, more discriminating than intelligence, have recognized it as a mathematical "as if."

This may seem, for an instant, an undignified interpretation of the highest attainments of the human spirit. But the theory of fiction is as serious as the conceptions with which it deals, and those are, primarily, the "ultimate realities" which mark the furthest excursions of the mind into the region beyond the finite world of material events. The dogmas of the faithful are many and various. Throughout all the flux of human civilization a constant succession of Ultimates has moved unbroken, each claiming to be the final truth and none substantiating the claim except by the internal evidence each, presumably, contains of its own superior reasonableness or authenticity. To this panorama of ultimate realities Vaihinger would apply the philosophy of "als ob" like a chemical solvent. The reaction is immediate. Any theory of metaphysical (or theological) ultimates proves out at once as a "fictional construct." Among the unenlightened matters of faith may become confused with matters of fact. Vaihinger calls particular attention to the historical metamorphosis that overtakes any philosophy when it becomes widely diffused. Beginning as an intellectual artifice of the enlightened it gradually becomes a legend among illiterates. To the poet the gods are an aid to poesy; to the vulgar they are matters of fact just beyond the reach of immediate verification but no different in essence from any clod.

The theory of the "as if" is exciting enough in itself. But its close resemblance to certain other notions that have been reshaping contemporary thought makes it doubly interesting. This connection between fiction and mythology suggests one affinity. Another one is the unconscious make-believe that psycho-analysis has revealed. The conscious fiction which Vaihinger proposes looks like a new member of a familiar family.

Indeed, we are not wholly unacquainted with it in its own proper garb. The "als ob" is a special case of a general logical theory better known in the United States than in Germany, the "instrumental logic" of the pragmatists. Vaihinger has worked out a special interpretation of the more than rational constructions in which philosophy and theology abound; pragmatism has developed a complete account of the thinking process and a general conception of truth in which the "als ob" takes its place. Says Vaihinger, conscious fiction is not factually true, though it is valuable and significant in human life. Says pragmatism, no truth is true except in relation to the part it plays in human life. Vaihinger has made a most penetrating discrimination between factual truth and, to supply a term, inspirational truth. James and Dewey have exhibited truth not in two colors but in all the shades of the spectrum. The value of Vaihinger's work lies in its significance as supplementary to these other studies in the fictions by which men live. Its chief deficiency is that it has not recognized relationship.

C. E. AYRES.