

About That Guide to Socialism

directors of instruction spent the morning sessions of their annual conference in further revisions. From June 15 through July 17, 1942, two other groups of elementary teachers, supervisors and principals still further revised the materials. Beyond this, the general plans for the revision were discussed with a consultant from Teachers College of Columbia University. A staff of three women was put in charge of "the editorial work," and the director of instruction, Dr. George Oliver, was given general supervision of the work.

And nobody ever got around to reading Section V, headed "Bases of the Course of Study"?

If that is the Department of Education's story, that the material from 1930 was simply picked up verbatim and pasted into the 1943 revision, without so much as a second look by anybody, the Department of Education can have that story. It tells a good deal about the State Department of Education.

But in truth, we are not much concerned whether the sections quoted in *extenso* at right were written in 1930, or in 1943. The remarkable fact is that they were published in May, 1943, under the auspices of the State Department of Education, as an official guide for teaching in the elementary grades; the further remarkable fact is that the department, from that day to this, has never taken a single affirmative step toward correcting the flagrant Socialist bias in some of this material. It has issued no amplifying bulletins. It never has recalled the work. Though the volume is not "in circulation," the clear assumption is that the volume is still in use; and until it is replaced or officially withdrawn, it remains the official expression of the State Department of Education.

The volume makes clear, on page 497, that the material quoted at right is no

casual compilation of objectives. These amazing "understandings" are solemnly declared to represent *the point of view* and the *aims of education* for Virginia schools. And clearly, the "understandings" set forth in Section V are exactly in line with material elsewhere in the 553-page volume.

For example, one finds on page 158 that among the understandings "sixth grade children should develop" is an understanding that "mass production increases the wealth of the few." Sixth graders are told to "locate on a map the large government dams and discuss their social and industrial benefits." They are not asked to locate hydroelectric dams or power plants built by private capital. Sixth graders are asked to "discuss why we should respect all kinds of labor and the people who carry on the work," and surely this is an admirable point for discussion; but nowhere is it suggested that employers or investors might be respected also. It also is suggested that sixth graders contemplate "the results of regimentation of masses of people, as in punching time clocks, and piece work in factories." In a discussion of safety, sixth graders are given another happy aspect of industrial life: Many children, they are told, "have seen parents and older brothers and sisters brought home from factories and mines where they had been injured by machinery."

Seventh graders also get the treatment. They should "develop an understanding," the teachers are advised, that "man's tendency to appropriate the products of science and invention for large personal fortunes has necessitated certain governmental controls." They should understand that "regulation is necessary to protect society from the evils of unequal distribution of social income." The seventh graders are told that "governmental and social organizations provide for

health and education." They are asked to collect data "showing how governmental control has decreased the death rate caused by certain diseases, such as typhoid, diphtheria, and smallpox," but there is nowhere any suggestion that private medical research has played any part in this.

Most of this expensively produced publication, to be sure, is not directly concerned with considerations of economics and governmental philosophy. For the most part, it contains suggestions on elementary teaching and recommendations for a bewildering variety of pupil activities. One wonders, in passing, how the youngsters ever find time to read, spell, or learn mathematics as they rush through problems in "How Can We Make and Keep Friends?", "How Can We Practice Democratic Principles in Our Daily Living?", and "How Can We Become Worthy Members of the Home?" (Sample answer for the last one: "Study ways or rearranging the furniture.") But at countless points throughout this proliferate "suggestive" guide, *somebody* with a pencil in this chicken pot pie seized upon opportunities to advance statism and to smear private capital.

Governor Stanley is exactly right in asking the State Board of Education to run down the authorship of these statements. Goodness knows the author is free to espouse socialism to his heart's content—but on his own time; when Socialist propaganda is slipped into an official State publication, bearing the seal of the Commonwealth on the cover, it is something else entirely. We hope Mr. Stanley also will discuss with the State board an improved procedure for the review of official manuscripts before they go to press. If this unbelievable business happened once, it can happen again—and once is entirely too often in a State as wedded to the free enterprise system as Virginia.