

## History Teachers' Forum

### INTELLIGENCE *v.* BLIND FORCES

WILLIAM O. LYNCH

The assertion has often been made in recent years that the development of political ideas as a basis for meeting economic and social needs has not kept pace with economic advancement. There is some truth in the assertion, but there is more that should be added. Students of history, government, and society should, of course, try to keep up with a changing world. This does not mean that all students in these fields should be expected to understand the fundamental problems of man's progress. It can only mean that among such students, there should appear, from time to time, seers who can point out the methods that should be employed and the needed modifications in political and social machinery. Such thinkers do appear, but their contributions go largely unheeded in a world where success means the accumulation of capital.

A guiding idea in modern economic affairs is that any one may try any newly invented method, process or machine. If the use of the method, process or machine increases the income of the individuals, firms, or corporations concerned, it is pronounced good, the assumption being that it must therefore be beneficial to all society. Social and political agencies must then adapt themselves to whatever follows the changes that take place in the economic world or be regarded as barriers to progress.

The real question relates to the soundness of the assumption that all newly invented methods, processes, or machines that make for greater income to the capitalists, large or small, who use them, are blessings to the people as a whole. As long as this assumption goes unchallenged, there is little that students of history, government, and society can do save trail along. If whatever is, is right, then progress or decadence comes whether we will or no, and anything that happens must contribute to the natural trends of the period.

On the whole, students and teachers in the field of social studies have done remarkably well. They have searched for the truth, they have faced the facts and have tried to draw honest and sound conclusions. Those who have dealt with mature students have sent many of them into the world with inquiring, open minds, only to see most of them quickly suc-

cumb to the powerful currents of accepted belief in the realms of economic activity. Even so, it must be true that inquiring, open minds are, or will some day become, the highest assets to struggling humanity. Those who seek for truths, the application of which will enable the peoples of this modern era to rise to higher levels, must never become discouraged. It seems as certain as anything can be that some time they will come into their own—that the peoples of the earth will heed their teachings and not permit blind forces to control.