

possible harm in them? Or rather, conceived as cathartic agents, no possible good in them, no passion from which they would help to deliver the Greeks? It hardly seems possible to think he was so blind when we think of him sitting before Plato for the twenty years of his young manhood, and hearing Plato agitating himself over poetic performances of all kinds. He must have come to the conclusion that the passion of lyric poetry, the lyricism of it, was either dangerous to citizens or not dangerous; and that, if dangerous, it would best be handled by the liberal provision of lyric poetry.

But what was this lyricism? Plato had no such word. The passion behind the lyric poem is the pure passion of imitation; that is all that Plato can say about it, but from one disapproving it that is enough. Poets and their audiences imitated persons, and then the art was tragedy, or comedy, or epic. Or they imitated things, even; they indulged in the most unbecoming raptures of sympathy; not only with the prince and the shepherd, but with the mountain and the sea, the sheep, the olive tree, and the nightingale. Then the art was the lyric. It may have looked like the last abdication of human dignity; *mimesis* in its most promiscuous and irresponsible application.

We come then to the general doctrine of *mimesis*; the passion or impulse that lies behind the very purest forms of art when no other impulses are discoverable there. There could not be a topic more important in the re-examination of aesthetic theory; but its consideration must be postponed until a later article.

American Review

v.5

"I'll Take My Stand":
A History

1935

DONALD DAVIDSON

IN the autumn of 1930 I was one of twelve Southerners who made an avowal of their concern for the destiny of the South. This avowal took the form of a book of essays, preceded by a statement of principles, the whole under the title: *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*. For certain obvious reasons it seems proper to review the origin and history of this adventure in social criticism. Among those reasons is the desire — I trust, a pardonable one — to have one true account of the book's history appear as a matter of record. It is with this purpose that I now write. But it should be understood that my expression is not the result of any new and systematic collaboration by the twelve original contributors. I am depending upon my own memory and am giving my own interpretation. When I use the first person plural, I do so for convenience only, and no presumption is intended.

In publishing *I'll Take My Stand* we were hardly so aspiring as to look for a great deal of support outside the South; but within our own section we took for granted that we might speak as Southerners. We thought that our fellow-Southerners would grasp without laborious explanation the terms of our approach to Southern problems; and that the argument, which was certain to follow, would proceed within

a range of assumptions understood and accepted by all. We welcomed the argument, since we felt that all parties would benefit by a free public discussion, of a sort unknown in the South since antebellum days. Such a discussion has taken place.

Yet with due respect to the able critics, whether of South or North, who have praised or blamed, seriously or jokingly, I beg leave to point out that the discussion of *I'll Take My Stand*, although it has continued briskly over a period of nearly five years, has been somewhat less profitable than it might have been, because the contending parties have too often argued in different terms. So far as the South was concerned, we were not altogether right in assuming that we could speak as Southerners to Southerners. For all that some of our critics and we had in common in the way of premises, we might as well have been addressing Mr. Henry Ford or Mr. Granville Hicks. No doubt we should have spared ourselves many surprises if we had corrected our manuscripts accordingly. But let that pass! Between these critics and ourselves is a gap of misunderstanding which in times like these ought not to be left yawning.

To our critics (if I may judge by their pronouncements), industrialism in 1930 was a foregone conclusion, an impregnable system moving inexorably on a principle of economic determinism and already dominating the United States and the South. It had evils, which might be softened by humanitarian devices; but its possibilities for good outbalanced the evil. Mr. Gerald Johnson, for one, spoke of "a glittering civilization" that ought to arise in an industrialized South. It is easy to imagine the pictures in his mind

of a wealthy, urbanized South, plentifully equipped with machines, hospitals, universities, and newspaper literates as alert as he is. The pictures of agrarianism were correspondingly bleak. To such critics, agrarianism suggested doomed farmers eaten up with hookworm, brutal labour from sunrise to sunset, or at best an idealized plantation life vanishing or utterly gone; or, so far as agrarianism meant agriculture in the strict sense, it signified a snappy commercialized occupation, making large-scale use of machines and scientific agronomy. When we championed agrarianism, they were amused and incredulous, if not disgusted, and therefore the tone of their discussion was often one of scornful levity.

It was easy enough, and sometimes exciting, to meet such levity with the retort called for under the circumstances. It would be easy now to inquire in all seriousness whether industrial civilization still glitters. But since we, no less than our critics, underestimated the speed and the thoroughness of the industrial collapse, I put this question, too, aside. Such uncomplimentary exchanges get nowhere, since they leave the premises of argument untouched. We did not and we do not think of industrialism and agrarianism in the terms that our critics have used. For their part, they have been unable to see the purposes of *I'll Take My Stand* in the proper context. It is that context which I wish to describe.

I'll Take My Stand was intended to be a book of principles and ideas, offering, with whatever implications it might have for America in general, a philosophy of Southern life rather than a detailed programme. It was based upon historical analysis and

contemporary observation. It was not a handbook of farming or economics. It was not a rhapsody on Pickett's Charge and the Old Plantation. It was first of all a book for mature Southerners of the late nineteen-twenties, in the so-called New South—Southerners who, we trusted, were not so far gone in modern education as to require, for the act of comprehension, coloured charts, statistical tables, graphs, and journalistic monosyllables, but were prepared to use intelligence and memory.

In so far as it might benefit by an historical approach, the book needs to be considered against the background of 1929 and the years previous when it was being germinated and planned, and not, as it has been interpreted, against the background of Mr. Hoover's failure, the depression, and the New Deal. If we could have foreseen these events, we would have contrived to make the essays point clearly the moral that was even then implicit in them. But we were not, like the Prophet Moses, aware of any impending plagues to which we could refer for confirmation. In those years industrial commercialism was rampant. In no section were its activities more blatant than in the South, where old and historic communities were crawling on their bellies to persuade some petty manufacturer of pants or socks to take up his tax-exempt residence in their midst. This industrial invasion was the more disturbing because it was proceeding with an entire lack of consideration for its results on Southern life. The rural population, which included at least two-thirds of the total Southern population, was being allowed to drift into poverty and was being viewed with social disdain.

Southern opinion, so far as it was articulate, paid little serious attention to such matters. The older liberals of the Walter Hines Page school still believed in the easy humanitarianism of pre-World-War days. The younger liberals were damning the Fundamentalists, and rejoicing in the efforts of the sociological missionaries who were arriving almost daily from the slum-laboratories of Chicago and New York. The business interests were taking full advantage of the general dallying with superficial issues.

I do not know at what precise moment the men who contributed to *I'll Take My Stand* arrived at the notion of making their views public. I do know that as individuals, observing and thinking separately, they arrived at the same general conclusions at about the same time. Although some of us were intimate friends, we had recently been scattered and had been writing in widely different fields. I remember that we were greatly and very pleasantly surprised, when we first approached the Southern topic, to find ourselves in hearty agreement. Each had been cherishing his notions in solitude, hardly expecting them to win the approval of the determined moderns who were his friends. But if we who had been so far separated and so differently occupied could so easily reach an understanding, were there not many other Southerners, fully as apprehensive and discontented as ourselves, who would welcome a forthright assertion of principles? These must be Southern principles, we felt, for the only true salvation of the South had to come from within — there had been already too much parasitic reliance on external counsel. But the principles must also be relevant to the new circumstances.

What were the right Southern principles in the late nineteen-twenties?

Of course we never imagined that Southern principles, once defined, would apply just as benevolently in New York City as some wise men thought that Eastern metropolitan principles would apply in the South. We never dreamed of carrying across the line some kind of Southern crusade to offset the Northern push which at our own doors was making noises like a Holy War. In only one contingency (which at that time seemed remote enough) could we possibly conceive that Southern principles might have a national meaning. Whoever or whatever was to blame for the condition of American civilization in those days — and there were malcontents even in the North who were asking such embarrassing questions — certainly the South was not in any responsible sense the author of that condition. The characteristic American civilization of the nineteen-twenties had been produced under Northern auspices. It was the result of a practically undisturbed control over American affairs that the North had enjoyed since its victory at Appomattox, and of a fairly deliberate and consistent exclusion of Southern views. If ever it should occur to the people of the North that that exclusion was a defect — if ever Southern opinions should again be as hospitably entertained as were Mr. Jefferson's and Mr. Madison's in other days, then Southern principles would again have a meaning beyond the borders of the South.

The idea of publishing a book dealing with the Southern situation went back perhaps as far as 1925 and certainly had begun to take shape by 1928. For it was American industrialism of the boom period that

disturbed us, no less than the later spectacle of industrial disorder. Before even a prospectus could be outlined, a great deal of discussion and correspondence was necessary. A sketch of what we had been doing just before the publication of *I'll Take My Stand* may be worth noting, since it indicates the diversity of interests from which we were drawn to focus on a single project. Tate had been in France, finishing his biography of Jefferson Davis and writing poetry and literary criticism. Ransom had been at work upon *God Without Thunder*, a study of religion and science. Wade had been writing a biography of John Wesley. Owsley was continuing the historical research that grew out of his *State Rights in the Confederacy* and that was to lead to his *King Cotton Diplomacy*. Nixon, who had just left Vanderbilt for Tulane, had been studying the Populist movement and the problem of the tenant farmer. Warren was at Oxford; he had published a biography of John Brown. Lytle had been in the East, writing plays and acting. Lanier had been teaching at New York University and doing research in the psychology of race. Kline had just received a Master of Arts degree in English at Vanderbilt University. I was attempting to edit a book page and to follow the curious tergiversations that modernism produced among the rising Southern writers. As for the other two contributors (who were not of the "Nashville group"), Stark Young, in addition to dramatic criticism, had written some excellent novels on Southern themes which at that time were none too well appreciated; and John Gould Fletcher, in England, had turned to social criticism in *The Two*

Frontiers, a comparative study of Russia and America.

Most of us had a good deal of cosmopolitanism in our systems, the result of travel or residence abroad or of prolonged absorption in literature, pedagogy, or technical research. Those of us who had written poetry and criticism were painfully aware of the harsh constriction that modern life imposes on the artist. We were rebellious that such constriction should operate upon Southern artists — or, for that matter, upon any artist; and some of us had written essays asking why this should be so. All of us, I think, were turning with considerable relief from the shallow social criticism and tortured art of the nineteen-twenties to the works of the new historians and biographers who were somehow avoiding both the complaisance of the old Southern liberals and the dissociated cynicism of the younger ones. In their perfectly objective re-statement of Southern history and American history we found new cause for our growing distrust of the scorn that was being volleyed at the “backward” South. What the historians said was in all really important points at startling variance with the assumptions of social critics and the “social workers” whose procedure was based on big-city attitudes. Suddenly we realized to the full what we had long been dimly feeling, that the Lost Cause might not be wholly lost after all. In its very backwardness the South had clung to some secret which embodied, it seemed, the precise elements out of which its own reconstruction — and possibly even the reconstruction of America — might be achieved. With American civilization, ugly and visibly bent on ruin, before our eyes, why should we not explore this secret?

We were the more inclined to this course because of a natural loyalty to the South which the events of the nineteen-twenties had warmed and quickened. This was our first and most enduring point of agreement. That loyalty had both combative and sentimental aspects, I am sure. We were and are devoted to the South in spite of its defects, because it is our country, as our mother is our mother. But we have never been in the false and uncritical position attributed to us by some interpreters, of invariably preferring Southern things merely because they are Southern. For the record let it be noted that no more drastic criticisms of Southern life and affairs, past and present, can be found than in some of the books and essays of Owsley and Tate; and they, with Wade and others, have on occasion been denounced by Southern organizations for their “disloyalty”. We never believed that one could be a good Southerner by simply drinking mint-juleps or by remarking sententiously on the admirable forbearance of Lee after Appomattox.

Such were our guiding motives. The search for Southern principles was a more deliberate affair, and doubtless had a good deal in it of that rationalization which is so often condemned and so generally indulged in. I am sure that at first we did not do much thinking in strictly economic terms. Uppermost in our minds was our feeling of intense disgust with the spiritual disorder of modern life — its destruction of human integrity and its lack of purpose; and, with this, we had a decided sense of impending fatality. We wanted a life which through its own conditions and purposefulness would engender naturally (rather

than by artificial stimulation), order, leisure, character, stability, and that would also, in the larger sense, be aesthetically enjoyable. What history told us of the South, what we knew of it by experience, now freshened by conscious analysis, and what we remembered of the dignity and strength of the generation that fought the Confederate War (for most of us were old enough to have received indelible impressions from survivors who never in anything but a military sense surrendered) — all this drove us straight to the South and its tradition. The good life we sought was once embodied here, and it lingered yet. Even in its seeming decline it contrasted sharply with the mode of life that we feared and disliked. The pertinent essays and reviews which we wrote before the appearance of *I'll Take My Stand* all had this central theme. Readers who wish to look for them will find them in *Harper's Magazine*, *The Forum*, the *Sewanee Review*, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, and elsewhere.

As we thought and talked further, we realized that the good life of the Old South, in its best period, and the life of our own South so far as it was still characteristic, was not to be separated from the agrarian tradition which was and is its foundation. By this route we came at last to economics and so found ourselves at odds with the prevailing schools of economic thought. These held that economics determines life and set up an abstract economic existence as the governor of man's effort. We believed that life determines economics, or ought to do so, and that economics is no more than an instrument, around the

use of which should gather many more motives than economic ones. The evil of industrial economics was that it squeezed all human motives into one narrow channel and then looked for humanitarian means to repair the injury. The virtue of the Southern agrarian tradition was that it mixed up a great many motives with the economic motive, thus enriching it and reducing it to a proper subordination.

Therefore the agrarian tradition was necessarily defined as "a way of life" from which originated, among other things, an economy. In *I'll Take My Stand* we did not enlarge upon the technical features of the economy, which could wait for a later description, but we treated other features of the Southern tradition at elaborate length and in broad contrast with the hostile industrial conceptions. The times seemed to call for just this emphasis, but I can see now that it puzzled our critics, who had somehow learned to think of "agrarian" in the strictly occupational terms used by newspapers and professional economists. Though it undoubtedly took too much for granted in our readers, the definition was sufficient for our immediate purposes. To us it signified a complete order of society based ultimately upon the land. It presupposed several kinds of farmers and endless varieties of other occupations. The elements of such a society had always existed in the South. They must now be used and improved upon if people were to remain their own masters and avoid the consequences of an industrial order which we could already see was headed toward communism or fascism.

The large-scale plantation had been an important

part of the older Southern life, but we were rather critical of the plantation, both because we felt its rôle had been over-emphasized and sentimentalized, and because we were interested in correcting, for the modern South, the abuses of the plantation system. We thought the rôle of the small farmer, or yeoman farmer, had been very much underestimated. We were concerned with the fate of the tenant farmer, with rural towns and communities, and with their importance in setting the tone of Southern life, even in the cities. We wished that the greatest possible number of people might enjoy the integrity and independence that would come with living upon their own land. Therefore we tended to push the large plantation into the background of consideration and to argue the case of the yeoman farmer. In this we followed Jefferson; but where the political rôle of the South was concerned we followed Calhoun, for it was the obvious, if regrettable, duty of the South to continue to defend itself against an aggressive, exploiting North.

Yet undeniable as our nostalgia for old times may have been — and quite justified — we had no intention of drawing a mellow and pretty picture of an idealized past. We leaned rather far in the other direction. Certainly Lytle's essay, "The Hind Tit", was aimed to show the merits of an agrarian life even in its roughest and most backwoodsy state. We were determined, furthermore, to make the broadest possible application of the general theory, and therefore we planned and secured essays that discussed religion, education, manners, the theory of progress, the race problem, the historical background, the arts, the prob-

lem of the college graduate. Only one of the essays dealt with economics specifically. One essay outlined the general argument of the book, and like several of the other essays included a close negative analysis of industrialism, which we took pains to define rather carefully. We did not, of course, mean that the term industrialism should include any and every form of industry and every conceivable use of machines; we meant giant industrialism, as a force dominating every human activity: as the book says, "the decision of society to invest its economic resources in the applied sciences".

From the outset we had to deal with the problem of who the contributors ought to be. This finally resolved itself into the problem of who could be trusted to approach the issues as we saw them. A few of us, at Nashville, had enjoyed the benefits of long friendship and much discussion. We knew each other's minds, but we needed help. A memorandum in my file indicates that we planned the volume to be "deliberately partisan" to an extent which would exclude certain kinds of contributors: "sentimental conservatives whose sectionalism is of an extreme type" and "progressives whose liberalism is of an 'uplift' type". My note further says: "The volume will emphasize trans-Appalachian Southern thought and will therefore have a minority of contributors (if any at all) from the Atlantic states". But the names of possible contributors as recorded in this prospectus suggest how catholic our intention, or how great our innocence of mind, was in those days. Besides some names of the actual contributors, it includes the following: William E. Dodd, Broadus Mitchell, Newbell Niles

Puckett, W. W. Alexander, Julia Peterkin, G. B. Win-
ton, Grover Hall, Louis Jaffee, Julian Harris, Judge
Finis Garrett, Chancellor James H. Kirkland. To
these were later added the names of Gerald Johnson,
Stringfellow Barr, John Peale Bishop. But of the
persons named only two were actually solicited—
Gerald Johnson and Stringfellow Barr; and both de-
clined, Mr. Johnson with a curt jocular quip, Mr.
Barr after a friendly exchange of correspondence
which seemed at first to indicate his adherence.

Perhaps these rebuffs discouraged us from a wider
solicitation. At any rate the contributors finally
agreed upon came into the book largely because, by
reason of close acquaintance, this or that person felt
they could be counted on and could presume to ap-
proach them. Even then, for the sake of unity, we felt
obliged to draw up the "Statement of Principles"
printed as an introduction. Each contributor was
asked to approve these principles and to offer sug-
gestions of his own. The "statement" was revised
several times. Nearly all of the contributors had some-
thing to suggest, and most of the suggestions were
duly embodied. Finally, it represented composite
opinion, arrived at after much trouble. The actual
phrasing was the work of Ransom, except for some
passages and sentences here and there. I remember
one last-minute change of wording. The second para-
graph originally began: "Nobody now proposes for
the South, or for any other community in this coun-
try, an independent political destiny. That idea was
finished in 1865." The latter sentence was changed to
read, "That idea *is thought to have been* finished in
1865."

There was no editor in the usual sense; the book
was a joint undertaking. However, some of us at
Nashville acted as an informal steering committee and
were obliged to hold many consultations more or less
editorial. One hotly argued editorial difficulty arose
not long before the book was scheduled to appear.
Tate, Warren, and Lytle held that the title ought to
be changed from *I'll Take My Stand* to *A Tract
Against Communism*. Over against this suggestion,
which had good reason in it, was the embarrassing
fact that the book was practically ready for issue.
The following extract from a letter by Tate, written
immediately after this incident, is prophetic of what
was in store for us: "It is over now. Your title tri-
umphs. And I observe that Alexander [of the Nash-
ville *Tennessean*] today on the basis of the title de-
fines our aims as an 'agrarian revival' and reduces our
real aims to nonsense. These are, of course, an agrarian
revival in the full sense, but by not making our appeal
through the title to ideas, we are at the mercy of all
the Alexanders—for they need only to draw por-
traits of us plowing or cleaning the spring to make
hash of us before we get a hearing."

Tate was exactly right as to what would happen,
though he now says: "It would have happened any-
way." In the contentious months that followed, when
we argued with all objectors who were worth arguing
with, such portraits or far worse ones were drawn.
We had virtually dared our contemporaries to debate
with us the question, then more or less tabooed, of
whether the new industrialism was as good for the
South as was claimed. With due allowance for various
friendly receptions and a generous allotment of

newspaper space which certainly gave us a hearing of a sort, it seems worth while to record a few samples of the raillery, not always good-humoured, with which our contemporaries greeted us. They begged to remind us of ox-carts and outdoor privies, and inquired whether we ever used porcelain bathtubs. If we admired agrarianism, what were we doing in libraries, and why were we not out gee-hawing? Had we ever tried to "make money" on a farm? Did we want to "turn the clock back" and retreat into "a past that never was"?

The *Chattanooga News*, although it complimented us with a series of very lengthy editorials, dubbed us "the Young Confederates", smiled indulgently over our "delightful economic absurdities", and said: "This quixotic tilting of literary lances against industrialization smacks of the counsel of despair." The *Macon Telegraph*, famous liberal newspaper that carries on its masthead a quotation from Mill's "Essay on Liberty", tore into the book, even before it was published, with all the savagery of the *Chicago Tribune's* best South-baiting editorials. Under the sarcastic title, "Lee, We Are Here!" the *Telegraph* began its insinuations thus: "One of the strangest groups to flourish in the South is the Neo-Confederates. This socially reactionary band does not come out of Atlanta — hatch of the Ku Klux Klan and the Supreme Kingdom — but appears to have its headquarters in Nashville." Later, with the book in hand, the *Telegraph* represented it as "a nostalgic cult owning a basis no more serious than sentiment", "an amusing patter-song", "a high spot in the year's hilarity". The *New Orleans Tribune* quoted with

avowed relish some phrases which the *New York Times* had editorially applied to the book: "a boy's Froissart of tales", "twelve Canutes", "worn-out romanticism".

A few critics, but only a very few, were more serious-minded and friendly. Some of these, oddly enough, were Eastern critics, who had lived at close quarters with industrialism and learned to dislike it; and in the end an Eastern magazine, *THE AMERICAN REVIEW*, gave us both understanding and hospitality of a sort we have never received, for example, from the *Virginia Quarterly Review*. And among Southern critics, it was a notable fact that our most consistent newspaper support came from Birmingham, the South's most highly industrialized city; from John Temple Graves II, of the *Birmingham News*.

Since we are not thin-skinned, we have managed to survive a curious notoriety of the sort that tempts friends to smile askance and tap their foreheads significantly. But our publishers practically dropped the book, no sooner than it was issued.

To the more sober charge that the agrarian proposals were not accompanied by a specific programme we have always been disposed to give heed. We had not attempted to frame any positive set-up for industry under an agrarian economy, and even our programme for the farm was not much particularized in the book itself. To an eminent and friendly Tennessean, who deprecated our lack of a political programme, one of us answered that we represented "a body of principles looking for a party", and he was thereupon invited to run for Governor on an agrarian ticket. The truth is that *I'll Take My Stand*

was by necessity a general study, preliminary to a specific application which we hoped the times would permit us, with others, to work out slowly and critically. The emergencies of 1930 and later years made such deliberate procedure impossible. But even when the book was in press we should have been pleased to add the very specific proposals which were, in fact, made public during the debates sponsored by various newspapers and educational institutions. Ransom, for example, throughout 1930 and 1931 argued for a kind of subsistence farming (hardly of the later Rooseveltian model) and for government policies which would bring about a wide distribution of owned land. He has later developed these proposals in magazine articles and pamphlets. In fact most of the contributors, through whatever media have been open to them, in recent years have pushed the principles of agrarianism far beyond the point represented in *I'll Take My Stand* and have made proposals about as specific as could be expected from men who do not have the good fortune to be members of Congress or of the Brain Trust. These may be viewed as a substitute, however inadequate, for a second volume of *I'll Take My Stand*, which through causes beyond our control we have not been able to publish.

Since my purpose here is expository rather than argumentative, I will do no more than indicate the direction of agrarian proposals. Most of them have been fully stated by Frank Owsley in his recent article, "The Pillars of Agrarianism" (*THE AMERICAN REVIEW*, March 1935). We consider the rehabilitation of the farmer as of first importance to the South, the basis of all good remedial procedure; and we there-

fore favour a definite policy of land conservation, land distribution, land ownership. At the risk of appearing socialistic to the ignorant, we favour legislation that will deprive the giant corporation of its privilege of irresponsibility, and that will control or prevent the socially harmful use of labour-saving (or labour-evicting) machinery. We advocate the encouragement of handicrafts, or of modified handicrafts with machine tools. In this connection, we believe that the only kind of new industry the South can now afford to encourage is the small industry which produces fine goods involving craftsmanship and art. We oppose the introduction of "mass-producing" industries that turn out coarse goods and cheap gadgets. We favour the diversion of public and private moneys from productive to non-productive uses — as for example to the arts — that over-accumulation of invested capital may be forestalled. We hold very strongly for a revision of our political framework that will permit regional governments to function adequately; and that will enable the national government to deal sensibly with issues in which the interests of regions are irreconcilable, or prevent the kind of regional exploitation, disguised as paternalism, now being practised on the South. That is to say, we favour a true Federalism and oppose Leviathanism, as ruinous to the South and eventually fatal to the nation.

It may be said of such proposals that they are not at all points peculiar to the Southern Agrarians, but are held by persons of various bias, some of whom may lean to an industrial point of view. I am sure this observation would be correct. The so-called Agrarians

are not a neatly organized band of conspirators. They are individuals united in a common concern but differing among themselves as to ways and means. They hope that their concern for the South, and to some extent their approach to Southern problems, is shared by many persons. They are conscious that many other minds than theirs are busy with these problems. They would be glad, as the book states, to be counted as members of a national agrarian movement.

Nevertheless, it is fair to emphasize at least two points of fundamental difference between the agrarian approach and others. We are interested in a way of life that will restore economics, among other things, rather than in an economics that promises merely to restore bare security, on hazardous terms, while leaving untouched the deep corruptions that render the security hardly capable of being enjoyed or nobly used. For this reason we are obliged to regard the Roosevelt Administration with a mixture of approval and distrust, for its approach, to the Southern situation especially, is too much of the latter order. At times President Roosevelt and his advisers seem to be governed by only two motives: the economic and the humanitarian. They propose to repair our faltering economic system and to guarantee a modicum of comfort to the human casualties of our false way of life. But they are doing nothing to repair the false way of life. Rather they seem to want to crystallize it in all its falsity. We believe that no permanent solution of our troubles can be found in that way. Complication will be heaped upon complication, until we shall be destroyed in the end from sheer moral impotence. But that is hard to explain to people who

insist in believing that labour can be benefited only by the invention of machinery and the promotion of labour unions, or who do not admit that the same human will which builds skyscrapers can also abandon them.

The second point of difference is one on which we would make few concessions, or none. Undoubtedly the South is a part of modern economy. Who could deny that? We should nevertheless insist that the South still has liberty to determine what its rôle will be with relation to that economy; and that that liberty ought not to be abrogated by the South or usurped by others. Unless the South can retain that power of decision, it can retain little of what may be, in any good sense, Southern. Above all, it cannot keep its self-respect or ever have the confidence in its own genius which is the greatest moral necessity of a living people.

[Inquiries from readers about "I'll Take My Stand", which has frequently been mentioned in The American Review, have prompted us to make arrangements with the publishers to handle orders for the book. The price is \$3.00, postpaid. The supply of copies is limited.—Those who wish may obtain both "I'll Take My Stand" and a subscription (or renewal of subscription) to The American Review for \$6.00.]