new frontier

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New Frontier

EDITORS:

MARGARET GOULD *LEO KENNEDY*
DOROTHY LIVESAY *J. F. WHITE*
WILLIAM LAWSON, Managing Editor
JOCELYN MOORE, Business Manager

ASSOCIATES:

ERIC DUTHIE, ISABEL JORDAN, R. S. KENNY, NORMAN LEE, BETTY RATZ, FELIX WALTER, GORDON WEBBER.

ADDRESS: 989 BAY ST., TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

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CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN STRACHEY is the author of *The Coming Struggle for Power, Literature and Dialectical Materialism, The Nature of Capitalist Crisis,* and other well known Marxist books. He has just published a pamphlet on Social Credit.

GRAHAM SPRY is the Editor of the Canadian Forum.

W. E. COLLIN is Assistant Professor of Romance Languages in the University of Western Ontario. His book *The White Savannahs,* a collection of critical essays on Canadian poets, will be published in April by Macmillans.

JACK CONROY has published two novels, *The Disinherited* and *A World to Win.* He has contributed short stories and criticism to many of the progressive magazines, and is one of the editors of Partisan Review and Anvil.

LEON EDEL is a New York newspaperman who has contributed to many Canadian and American literary magazines.

LESLIE MORRIS is the Editor of The Worker.

E. A. BEDER was chairman of the organizing committee of the Ontario C.C.F. Clubs. He contributes to American and Canadian periodicals.

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Editorial

THE aims of NEW FRONTIER are twofold: to acquaint the Canadian public with the work of those writers and artists who are expressing a positive reaction to the social scene; and to serve as an open forum for all shades of progressive opinion.

Though technically adequate, so many interpretations of the Canadian scene in creative writing, criticism and art, have been singularly disregardful of or unfaithful to the social realities of our time. This effect roots in a diversity of causes. One of these was the re-discovery of the Canadian north country landscape . . . with its infinite possibilities for presentation in art, and its eminent suitability as background for sentimental romance. Another, also of geographic *origin,* was the physical isolation in which many domestic creative artists have had to work . . . fostering the provincialism of sectional differences which has gravely affected our cultural existence. Allied with and developing from these is the tendency to the ivory tower, in which some artists in general and so many poets in particular have taken temporary refuge.

The editors of NEW FRONTIER, while recognizing the quality of the work produced by divers pioneer artists and writers, believe that they have suffered somewhat from these contractions. On the other hand, certain individual creative artists and groups who are becoming more interested in the social implications of Canadian life, are turning out work which has both social and artistic value. NEW FRONTIER is anxious to make the best of this work available to a wide circle of Canadian readers.

In addition, we hope by free discussion of the very real differences which exist between many diverse tendencies in Canada, to reach some common ground on which all forward-looking people can meet, taking their stand fearlessly against any signs of reaction, whether cultural or political.

Canadians are apt to believe that such manifestations of reaction, which in Europe have taken the bold form of fascism, will not present any real danger in this country. We are a freedom-loving people, opposed to political gangsterism, unlikely in our own minds to succumb to an overt dictatorship of powerful interests. Neither will the brutal tactics of the storm troops appeal to us, as the protest against R.C.M.P. action in Regina has already shown.

But how, in the past few years, have we defended our liberties? The high handed actions of the Bennett government were voted down at the general election, yet repressive legislation still remains on the statute books. Undoubtedly there is a group in the Liberal Party which is anxious to see Mr. King's promises put into effect. But it remains to be seen how strong this group is, and also to what extent the Canadian people will make their wishes heard.

Meanwhile certain developments in British Columbia and elsewhere provide food for thought. It has been possible to sway the Canadian people by a clever play on their emotional habits of thinking, thus paving the way for downright repressive action on the part of fascist adventurers.

Canadians, like other peoples, are susceptible to demagogic appeals made to their long-nurtured belief in the responsibility of the government. They are not sufficiently alive to the gradual corruption of Canadian democratic institutions. For instance, the value of the franchise is being seriously curtailed, when city councillors elected to office by the people, as in Regina or East York, are disqualified simply because they are unemployed, or behind in paying their rent. Here is the subtle danger of fascist techniques creeping into our institutions of government. This development is taking place under the King regime and should put Canadians on their guard.

Perhaps the objection will be raised that a magazine whose aim is to defend democratic liberties will have a negative character. On the contrary, we hope that constructive suggestions regarding the problems that beset us—problems of insecurity among many diverse groups such as farmers and young people, professionals and unemployed, industrial workers and small business men—will find an outlet in our pages. We stand for the extension, as well as the defense, of democratic liberties. We will expose intolerable conditions, but we will also encourage whole-hearted efforts to solve the difficulties.

Never before in the history of this country has there been so much need for clear thinking and unity of action on the part of Canadian writers, artists and intellectuals as there is today. It is the hope of the editors of NEW FRONTIER that the ominous uniting of the forces of reaction will be opposed by a drawing together of the forces for progress. We hope to see those who have been sitting on the fence lining up in support of culture and civilization, as have such middle road writers as Aldous Huxley, E. M. Forster, Archibald MacLeish, Ramon Fernandez and André Gide. If NEW FRONTIER is able to assist their progress in any way we will feel that we have more than justified our existence.

The Universities and the Depression

By FELIX WALTER

I WAS born, in a manner of speaking, on the campus of a Canadian university. Later my carriage was wheeled beneath the university elms and there was a fierce little man on a bicycle, a veteran of the Boer War, whose business it was to see that none but professorial infants breathed the rarified air of this academic Eden. Later still, gruff, picturesque old men who sometimes quoted Latin and almost always smelt of whiskey, professors of a species now almost extinct on our campuses, used to pat my curly head and tell me I would be a professor myself when I grew up. Some fatal defect in my character must have made it evident even then that I would follow the line of least resistance. For of course I did and, after undergraduate years at the natal university, graduate years abroad, a teaching apprenticeship passed in a second Canadian university, I now find myself ensconced in a third.

The best way to tackle the problem is to divide it making a few general statements about Canadian universities. If the sheer amount of university gossip absorbed qualifies a man to discuss this topic, then I am fully qualified. Besides I care rather a lot what happens to our Canadian universities and take the matter rather seriously. I think that our academic system has been pretty considerably affected by the recent breakdown of that other, parent system — the politico-economic one. Such changes as seem evident to me cannot all be put down on one side or the other of an imaginary ledger. Some are good, some are bad, but there have been changes.

The best way to tackle the problem is to divide it into three parts like the estates of pre-Revolutionary France or the three powers of the British Constitution. The King, Lords and Commons or the three estates of the Canadian university are the governors, the staff and the students. The governors reign and, alas! often try to rule. The professors, like the Lords, justify their existence by the quality of their oratory and enjoy, in theory at least, the privilege of life tenure. The students, like the third estate, supply the numbers and pay the fees. Let us have a look at these three elements in turn.

Put two or more professors talking together and before half an hour is up the conversation will have turned to the topic of trustees in general and there will be brimstone in the air. Now it seems to me that trustees, or governors, or whatever they call themselves, are more deserving of pity than of anger. If they are fish out of water it is not through any innate perversity. Under capitalism business men have no choice; they must run everything: art galleries, churches, universities as well as and along with railways, stock-exchanges and department stores. They would rather stick to their knitting, but it is a question of *noblesse oblige*. Most of them are conscientious and singularly aware of their unfitness to cope with purely academic problems. Already before the depression it had become a custom to appoint as trustees business men who were also university graduates. Such persons have at least a bowing acquaintance with academic matters, though the thin veneer of a pass course taken thirty years before may long since have been chipped off in the market-place. At least such persons have a sense of loyalty to the institution they are called on to serve and are unlikely to load the university treasury with their own worthless stock, as has happened before now. It is nice to have trustees one can trust.

Are trustees a menace to academic freedom? Many professors seem to think so, and of course it is idle to suppose that all members of a group who owe wealth and power to the present dispensation will meekly tolerate attacks upon it or even questioning of its eternal rightness and permanence. The depression should have been a final test of this matter, but at best the results are inconclusive. At least there has been no wholesale persecution such as reached its malodorous climax in the University of Pittsburg, but there was the King Gordon case, which is enough to show that "It Can Happen Here." If few professors in Canada have actually suffered for their teaching, plenty of them have been warned and gagged. In all fairness it should be said that it is rarely trustees themselves who cause trouble, but friends of friends of theirs, whose knowledge of the university proprieties is even more remote. Of course there is an active reactionary element among trustees and Sir Edward Beatty is its mouthpiece, but if that is the dread voice of St. James Street, it sounds like a pretty thin childish treble.

Actually the depression has had a tonic effect on university governors from coast to coast. Business men may still be omnipotent, but they are no longer omniscient, not even in their own eyes. The wholesale dismissals of boards of governors at Manitoba and at the University of British Columbia has been most salutary. Even McGill, for long a citadel of trustee absolutism, has by the recent revision of her statutes taken a long step in the right direction. For the moment trustees are inclined to concentrate on their essential function, that of providing funds. It should keep them busy these days.

Professors have changed a lot in type in the last decade. I suppose John Macnaughton, gyrating in sulphurous magnificence between Queen's, McGill and Toronto, was the last nationally prominent specimen of the old school. Already before the depression the drift towards specialization in all callings had bred a less picturesque, more standardized kind of university teacher. Specialization has its own inherent defects and some of the present generation of professors tend to retire so far into their own limited field that they seem to lose sight of the general aims of education altogether. But if today's professors no longer hang up their socks to dry in their offices, throw chalk and books at the students, nor possess the wide cultural background of a Maurice Hutton, a Paul Lafleur or a Glover, they have their good points. They have raised standards within the profession; it is today almost impossible for a broken down parson or an unsuccessful insurance salesman to get a job in a Canadian university simply by hanging about and asking for it. They are less dilettante; they publish more in the technical journals of their particular field, though still not nearly as much as their colleagues in the United States,

partly because of the lingering on of the English tradition which rather frowns on anything so strenuous and undignified.

That brings me to another point: the question of our emergence from the colonial era during the depression. Canadian universities owe a tremendous debt to the hundreds of Englishmen, Scotsmen and Irishmen who supplied the bulk of their staffs for a century, but the native supply is now becoming adequate to the demand. It is particularly to be deplored that we import such quantities of Britishers and so few Americans from right next door. The latter are more adaptable to our standards and our problems. In any case I shouldn't wonder if Canadian universities have imported their very last president from across the Atlantic. Imported professors may and do fit in admirably, but an administrator requires a much longer period of acclimatization, preferably in a subordinate position. The best of them, just when they have got the hang of things, get a call from a British university and translate themselves back oversea. The Canadian principalship turns out to have been just a stepping-stone after all.

Professors were lucky on the whole during the depression. In some of the more gravely impoverished western universities there were wholesale dismissals and drastic slashes in salary, but, compared to architects, doctors, lawyers and the like, they fared well. But the depression did affect their usefulness as a body in a manner which does not seem to have attracted the attention it deserves. Recruiting into the ranks of the profession has slowed down to an anaemic trickle. Every year scores of young graduates were appointed as instructors and lecturers in Canadian universities. They formed a living bond between the older members of the profession and the oncoming generations of undergraduates. This bond has been almost entirely severed and there is no greater tragedy in the Canadian academic world than the sacrifice of a whole generation of future leaders in the universities. Those who do struggle to the precarious toe-hold of an instructorship are scandalously underpaid and overworked, in other words exploited like any other form of surplus labour.

If we discussed the reactionary menace among the governors, what about professors and radicalism? *A priori*, members of a sheltered and privileged class are not likely to be very radical, and, *a posteriori*, Canadian professors are not. As educated persons, on the whole not without intelligence, they are disinclined to see perfection in the present system, but there is nothing to spur them into changing it. Characteristically enough, the depression-born Canadian social-democrat party with its professorial brain-trusters is a rather genteel sprig clipped from the suburban hedge of British Fabianism. There are no Lenins lurking on our university staffs, but quite a little group of potential MacDonalds.

That brings us at last to the student-body, which, in spite of the private opinions of many of my colleagues, is the real *raison d'etre* of any university system. It is often said that students are now more serious-minded than they used to be and I believe this statement to be true. When I was an undergraduate the world was seething with the problems of the immediate post-war period, but my class-mates rarely discussed them. My generation was about the last one of the old hooligan tradition; we hazed and fought the police and broke things. Students today no longer go in for that sort of nonsense. Something has sobered them. Their world and their parents' world has been shaken and they are willing to do some work to find out why and what can be done about it.

These are real benefits of the depression as far as it has affected the students, but there are grave injuries to be recorded as well. The collapse of university finances has led most institutions to raise their fees steeply with the specious cry that students should "pay" for their education. This is a reactionary measure of the most vicious nature. Carried much further it will definitely make university education in Canada the exclusive privilege of the sons and daughters of the well-to-do. Already the clock has been turned back so far that one rubs one's eyes on reading the following quotation from an article on education which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1927. "College education within the last thirty or forty years," said the author of "The Revolt of a Middle-Aged Father", "has changed from a luxury to a seeming necessity, from an exception to a tradition, not only for the rich and the near-rich or the middle class . . . but even for many a worker's family as well." This process is now being reversed. It is increasingly difficult for students to earn their fees during their summer holidays and the assertion, often trumpeted in official quarters, that new and increased scholarships and bursaries compensate poor students for the increase in fees, is simply not true. The western universities, happily freer of the Family Compact virus which still poisons the East, have been more cautious in their attack on the democratic bases of higher education.

If I were not restricted by limitation of space, I would ask myself the next stock question: "Are students any more radical than professors?" And I would answer that they are not; even less so. Young men and women come up to the university thinking as their parents think, which is a pretty damning indictment, but not their fault. At the end of a four year's course in a properly grouped branch of the humanities, the best of them are beginning to think for themselves. In this connection it might be pointed out that there is no more efficient factory for the mass production of future Babbitts than the three year pass course. It is a university education reduced to the terms of a revolving-door in a department store: in and out again with a whiff of hot air on the way round.

So trustees are meeker and professors more efficient and students more serious, yet, paradoxically enough, it is not my opinion that Canadian universities are making any better job of it than they were before the depression. And that is because they are still as heterogeneous and anarchic, as uncertain of what their fundamental aims really are, as hide-bound and as timid as the economic and political system they spring from. Why are they what they are, and will they ever be otherwise, are questions not to be answered in a single article so deliberately limited in length and scope as the present one.

Basis For a People's Party

By E. A. BEDER

Note: The editors of New Frontier, desiring to present to their readers a symposium of opinion on the topic of a People's Party, invited Mr. Leslie Morris, editor of The Worker, and Mr. Graham Spry, editor of The New Commonwealth and of the Canadian Forum, to write replies to this article by Mr. Beder. We invite comment and discussion on these three articles.

THERE are two methods of establishing the basis for a People's Party. One is to set down five or seven or nine generalities around which "the workers, the farmers and all progressively minded people can unite". The other is to examine the particular background in a particular country and to proceed to establish "the widest unity" only after surveying the conditions affecting "the workers, the farmers and all progressively minded people", the degree of political understanding these people have, and most important of all, the political trends they are evidencing and to which they subscribe. The one method is the general application of a formula good for all countries, the other involves a "tailored" program based on the ideological twists and political deformities of the particular nation the program is designed to fit.

Not that the issues are yet joined in so simple and sharp a fashion. Actually what is going on is that the proponents of the "generality" program are prepared with what they have to propose whilst the groups which hold to a tailored or "Canadian" program have only sensed that the generality program is inadequate to the needs of the Canadian situation, and have not advanced any further in their delimitation of what a Canadian program might be.

But there is this basic theoretical difference between the two viewpoints, therefore it is essential that they be examined in the search for a foundation for a People's Party.

If we must give a political label to the respective view points then the generality program is identified with the Communist Party and the idea of a Canadian approach is identified with the C.C.F. And in our examination we must check also what is meant by a Canadian approach and the danger inherent in over-extending Canadianism until it stretches itself into a mask to cover all economic reality.

It is no secret of course that the Communist Party's complete change of front is the result of the Comintern's analysis of the events of the last few years, particularly in Germany, Austria and Spain. Harsh reality disclosed that the theory of a generally developing revolutionary situation in all countries which would culminate progressively in Communist victory had received a setback. The setback of course was the counter development of Fascism. In turn the Comintern countered with a change of line which involved the Communist Parties in all countries seeking alliances with social democratic groups and even liberal forces in stemming the tide of fascism. Thus from being in the forefront ideologically with a revolutionary program which tended to isolate it from most groups, the C.P. has swung over to a position which centres itself in a defence of social democracy, a change so far and swift that it produces new problems of its own.

Undoubtedly as a defence measure it was a good tactic, but the question immediately arises is such a defence program enough? Does it correspond to the situation, for instance, in Canada?

It is quite true that in France this particular tactic met with great success, but does this end the situation? Fundamentally the problems we face can only be solved by setting up a social and economic order that is itself the solution, consequently until this is achieved all other measures are transitory. The point then is does this particular tactic achieve the unity necessary to establish the new order or does it lose its economic reality as the price paid in maintaining political unity among diverse groups? In France, the People's Front, having achieved such signal support, is looked upon as the next government. Here the theory will be tested. Did the People's Front through the manner of its formation, the wide application of defence concepts hinging around opposition to Fascism and war constrict the economic range of the coalition to such a point that it will be unable to apply the necessary measures which will make a solution to the economic problems possible? In other words did a defence mechanism based on generalities water down the full socialist program which alone can make France a stable nation?

Time alone can answer this, but in any case must the development of a People's Party in Canada proceed along exactly the same lines that brought it into being in France? For instance opposition to War and Fascism would probably make its greatest appeal in France. France, its soil ravaged in the last war and bordering on Hitler's frontier is peculiarly receptive to such a defence mechanism. Do the same conditions apply in Canada?

I am not suggesting that we do not need to develop the consciousness of the people of Canada against War and Fascism, but the point here is something entirely different. Does this particular approach offer the maximum "pulling power" for the creation of a People's Party? Is it the most effective way of rallying the greatest number of our people in a common coalition for their economic betterment?

The Canadian situation reflects a most peculiar condition which has in it some startling possibilities for social change. There are four anti-capitalist parties now in the field. The C.P., the C.C.F., the Social Credit Group, the Stevens Party, must all be looked upon, one way or another, as anti-capitalist, at least as far as the rank and file are concerned. Whether they are politically developed or politically deformed they express in some measure their opposition to the existing system and express their hopes and fears in that vague and yet hopeful form which talks of a "new social order." Moreover nearly a million voters out of a total of four million supported these "anti-system" parties in the last election. Contrast this state of affairs with the United States where there is not even

a srong third party in the field and it will be seen immediately how full of possibilities the situation is in Canada.

Under such conditions is it wise to put forward only generalities to unite these elements or should we look forward to devising a straight political program in a field that has been politically cultivated to take advantage of the political developments of the last three years? We must answer a straight question of whether more people can be attracted in Canada by a political program which makes concrete what a "new social order" can give them in terms of jobs and wages and social security than can be attracted in a general movement against War and Fascism and for "immediate demands". It seems to me it is not Utopian to advance along a political front that has already been faintly outlined, to turn the energies of all who seek a People's Party into straight political action for the new social order, rather than to work up to this point through the circuitous route of unity around generalities, hoping that somehow this unity will transform itself into a concrete political program in some undefined way and time.

If, however, the proposals of the Communist Party seem to me not to be in accord with Canadian conditions I do not wish to convey the impression that, by inference, the attitude of the C.C.F. is correct. The mistakes of the C.P. are the mistakes of a party in action threshing around for a way out and handicapped by an obsolete form of political organization. By contrast the C.C.F. seems bogged in inaction. Although conditions in Canada do call for a Canadian approach which must have distinctive features of its own, the C.C.F. has been utterly unable to translate these specific Canadian characteristics into a political program. It has remained wrapped in the inertia of its Regina Manifesto, a document that was outmoded six months after its adoption.

Theoretically the C.C.F. appears to have become exhausted by its labors in Regina, it has advanced no further in a period when each month reveals new fields for action and new possibilities arise which can be turned to political advantage. This is the basic weakness of the C.C.F.—inaction due to the fact that it has no theories to nourish it. No vital discussions are carried on in the party, criticism is frowned upon, the last two Ontario conventions for instance being completely sterile and routine. There was no national convention in 1935 and the national convention when held seems to concern itself mainly with timorous amendments to the canonized Regina document.

But if ideas are lacking in the C.C.F. there is one standardized phrase which has been utilized to replace ideas and discussion. This is the cry that "Canada is different." This seems to be the answer to all proposals from other groups, although, as I have tried to show, the C.C.F. cannot produce its own program clarirying this Canadian quality. Moreover the fact of Canadian difference has been extended from its Canadian background where it alone exists into the whole realm of capitalist development. Thus Fascism cannot arise here because we are "different" and the laws of capitalist production will not apply here because in some mysterious way these laws only operate in "foreign" countries. This extension of Canadianism beyond its valid territory is a disturbing feature in the development of the C.C.F., since it warps and hinders all understanding of economic reality in a period when only the clearest conception of what is taking place in the world of capitalism can serve as the basis for the way out in Canada.

Thus arising from the Canadian scene as a movement for the establishment of a new social order in Canada, the C.C.F. has declined in the three years of its existence from the dominant force to produce this new order into a withering group without an essential program for the change it seeks. More, because of this vital lack opposing groups now challenge the C.C.F. for supremacy in its own domain. Three years ago it had the field to itself, now Social Credit, Stevens and National Government movements compete against it. It is true that in general all these groups are part of one wide social and political upheaval but this offers no consolation to the C.C.F. It is the measure of its own weakness that all these forces have come into being *after* its own formation.

There is still time for the C.C.F. to re-form ranks and advance. If it takes the leadership in the formation of a People's Party, if it refashions its own political program into something vital and clear, if it utilizes the favorable conditions in Canada for a direct political advance for the new social order then it can redeem its past mistakes and act as a unifying force in a period of moral and political disintegration. Instead of crumbling and watching other "new social order" groups take the field against it, it can itself express this dominant idea and take over elements from the other groups when they crumble, as some of them must.

The coming National Convention of the C.C.F. will afford a test of the leadership and the capacity of the Party to act as the base for a wider People's Party. A bold yet sagacious course would be to extend the National Convention to take in all elements who wish to take part and have something to offer. Whilst for instance the proposals of the Communist Party for a People's Party seem to me to be out of tune with actual Canadian conditions, this does not mean that the C.C.F. should not work in co-operation with them. Nor should some of the smaller groups who wish to aid be excluded from taking their part in the construction of a clear political program.

The C.C.F. faces a great opportunity. Favorable political conditions in Canada permit an open onslaught on capitalism, the people are ready for it, it is the concrete political program that is lacking. If such a program can be hammered out at the coming convention then all the time and the danger of the circuitous route designed to lead up to it can be eliminated. It is this time factor that is above all vital. A People's Party must be ready with an answer to the economic problems as the fissures within capitalism grow ever wider and the social pressure rises. The basis for a People's Party is to be found in a precise political program which contains the answers to the economic problems.

Why a People's Party

By LESLIE MORRIS

COMMUNISTS are glad to have an opportunity to present their case for a people's party in a symposium of this kind. The very fact that the question of a people's party is now being so widely discussed is in itself proof that the idea is in harmony with the wishes of many people. A great deal of confusion and mis-statement exists as to the purposes of the Communist party in putting forward such a proposal.

Georgi Dimitroff, in his brilliant report at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International last summer, anticipated all of the arguments which now confuse the main issue of the moment. What is that issue? How best rapidly to fuse all anti-fascist, democratic forces into a movement which will make fascism impossible and which will clear the road to greater democracy for the masses, to Socialism.

It is possible to meet most of these arguments in Canada, and some of them are contained in the article of Mr. Beder. I propose to deal in this article with some of them, while not regarding my task as in the nature of a polemic.

What is the Communist analysis of the situation? To understand this is to comprehend just what the Communists want. Let us first grasp the fact that the political scene has radically changed from what it was prior to the advent of Hitler and the events in Austria, Spain and France. These highly important events, taken together with the changes within the labour movement in all countries, constitute new factors in the world, namely, the victory of fascism in countries where the labour movement was split and where the united front had not been achieved; in others, the halting of fascism by masses of people of diverse political views who none the less were prepared to unite against the fascist menace.

What does this mean? That fascism, the naked, forcible rule of the most reactionary sections of big capital, the means of state rule which the big capitalists are more and more resorting to, rides to power only if the doors are kept open by a split labour movement.

More than that: it means that a split labour movement cannot do what is supremely necessary, rally around itself all those sections of the population, the urban middle-class, the intellectuals, the professionals, the farmers, the backward workers, out of which fascism creates its mass basis.

Therefore the Communists raise this question: How can the fascists be defeated except by the organized will of people who come together in agreement on the basic questions of the fight to preserve and extend democratic rights, to maintain peace, to fight to satisfy the economic needs of the people?

Let us not think that fascism's program is couched in openly anti-popular terms. And just here is where the great danger for the labour movements arises: the fascists appear before the people as the champions of people's rights, and the defenders of national tradition; as the force unifying the nation. Fascism is an enemy which is not easy to fight; extraordinary methods must be used to combat it. Those millions who are not yet politically awakened, who are not yet sympathetic to Socialism, who come under the spell of various demagogues, stand in utmost danger of becoming the victims of fascist deception. For the labour movement of the world it is a question of "who wins whom?"

But, some will exclaim, such a situation is not yet present in Canada, the Communists are importing European ideals and trying to plant them in a strange soil.

To which Canadian Communists reply: To the extent that fascism is prevented from creating a mass basis, to the extent that the existing state machinery is not fascized, to the extent that democratic rights are protected by the masses; to the extent that the common people are able to win, through struggle, satisfaction for their daily needs and defeat the economic policy of the capitalists, to that extent alone will fascism be prevented from victory in Canada. To wait until a fascist situation exists means sacrificing the labour movement and the middle classes of this country to reaction!

The Communists make it abundantly clear that they are not throwing overboard any of their principles in this. To anyone who knows the history of the Communist movement it will appear ludicrous that Communists separate tactics and strategy from principles! If a principle is anything, it is a guide to action. And what kind of a revolutionary would he be who would be willing to see fascism ride roughshod over a people for the sake of a "principle"? Such "principles" assist fascism.

Far from it! The Communist Party states clearly that it stands on the position of revolutionary class struggle; that only Soviet power can give full democracy and freedom to the masses; that the fight against fascism must be carried to the point where the system that breeds fascism is replaced by Socialism.

But to stand, as some C.C.F. leaders now appear to stand, for "pure" Socialism divorced from immediate battle, is to take up a sectarian position which can result only in defeat for the working class movement.

The most striking phenomenon in the Canadian labour movement has been the manner in which large numbers of workers have taken up a militant position. The trek of the camp boys stirred thousands of people to action. We will see more similar happenings! The merging of the Workers' Unity League unions with the A. F. of L. lights up the way to a powerful union movement never before seen in Canada. Such a striking movement as the "Front Populaire" in Quebec province has succeeded in winning many followers away from the fascist clubs, for democratic struggle, promising an end to French-Canadian backwardness. In dozens of localities, Communists and C.C.F. members are working in harmony on matters of intense public concern. All these happenings indicate the growing necessity of a united labour movement, of a people's front, which will give voice to the growing "left" moods of the masses.

In proposing a farmer-labour party as the vehicle for this expression, the Communist Party is motivated by the best interests of the common people of Canada. To bring about the formation of such a party will not be an easy task. Clarity is needed. To achieve this the Communists propose a thorough going discussion in the labor movement, among the farmers and among the middle-class people of the towns and cities. No cut and dried guiding lines can be set for such discussion—with the single exception that in order to be fruitful it must have the merit of frank, honest and straightforward presentation of the pros and cons. (In this connection, the Communists consider that certain leading figures in the C.C.F. cannot yet lay claim to such a presentation.)

Such open, frank discussion is necessary to get rid of the accumulated suspicion and distrust which, we cannot gainsay, does exist.

Here the article of Mr. E. A. Beder, in which he takes up the important question of the program of the farmer-labor party, requires answering from the Communist point of view. The Communist Party does not come forward with a prepared program, as Mr. Beder seems to think necessary, and introduce it with the words: Here is what we place as a "condition" for a farmer-labor party. To do so would be the worst form of schematic substitutes for a genuine movement. Not that Communists have no opinions as to the program which should be adopted. It would suit them very well if by some stroke of magic the program of the Communist International would be suddenly and completely acceptable to the masses. But, as Lenin was fond of quoting Chernishevsky: "Politics are not as straight as the Nevsky Prospect." Things don't happen that way. Suffice it to say that such a program will not be the full Communist program. It may not be the Regina program of the C.C.F. It may not be fully socialist. But one or two things are already clear, and that is the main thing; the program of such a party must express the political and economic desires of the masses of Canadian people. It will have to be directed against the reactionary capitalistic forces. It will have to exclude co-operation with them. It must be a program which will lead to unity in action of the masses of the people. To be really effective it must not be directed to the industrial workers alone, but to the farmers and to the middle classes of the cities and towns. It must pay special attention to the people in and following the Social Credit movement.

It will not be a "defense" program, or lose economic reality as the "price of unity", or counterpose "immediate" with "ultimate" demands, all of which Mr. Beder seems to fear. But to be effective it must be a program stimulating action by the masses on immediate questions.

Already there are evidences of how such a program may come about, and what organizational forms such a party may take. Regina offers the best example. There a really representative united front in the form of the local labor party has, in a short time, won the city administration. The movement was not schemed from the top, but came from below. It has already evolved forms of mass work which stand as a model to all labor parties. If this can be done in a middle class city like Regina, what can be done in large industrial towns? (A further lesson from Regina: It is safe to assume that the present unity would not have come about without the experience of the trek and Dominion Day events.) From which we can draw the lesson that unity can and is forged in the daily fight and not as the result of dry, abstractly perfect schemes.

But not only that. When the Communist Party proposes affiliation to the C.C.F. as a step to a mass people's party, it does so with the idea of leadership in mind. Can it be said that a farmer-labor party is possible unless the Communist Party and the C.C.F. give a unified lead? Communists realize the mass influence of the C.C.F. Not to do so would indicate political blindness. The Communists believe that the C.C.F. is not a centralized, homogeneous, individual membership party, but has many of the qualities of a federated mass party. We therefore see in the C.C.F. that channel through which a farmer-labor party can best flow. For the C.C.F. today does not organizationally reflect its mass support.

It can do so only if it drives to include the unions, the many different labor organizations, the farm bodies, the middle class groups, the Social Credit clubs, left church groups, and a number of others who will be activized by the appearance of such a party.

This is not a matter of "imposing" Communist will on an existing party. It is a matter of building out the material to hand that farmer-labor people's party which alone can express the people's anti-fascist pro-democratic, political front.

In such a party, Canadian Communists will work just as loyally and actively as do the Communists in France. Retaining our program and believing the eventual inevitability of proletarian dictatorship, we are prepared to come together on those immediate issues which mean life or death to the labor movement and to its allies.

To such an end, at the present moment, Canadian Communists are directing their energies to local united front movements, and to the fight for trade union unity—that key and heart to any real mass people's party.

In a people's party such as is necessary to oppose the forces of capitalist reaction, the Communists here will strive to prove themselves that section of the labor movement which is the most energetic in the fight for peace, against fascism, for democratic rights.

The Communist Party does not hesitate to publicly criticise itself for those errors which it committed — and which no active workers' party can avoid. The errors were those of growth, of sectarian immaturity, and we need no pummelling from the C.C.F. leaders to tell us that.

What is needed now is greater activity, increased co-operation, unity in action between the Communist and the C.C.F. to build a mass farmer-labor party, skilful leadership, mass initiative. With such a united front in the political labor movement, and with unionization of the two million unorganized as the aim of thousands of class-conscious union men and women, a people's party, a genuine, mass farmer-labor party can come about, and in a short time.

On the quick emergence of such a party the whole future of the Canadian toilers, professionals and intelligentzia depends!

A C.C.F. Approach to a People's Party

By GRAHAM SPRY

NOTE: Since New Frontier is a magazine for the free expression of opinion, we print the opening paragraphs of Mr. Spry's article without deletion, although the Editorial Board is unanimous in disagreeing with every particular of them. Setting aside the discourtesy with which Mr. Spry has accepted the hospitality of the columns of this new magazine only to make unwarranted charges against it, we consider the paragraphs in question to be wholly gratuitous, and to bear no reference whatever to the subject on which Mr. Spry agreed to write.

POLICY and organization constitute the two main questions to be determined by left-wing movements in the contemporary Canadian political situation. It is these two questions which I propose to discuss in this article.

I do not intend specifically to discuss all the points Mr. Morris and Mr. Beder raise. Mr. Morris states the position of the Communist Party. This is also the position of NEW FRONTIER, the policy of the "united front" in accordance with the "re-shaped tactical line" of the Communist Party of Canada.

Mr. Morris is a Communist. His position is clean-cut, frank, courageous. He makes no bones about it, he has adorned himself with no camouflage. I could wish that NEW FRONTIER and those associated with it were equally frank. The "revised tactical line" has created a new form of political animal — the "United Fronter"—a sort of political Centaur, half a kicking horse, half a smiling, ingratiating human. The landscape is dotted with these galloping figures—the League against War and Fascism, the Friends of the Soviet Union, a whole variety of similar figures, and now in the "cultural" field, NEW FRONTIER. (This however, does not mean that all persons associated with such groups are Communists or even supporters of the communist position. Certainly not all the editors of or contributors to NEW FRONTIER are Communists.)

These figures, both recent and less recent, justify their existence upon two contradictory grounds. They kick against mere Socialists and other inoffensive animals because they are so different in policy and action from the full-blooded Communists. They smilingly advocate a united front between Communists and Socialists because the policies and action of each are so similar. Thus, NEW FRONTIER justifies its birth because The Canadian Forum is not far enough to the left, and because the right and left should be united.

Mr. Beder is not without Centaur-like appearances; but he is further from the Hellespont—a Centaur, if you will, floating alone on a magic carpet between the shining Heaven of the Communist Party and the inert earth of the C.C.F. Two years ago, the C.C.F. was not doctrinaire enough to rise to his high level; today he attacks the C.C.F. because it is too rigid, "too wrapped up in the inertia of its Regina Manifesto". Few Socialists can be more "rugged individualists" than Mr. Beder.

But despite this friendly tirade, I agree with Mr. Beder in two of his statements on policy and organization. He says, "Conditions in Canada do call for a Canadian approach which must have distinctive features of its own." And he says, with respect to organization, "The C.C.F. faces a great opportunity. Favorable political conditions in Canada permit an open onslaught on capitalism."

And I agree with him that the Communist proposals for the policy of a new party are quite inadequate. The generalities set forth as policies upon which a "United Front" can be achieved by and with the Communist Party reflect that magistral ineptitude which has characterized almost every major approach of the Communist Party to the Canadian working and middle classes. As I read Communist papers and hear Communist speeches, I often wonder how so efficient an organization can be so incredibly inefficient in its propaganda.

A new party cannot be formed upon such vague phrases as "action for peace", as "maintenance of democratic rights", as "fight against Fascism", as "transfer the burden onto the shoulders of the ruling class". There is not a political party in Canada that would not use those phrases.

The real basis of a political party is the actual concrete policy for dealing with the questions these or other phrases suggest. Until this content is given, I remain very strongly dubious of Communist enthusiasm for "democratic rights". Has, for example, the Communist Party abandoned its erstwhile horror of "bourgeois democracy"? Similarly, there remains a deep-seated doubt about the Communist attitude to the churches, about the essence of Communist foreign policy, about the attitude of the Communist Party to institutions not particularly significant in the struggle of this century, but commanding deep loyalties and, when attacked, still capable of rallying a vast force against the attackers.

A whole series of these questions require examination. Nothing in the booklet *Towards a Canadian People's Front,* or in Mr. Morris's article settles them.

The main basis for a "people's party" as proposed by the Communist Party has been opposition to Fascism and War. "Canada is not different" in that it has no conditions that will lead to Fascism, but Canada is different in that Canadian conditions do require a Canadian approach.

And the approach towards a people's party is not to be found in opposition to Fascism and War precisely because Canadian conditions, as Mr. Beder agrees, are different, for example, from French conditions. This approach is a typical Communist blunder; it is an attempt, through the League Against War and Fascism and other bodies, to impose upon the Canadian people the pattern of the French or European mind. Henri Barbusse may have been sound in Paris, but he is not sound in Toronto.

The fact of the matter is that, however essentially peace-loving the Canadian people are, they are not ready to forget policies that more easily divide them and unite merely on the basis of opposition to war. A tariff controversy, at the moment, divides Canadians more easily than opposition to war unites them.

And similar comments may be made about opposition to the name "Fascism". Most Canadians, if they happen to recognize the foreign term, Fascism, are opposed to it. But it is a sheer delusion to think that Canadian divisions, sectional, racial, religious, political, can now be submerged in opposition to "Fascism". Fascism is not part of the Canadian pattern, and not all the self-sacrifice and ability of A. A. McLeod and his colleagues have yet imposed it upon the Canadian mind. It can be done, but it cannot be done in time.

Other words and phrases could be discussed, but the fact of the matter is that I reject emphatically and entirely the whole series of meaningless and emasculated cardboard soldiers that the Communist Party and its Centaurs are setting up as the advance guard of a new people's party. The uniforms are somewhat frayed and foreign. I suspect Mr. Morris and the authors of *Towards a People's Front* are only putting them in the window to see what the passers-by will say.

But, having thus rudely rejected Leslie Morris, Dimitrov, Stewart Smith, A. A. McLeod and Henri Barbusse, is there any alternative allurement which could be suggested for the window? The window must be emphasized as a window. The two policies, the appeal in order to secure power and the administrative use of power, should be consistent in principle. But there is a distinction between the window and the shop, between propaganda and legislation.

The C.C.F. shop, the Regina Manifesto, has stood up far better than Mr. Beder would have us believe, and it is from this quiver, and nowhere else that the window will be made appealing, provided, of course, that there is to be consistency, that the shop and the window be joined. The Regina Manifesto and the thinking behind it produced the largest and broadest (but certainly not most efficient) political organization on the left, and by opposition, a dialectical process, called forth the Reconstruction Party, the Tory "swing to the left", the Communist swing to the right, and other results, even (with other factors) Mr. Aberhart. These, obviously, are not all desirable results, but the C.C.F. makes bold to claim that no political document in recent Canadian history has had so many consequences as the Regina Manifesto. Change, interpretation, development of the Regina Manifesto will proceed; they are proceeding now in a whole series of media from *Social Planning for Canada* to forms of political agitation. The Regina Manifesto, however, is not window dressing. It will not do as a substitute for Mr. Morris's pathetic, under-nourished cardboard soldiers. It is too large an army and the army necessarily, is somewhat academic.

It seems to me (I use this regrettable first person because I speak only for myself and, moreover, speak most tentatively) that the basis of both a popular appeal and of a single unified anti-capitalist movement may be found in policies drawn from two main groups of Canadian political prejudices, patterns, and problems, each of them reflecting the essential nature of capitalism and each demanding the essential remedies that only socialism can provide.

The first of these is opposition to monopoly. Here, in the opposition to monopoly, is presented a dominant, characteristic evil of capitalism, a palpable sustained failure of reformism, a pattern long-developed in every Canadian mind from coast to coast, and a most ample record of the growth and operation of monopolies. A whole series of diverse interpretations appropriate to the special interests and particular problems of industrial workers, youth, housewives, farmers, small merchants, etc., etc., present themselves at once. Here is an issue for the window.

But the danger is that the remedy may not be emphasized enough. Fascists also attacked monopoly; so, also, did Mr. Bennett and Mr. King. It is, therefore, essential to propound the remedy, but, considering here the necessity of unifying other movements, some latitude might be allowed, some diversity even encouraged in the remedies, or the terminology proposed. But whatever the details of the remedies, the principle underlying them all necessarily would be the same, the principle of socialization.

The positive policy is more difficult to state. In summary, it relates to a demonstration, in simple, ordinary terms, of a sound and practicable method of creating and distributing an income to every Canadian family, either in cash or in social services, sufficient to sustain and to improve the standard of living.

For this appeal, also, the ground is prepared and essentially there is only one ultimate solution, however it may be presented in the window. That solution is the socialization of finance. Stated in another way, the movement of the future on the left is the movement that shows "where the money will come from"; that is, how a rising national income will be produced and distributed.

Our opponents are often admirable guides to their greatest fears and weakest point. Thus Sir Edward Beatty and Mr. Jackson Dodds both replied to the charge that a very few people own this country. And the bank presidents have also been telling us how many bank accounts there are in Canada, how the "people own the banks," and what not. Monopoly and the socialization of finance are delicate points, or they would not be covered with the armour of so much public speaking.

Provision of work at trade union wages, adequate farm incomes, lowering of the burden of debt and taxation, establishment of an adequate health service—all these and a host of other policies flow from ending monopoly and showing where the money comes from. Both need a great deal more exposition and exploration than given here, and obviously the question of war and peace must be discussed. But the approach to a "reshaped tactical line" for a single left-wing movement lies, I think, somewhere in these suggestions.

But perhaps more important than either monopoly or income is the awakening of a hope in the hearts and minds of the people that each individual has value and significance, a function to perform, a contribution to make for society. A mere economic appeal is not enough; there must be an appeal to nobility, a religious zeal, a fervour that alone comes from the sense of significant participation in the striving with others for others. The individual in a factory or on relief or behind the plough has lost that feeling of significance. There is no greater appeal than the moral appeal. A

united movement without that appeal will not remain united.

How is this single movement to be achieved? There is scarcely space to discuss what Mr. Morris and the Communist Party propose as the organizational basis of a single left-wing movement. The assumption that the C.C.F. ever had a loose, federated constitution to which any party vaguely sympathetic could affiliate is entirely wrong. From the first the intent was unity upon the basis of a single constitution and a single policy.

A political movement to be effective as an organization and as a method of moving opinion must have a definite if general program. And if the organization as an organization is to be effective, there must be some single final authority, however democratic. The Communist proposal envisages a basis even looser than a federation. Each section is to be sovereign and to co-operate insofar as it agrees to co-operate. And one of these sovereign sections, the Communist Party, is to be subject to another sovereignty, the Communist International. The picture of a federation on so loose a basis composed of such varied sovereignties as the Communist, C.C.F., Social Credit, Reconstruction, Labour, Farmer, Socialist and Beder parties, looking, not to the final authority of a single democratic or autocratic body, but to Stalin, Woodsworth, Aberhart, Stevens, Paddy Draper, Bill Nicholson and Beder, is a picture that conveys little conviction. It is, I fear, scarcely a picture of the sort of force that would provide any match for the old parties or for St. James and King streets.

Is there, however, a basis for a single organization, a people's party? One answer is the C.C.F. itself, as it is now constituted. Despite Mr. Beder's jeremiads about the C.C.F., it survived even his resignation and even Mr. King's victory. The strength of the Communist Party lies in its centralized, coherent, disciplined organization, but it has little or no spontaneous, dispersed strength. The virtue of the Communist Party is that it is more of an organization, though less of a movement; the virtue of the C.C.F. is that it is more of a movement, though less, as yet, of an organization.

I venture to suggest that there is not a single youth group in Canada associated with churches, Y.M.C.A.'s, social organizations, or English-speaking farm organizations spontaneously studying Communism for Communist purposes. There are scores, I might even say hundreds, of such groups studying what the C.C.F. proposes. No one, not deeply engaged in C.C.F. activities, can gauge just how universal is the spontaneous interest in the C.C.F. It comes from every section in Canada, and from every section in that section—working class, farmer, religious, social, literary, old and young. And for the most part—I say this with no relish, but as a statement of fact—the overwhelming majority of these groups would not tolerate a Communist speaker, except as a curiosity. It is not claimed here that these groups are C.C.F.; of course not. But it is claimed that these groups are seriously examining the C.C.F. policies, including the Regina Manifesto and "Social Planning" as serious and practicable alternatives to the present parties and the present system. The Communist Party in the past and the Communist proposals in the present did not and cannot "organize" such spontaneity.

Both as an organization functioning, though still very imperfectly, and as a movement, generating spontaneously its own support, the C.C.F., alone among all the left and presumed left parties, can provide the basis for a people's party.

"What, then, must we do?" to ask the question in the words of Tolstoy. Here a frankly hedge. I hedge, first, because I am convinced only generally, not precisely, of my answer; second, because if I was convinced, I should not throw the answer into the discussion at this particular moment.

But these two or three things may be said: First, there must be one, not many, anti-capitalist parties; the task of the immediate future is to achieve a real and significant unity. Second, either the C.C.F., as now constituted, or with some modification of its constitution and approach, alone shows the way to such unity. Third, it is almost futile for the Communist Party to take the initiative, especially by its present method of Massey Hall speeches and "boring from within", in a word, by pressure. Further, there is the timing factor in unification—which group first? which group second? On this point I can only say that any possibility of "unity" with the farmers or with the Reconstruction Party and the Social Credit Party will be destroyed through prior "unity" between the C.P. and the C.C.F. The organizations might be won, but the movements would be lost.

Two Poems

How Are You?

"How are you, this morning?"
I questioned a man.
He replied:
"In Japan, a bullet has shattered my brain.
In China, the bayonets have pierced my side.
In America, I am crying for bread at my mother's knee.
I am rotting in Canadian gaols.
In Europe, I am driven by hunger and despair to the red shambles of another war.
Thank you for asking.
I might be better than I am . . . this morning!"

A. M. Stephen.

Epitaph for a Canadian Statesman

Now Time has pricked this bag of wind
Which parliamentary thrusts could not;
The iron heel that clicked and rang
Corrodes to bio-chemic rot:
Where orphaned rolls the Ottawa
His cossacks club for other hire;
His lien on heavenly dividends
Is vouched for by the Tory choir.
Industry's Captains, C.M.A.,
Draft plaintive eulogies for him
Whose swallow tails and penguin paunch
Are fluttering with the cherubim.
O Bosses, wring your chubby hands,
Weep sweetly as the crocodile;
And mourn your prototype brought low
Though versed in constitutional guile.

Leonard Bullen.

Six Years

By KATHERINE BLIGH

MRS. DAKIN lived in the third house from ours. Maybe I remembered it best because it was the only house on the street where I hadn't set foot inside the doorstep; though I reckon I knew the outside by heart, with its neat box hedge planted gay-like with geraniums and salvia, its windows trim with polka dotted curtains, and the bungalow roof nestling down comfortably over the clapboard. It was one of the nicest cottages on our straggly street, the look of it made you wish the town council would hurry up and pave, out our way. And Mr. Dakin, they said, made good money where he clerked, somewhere in the city, shot up flight after flight each morning by the elevators.

Those were good days, and most of our men were working at the starch works, taking their dinner pails with them as they left home at six-thirty in the morning. We women were up betimes too, washing and scrubbing and tending to the children. It wasn't till along about ten o'clock that Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Dakin's neighbor, could take note of the fact that Mrs. Dakin's blinds were pulled up, and she out on the back porch in her wrapper, taking in the milk. Mrs. Bennett may be something of a gossip, but she is kind-hearted all the same—and certainly Mrs. Dakin never gave her curiosity the least bit of satisfaction. She would never even call out good-morning sociable like any decent body would. If she had to answer you, her speech would be short and quick like that of city people. They do say she came from the city, and maybe that says as much as the first robin.

Mrs. Dakin had only one baby, that she wheeled out every afternoon in his carriage. When he grew older she let him play about in her back yard all by himself. Sometimes he would talk away to Mrs. Bennett's children through the fence, and Mrs. Dakin would be at the kitchen window, watching every move he made. It was as if she thought her child was something precious and different from all the other children. Almost as if our kids had a disease he might catch.

When the big lay-off came Mrs. Dakin was the only woman on the street who didn't seem to know about it. Maybe nobody troubled to tell her, but she wouldn't have cared anyway. Her man wasn't working at the factory. It's strange to think about in a way, her living so close to us, and yet so far. I used to wonder sometimes, hurrying past her house to the store, how she could live like that, so far way from everything that was happening. Goodness knows, I had enough troubles of my own not to want to drag anybody else into the same net. I just wanted to understand her. She was on my conscience like a frightening dream you have had in the night, and can't quite remember.

One night a group of our men folk were having a meeting in the front room, to talk about getting cash relief instead of vouchers. Bill Sanders was there, Alec Thompson, Joe Mantoni, Sam Bennett and my Joe. I called out to them to keep the wick burning low, because there wasn't much oil left in the lamp. The electricity had been cut off months before and we would have no more oil until our two weeks' budget time was up. Maybe they didn't hear me, but anyway they got to figuring with pencil and paper and talking louder and louder. Suddenly their talk was cut short like birds' voices when a storm is coming. Then Joe said "Well, I'll be jiggered." I peered through the kitchen door into the front room and there they were, sitting in the dark like I had predicted. I went to fetch some candles and when I came back Sam Bennett was standing at the window with the curtains pushed back. "Well," he drawled slowly, as if talking to himself, "I reckon the only welcome light in this street, that we fought so hard to get wired and brought up to date, is the Dakin's electric light burning up the midnight on their porch."

"And they only came here after we got the electricity installed," Alec said.

Nobody could forget the Dakins.

It couldn't have been long after that when we were sitting home one evening all to ourselves. Joe wasn't going out to any meetings that night so he was feeling comfortable with his shoes off, leaning back in his chair by the stove and reading the paper. I finished giving the baby her bath, put her to bed, and sat down by the table to help Johnny with his spelling. Joe was puffing away hard at his pipe, sometimes reading out some news items, or else just muttering to himself between paragraphs. To tell the truth I wasn't paying much attention to him, just sitting there drowsily and saying yes and no, and telling Johnny to look in the book when he spelt out loud.

Joe said something about there being a letter in the paper from an unemployed fellow on our street. Then all of a sudden he was jumping to his feet, excited, waving the paper.

"Why Mary, would you believe it! After all we've been saying and thinking—it says here that the Reliable Insurance Company has dismissed most of its male workers: because they have to be paid more than the girls!"

I just looked at him, not knowing what he was driving at. Sooner or later he would explain when he saw the dumb look on my face.

"But don't you see what this means, Mary! That is where Dakin is working—that is what will happen to Dakin!"

Mind you, I don't think he was gloating. It just hit him like a thunderbolt would, and he didn't know what to think. In a flash I could see Mrs. Dakin taking in those words, wide-eyed and innocent, not understanding; and the fear like a bad dream swept over me.

If the truth must be said, most of us were somewhere near the front window for the next few mornings, along about the time that Mr. Dakin went up the street to catch his trolley. There he was, same as usual, his slight, bony figure walking along at a quick pace. It was only after two weeks that Mrs. Bennett said definitely: "He couldn't have been laid off. He goes back and forth regular as clockwork."

I was glad. Yet there was a kind of ache too. The Dakins seemed so far off.

That winter was the worst winter we had had. Instead of stretching further the relief we got seemed to shrink. Joe said prices were going up and they didn't make the vouchers out of elastic. Then there was always new things needing to be bought, shoes and medicine for the children, kitchen necessities, cleaning materials that weren't on the relief list. For a while we skimped. And then we began to get mad. It was when Alec Thompson's little girl was so sick with pleurisy, run down from lack of vitamins, and they wouldn't take her into the hospital. That was when the Unemployment Association got going strong. Most of the women were on the women's auxiliary and grievance committee combined. We investigated families that had been given a rough deal, we went on delegations down to the relief office.

One week when the struggle was at its pitch we decided to hold a euchre and social at the Association Hall, so as to raise money for delegations to the county council and for emergency aid to blacklisted families. We women were discussing it beforehand over at my place. Mrs. Thompson came plump out with what was on our minds: "If we want to raise money we can't take the pennies out of our own tin boxes that we keep on the mantle. That's no way out. We've got to invite people who are working."

"Such as?" said Mrs. Mantoni. Then she named a few people who are skimping along on wage-cuts.

"What about the doctor's wife? And the minister's wife?" someone else pointed out.

"And what about the Dakin's?" said Mrs. Bennett. Everyone just laughed as if that was a good joke.

"Mrs. Dakin is still wearing the winter coat she had three years ago," Mrs. Thompson said. "But she passes you with her head in the air. The other day I said good morning to her on Main Street, but she was staring in at a windowful of flowers, and made as if she didn't hear me."

"If she can buy flowers, she can buy a ticket to a euchre," Mrs. Mantoni said. That gave me the courage to say that I would drop in at her place, and ask her.

The very next morning I was unlatching the little green gate, and ringing the front doorbell. I would have felt more natural going round to the back, but I didn't somehow like to. It took a long time before she came to the door. She opened it about a foot and stood on guard between me and the house, her black hair wrapped up in a dust cap, her hazel eyes sort of defiant.

"I'm Mrs. Morrison. I was asked to call on various people on behalf of the Unemployed Association."

"We don't belong to that," she said, very quick.

"I know. It's just that we're having a social and get together. We thought maybe your husband and yourself would like to come . . ."

She hesitated. It was a bright cold morning, and easy to see she was shivering. But she did not ask me to come in. "I would have to ask my husband," she said.

"Maybe if I left you a couple of tickets," I said "you could decide later." I held them out to her. "They are fifteen cents each."

She drew back, almost closing the door. "I really don't think he would want to go," she told me. "You see, the baby is sick and I would have to stay with him."

"I'm sorry." That's all there was to say. She had got quite definite all of a sudden, when at first I thought there was a sort of yearning in her, to come and meet us all.

We held the euchre without her. Mr. Conroy dressed up in his clown suit and had us all laughing instead of worrying about the relief. Somebody had a fiddle and Sandy McPherson, who was supposed to be at death's door with his weak heart, went tearin' through the hall like a streak of dynamite, leading the square dances.

That night Joe and I walked home tired but happy-like, he carrying the baby and I dragging Johnny and Isabel, who were almost walking in their sleep. The sharp, starry night quickened our breath, so we threw our heads back. Finally we saw ahead our own street, and rounded the fenced-in corner that is Dakin's corner.

"Joe," I whispered, "there isn't any light on."

"Well, they're in bed, I guess. Or gone to a movie."

We moved on, almost past Mrs. Bennett's house. But she tapped at the window and I stepped in alone to see if she wanted anything. Mrs. Bennett had not come to the social because she was expecting a new addition to the family.

Inside she seized my arm breathlessly. "Mary, it's happened!"

"And you didn't get to the hospital?" I was horror struck to see her standing there.

"Not me. I mean the Dakin's. Their electricity has been turned off!"

"But that's impossible. He's working."

"All the same, the electrician went by there this afternoon."

"But he's working . . ."

"Who knows?"

I turned to the door. "Then they need our help."

"They don't want our help, Mary."

"Never mind." I didn't feel excited any more, or happy like at the social. It was with a funny kind of quietness I went out of Mrs. Bennett's yard and turned in at the Dakin's gate as if I was going there for the first time in my life. The front doorway was dark and bolted so I made my way round to the back, knocking on the kitchen door. Everything was quiet.

I knocked again. Someone stirred. The door opened by a tiny crack and the faint glimmer of one candle lighted the room. Almost hidden behind the door Mrs. Dakin said uncertainly: "Everett?"

"No. It's I. Your neighbor. Mrs. Morrison."

She opened the door without a word. Once inside the dim, muffled light of the kitchen I did not know what to say. Mrs. Dakin seemed to be alone, and from what I could see of her face it was all puffed up with crying.

Finally I said that I had come from an unemployed gathering. We believed we could get better relief to fit the rise in prices.

"I wasn't there," said Mrs. Dakin. "Sit down, won't you?" She was standing up herself. Her body seemed too rigid to sit. I pulled a chair up to the kitchen table and sat looking up at her. "I am on the grievance committee, so I happened to think that if there was any matter we could take up, to help you out——" I was faltering, and she did not seem to comprehend. "Perhaps you would want to talk to your husband first?"

"Oh he's not in—he's gone out for a walk." Her voice was still nasal from crying. "You can talk to me all right."

I told her what the Association had been doing. I told her what the relief officer was like, and how it might be difficult to get on relief the first time, unless you pushed hard. She did not seem to be listening, standing on one foot and making circles on the floor with her other shoe.

"You see," she said, still hard and set, "we don't want to go on relief. . . . I don't know what right you have to tell me to do it."

I got up, then, in a hurry. "I'm awful sorry. I didn't mean to intrude. I don't know why I thought your husband was working."

"Who told you he wasn't working?"

"Nobody. . . . I was mistaken, I guess. It was your lights going off. I thought it would be neighborly to ask what was wrong. Please excuse me."

She got blazing mad then. "There, you see! It's just what I thought would happen. As soon as you get to know people they want to know your whole business. No matter what you do, they have to talk about it. Prying into the lives of harmless people, twisting everything up . . ." She wouldn't let me interrupt her. "Yes, there's something mean about living like this, so close. In the city you don't have to live like that. You have a brick house and a garden, with roses climbing along the back fence. You say 'hello' to people but they don't try to sneak over the fence and count how many chickens you've got. I hate this, I hate it." she cried.

Finally, standing near the door, I got a word in edgewise.

"Naturally," I told her straight, "if you are well fixed it was none of my business to come in here. But you had told me your little boy was sick, and noticing your lights were off I just couldn't help wondering if you had gas to cook with, not knowing at the time that your husband was still working. . . . All I can do is apologize for my mistake. . ."

I started opening the door.

She stood there staring at me, telling me it was quite all right. The cold air came blowing in and she shivered a lttle. From the bedroom the baby cried out to her, maybe in his sleep, fretful like.

"Does he need anything?" I asked, feeling it was a foolish thing to say. Somehow or other I wanted to go away with a more friendly feeling.

"Wait a minute." She flew into the other room. Pressing the doorlatch in my hand I could hear her soothing him. She stayed so long I thought she had forgotten me; perhaps she had not meant me to stay, it was an excuse so that she wouldn't have to say goodbye. The candle flickered in the draught caused by the crack I had left in the door. I thought I had better go.

But she came back. "He wants some milk" she explained, hesitating. "He hasn't had any all day," She said it in a kind of detached way, and went on in a low voice, not looking at me. "You see, maybe it wasn't a mistake after all. . . ."

"What do you mean?"

"You'll have to know sometime, I guess. It's better to get it straight than in a roundabout way."

I waited for her to go on. She was still defiant, but much calmer; quiet as if there was something really big worrying her. It forced her on.

"It's true that Everett hasn't been working," she said, quite fast.

I pushed my hand against the door. "But he goes to work every morning!"

"That's a lie, too!" Suddenly she was nearly crying. "He was laid off three months ago. He only p-p-pretended to be going to work. There now, you have it! You know everything I was trying to hide—everything."

We were facing each other, she young and desperate and I older and trying to understand.

"There wasn't nothing to hide," I said. "We're all the same way."

"But we were saving up to move, and to send Jimmie to school in the city, and to go up north in the summertime. . . . You wouldn't understand. And now there isn't anything left. . . . And I am having another baby. . . " She began to sob then, and slouched down into a chair.

She was so young she thought she could do everything by herself. It didn't matter what we were planning to do to help our selves, she couldn't count herself in on that. But I knew there wasn't any other way out.

I figured I'd have to leave her there, crying, and go on home. But when I had got as far as the door she stopped me again.

"I've been awful mean to you," she said.

"No, I see how it is."

"I used to watch you going by on the street with your head up as if you were really going some place. And I'd want to run out on to the street and say hello. But I was scared that if we got to know the neighbors it would keep us back somehow. I didn't want Everett's boss to step by and catch me gossiping on a corner. Everett said we didn't have anything in common—and now, you're the first person to come!"

"I didn't come out of pity," I said. "It isn't kind ness."

"Then what——?" she faltered.

"Just to say you've a right to live decent."

We looked straight at each other. I couldn't tell if she was smiling or crying.

"I'll tell Everett," she said.

She had six years to unlearn.

Summons For This Generation

Revoke your ebb's dispersal with arrayed
Bright flesh on stalwart scaffolding of chalk,
With hair grown subtly to a thatch, the scooped
Low-buttressed skull that roofs the wits the walk
Of the time-ghost, with vigorous grouped
Limbs, with wrists, with hands alertly splayed;
Assert a tidal and advance a flood
With clamour of the lips the pulse the tongue
Bell-clanging in the steeple of the head,
With thought, with laughter and the loosely-strung
Spine taut, the light heel spurning the pampered dead,
With dominant restatements of the blood.

LEO KENNEDY

Friends, Romans, Hungrymen

By A. M. KLEIN

SO one day, way back in the time of the fairytales, the boss called me into his cave and said that he was sorry but he was going to lay me off. He said it nicely, like an ogre elocuting fee-fi-fo-fum. He grabbed me, wrapped me up in a little package, and laid me down upon a dusty shelf. Then he stuck out a long tongue, licked the gluey side of a strip of paper, pasted it on me, and read it over: Unemployed.

At night, when I heard no more belches in the cave, I knew the boss had gone home for a refill of his belching stuff. He is a sick man, he always eats. I wriggled out of the package, and went to the park. I applied for membership in the zoo.

I have been there ever since.

Sometimes I am very hungry. Things in my stomach toy about with my intestines, pulling them out like elastic, and letting them go snap.

At those times, I go through the lanes of the city. I lift the haloes from off the garbage-cans, and always find a tid-bit. Manna. It tastes like whatever one wishes it to taste. I only want it to taste like food.

Once I realized that it would be a long time before I would get a real meal. So I took out my false teeth, polished them on my cuff and wrapped them in a piece of cellophane that I picked up in the street on a cigarette box. Soon I put the teeth back into my mouth. The better to smile with, my child.

I smile to the dames that pass through the park. They look good, and when they are gone, a sweet smell still floats in the air. But they never give me a tumble. I think I am too skinny. They don't like ethereal guys.

It is terrible not to have a roof over your head. All day, white molten lead is poured over me from a big cauldron which somebody on purpose hangs up in the sky.

At night I sleep on a bench in the park. A lot of other bums do the same. Before I fall asleep, I always watch the shadowy cobras, and the prowling leopards coming towards me. In the morning I wake up, and my shoes and cap are wet from the licking of the beasts.

My head is getting duller and duller. It feels like a cage in which mice are scampering about looking for cheese that isn't there. It is because I am getting so stupid that I was nearly run over by Ezekiel's chariot which came rushing at me, stinking like a field of over-ripe radishes, and screaming with the voice of a dinosaur. I was picked up from the gutter, sugared with dust like a Turkish delight.

As I turned a street corner, I met God. I asked Him for a dime for a cup of coffee. He told me He had no small change, but recommended to me a swell flophouse on the Milky Way. Then, as an afterthought He put His hand in His pocket, and took out a couple of cheap comets. Because my pockets are torn, I tied one up in my shirt, lit the other, and strolled down the boulevard, puffing like a plutocrat.

There is nothing like a bit of self-confidence. I went back to the boss who was swathed in many rolls of pork-loins. I asked him for my job. He said: Can't you see that you are lying on a shelf? Go away from here, you are a ghost. I pushed my fingers between my ribs and pulled out my heart, and said: Look, it is going. It's a fake, he answered, you just wound it up.

After that I had to take a drink. I drank at a public fountain. But I did not enjoy it. A creature, with two arms, two legs, a wooden fang, and growing blue wool all over him, kept watching me. And when I stopped to wipe my lips with my sleeve, he said—in English—Move on.

The best is to sit on a bench in the park. There are all kinds of papers lying around, and if you are not tired, you can read them, for nothing. I like to read the menus. Yesterday, I picked up a nifty, and the birds who were looking over my shoulder sang, *Fricassee! Fricassee! Pate de foie gras!*

But you get rubbed out sitting too much. Some day I will have to sit on my sixteenth vertebra. I look around. There is a sign which says KEEP OFF THE GRASS, but the sign itself breaks the rule. So I lie down on my belly, and watch the ant-hills. I have nothing to do. I give every ant a name, names of fellows who used to work with me in the office. The fat ant is Bill the accountant, the skinny one is the office boy Fred, and the one with the shaking head is Old Man Harris, the Credit manager. I envy the ants. They all have jobs.

Did you ever come to think that birds and beasts are always employed? They all have jobs. They are always doing something. They are laid off only when they are dead. That's civilization for you.

And the birds that work all summer go to Miami for the winter. Even the squirrels save up their nuts for a snowy day. Perhaps the boss kept something for me, to give me when he laid me off. I went to him, and asked him for my ten kegs of sweat which he was keeping back. The boss pulled up his lips, and showed me his teeth. I heard noises going on in his throat.

That night I dreamed I was up in the sky. I picked bright blueberries out of its floor, and ate them. Then I washed it all down by drinking a bucketful that I pulled up from a well of golden soup.

But in the morning my mouth was dry. A kind lady gave me a sandwich. I took it to the park and ate it. All the bums pointed their fingers at me, singing: Shame! Shame! He's ea-ting! He's ea-ting!

The benchers of the park say that the trouble with the system is that there are not enough coins in circulation. They are going to issue some of their own. They had a fight about whose map to put on the ducats. Big Tom wants his face there, but Sam says he looks nicer. Somebody suggested an Indian's head. Naw, we don't want no foreigners.

Then somebody said that it would be better to have a symbol. No, a face. No, a symbol. Alright, a face and a symbol. So it was decided that we put a skull, anybody's skull, on the coin. Now we have to find the metal.

I have no faith in their plans. I would like to be a sweeper in the mint.

On the park bench I found a newspaper. I noticed one page on which the printer had forgotten to set

Unemployed No. 5.

From a lithograph by Ernst Neumann

any type; then in the corner I observed a number of bugs arrayed in a funny combination on the blank paper. They weren't bugs: it said Man Wanted. I went to the place. The man at the door said: You have a late edition, buddy, that was a month ago.

I scrammed. On the way I met my cousin Gerald. He stopped his car, and undid the top buttons of his pants. It's tough, he said, and caught his breath. I said yes. Why don't you go into business for yourself, he said. That's a good idea, I said. I am going to get a sky-rocket and shoot up to the moon. I will take the moon off its hinges, and hide it somewhere. I will say: You want moonlight, pay. Then I will rent the moon out at so much per night. Cut rates for sweethearts. Then I will organize a company and sell moonbeam shares. Yes, I will go into business for myself. Anyway, give me your paper.

In the paper there was a headline, with a big fat exclamation mark: There is a job! When it came my turn to see the guy who was looking over the candidates, I said: Gotta job. It must have sounded foolish, after me waiting in line for so long. Gotta job? How much am I offered, he said.

I went back to the park. I threw my soul into a thimble which a nursemaid had lost under a bench. I planted the think in the earth. I spat upon it; I said: Let it grow.

And now, now I want to die. The bums in the park had a long talk about suicide. They said to me: If you want to die so much, why don't you throw yourself from a sky-scraper?

I haven't enough weight to hurt myself, I said.

How about poison?

I *have* eaten in relief joints, I said.

Ah, they said, shooting?

That's to kill healthy men with.

Then they got sore. Go and hang yourself, they said.

I got sore, too. You dumb clucks, I said, can't you see my neck's too thin not to slip out of any knot?

Somebody said, Have you tried starving, when a guy who was eavesdropping on us, jumped on a bench and shouted: Friends, Romans, hungrymen, lend me your tears. Then he threw his arms up in the air, and pushed out his chest, on which his arms landed when they fell. Then he craned his neck this way and that, and asked a lot of questions, and didn't wait for an answer. We lent him our tears, and he wept.

Suddenly there appeared a herd of those same creatures that once mooed me away from the fountain. They were grabbing the boys by their manes, and pushing them into a waggon. One of them bit me over the head with a wooden fang, and dragged me to a station. That is the name of the lair of these creatures.

Then I was stood before a head which was lying on an open code, and the head said that somebody had overheard me talking about suicide. This was a crime, the head said, and screamed numbers at me. My life belonged to the state. I felt very proud because they were making a fuss about me killing myself.

Then the head said that I would be charged in due course with attempt at suicide and disturbing the peace. In the meantime, if I wanted to make a statement, I didn't have to, and if I didn't want to make a statement, I might. Or something like that. Then somebody gave me pen and ink.

That's how I come to write down everything that I have written down. I am very happy because they tell me that I am going to jail. I hear that they have meals there, regular.

And I hear too that they have work. They even make you work. Imagine! Nobody says how much am I offered?

I hope I stay there forever and forever, amen. This is my statement.

Staver

By MARY QUAYLE INNIS

WHEN she gave him her old winter coat for his wife, he felt the cloth and said quickly, "Why, it'll be as welcome to her as flowers in May." Instead of mumbling "thanks" and shuffling his feet as most of them did, the young man stood there feeling the coat and looking straight at Edith. His eyes were a light brownish green, almost the colour of citron. He laid the coat over the verandah railing and said, "I'll cut your grass for you."

Edith was startled. "You don't need to do that," she said.

"Where's the mower?"

She watched him from the sun room window. He was a huge young man, tall and very broad with shoulders that looked as though he wore football pads under his blue shirt. The lawn mower clattered along like a toy in front of him. Edith thought how hard a task her husband made of the grass cutting. Perhaps she could get this man to come every week. When he finished she offered him fifty cents, half expecting him to refuse it. He took the coin, looked at it and put it in his pocket.

"Now, what more is there?" he asked, looking at her proudly. "I got to raise $2.25 this week to pay the rent. If we can't pay the rent we got to get out." He looked at her, waiting, and added, "My baby's five months old."

"Why," Edith murmured, "Why, I don't know. My husband usually does the outside work."

He seemed not to hear. "I'll do anything," he said. "I got to raise $2.25 by Saturday."

"Well, come Friday," she said impulsively. "You can clean the cellar."

Staver was his name. Edith thought about him all day. She imagined his wife—very young, with blond hair, and his fat, dark haired baby. He must have had a good job before the depression, he walked as if he had had everything. It must be hard for him to wear frayed cotton trousers and broken shoes and see his wife wear somebody else's coat. She could save enough out of her allowance to pay him for cutting the grass every week and make a reprieve for Francis who hated doing it. It seemed terrible that a young, in-

telligent, powerful man should find it a struggle to raise $2.25 a week.

It was ridiculous how she looked forward to Staver's coming. Edith Craigen lived very much alone; she thought sometimes that no old maid in two rooms lived more quietly. Francis had serious digestive trouble and could eat only bland foods and strained soup. When he was gone in the morning, she made a junket or a cup custard for his dinner, washed the breakfast dishes and dusted the house. Then the day was hers—it was more than she knew what to do with. They had a few friends as quiet as themselves. Movies hurt Francis's eyes but he liked certain radio concerts and he liked to read. During the day, Edith sewed a little, lay on the chesterfield with a magazine, turned the radio on and turned it off again. One day a week Mrs. MacPhedran came to do the cleaning and Edith dreaded that day when she had to get a substantial lunch, and listen to the woman's cheerful talk.

The young man Staver was something new. She looked forward to his coming like a child waiting for Christmas. When she saw him walk round the house and heard him rap loudly at the back door, her cheeks suddenly burned and she hoped he would not notice how nervous she was. But he noticed nothing. His look encompassed the cellar, tidy already, and condemned it as a poor, unworthy scene for his labours but he said nothing. He opened the windows and started vigorously to work. Only, as she started upstairs, he called out:

"I charge forty cents an hour."

"All right," she answered timidly, "yes, all right."

His clothes were terrible but he was much too big to wear anything of Francis's. She prepared him a substantial lunch out of things that would not be included in relief supplies—eggs and a salad and cake. On one side of the tray she placed a red apple. He could eat that on his way home or this evening for his supper. When he brought the tray back he only said:

"What can I do now? I need a whole day's work."

"I only had the cellar to do. You can cut the grass next Friday." She glanced at the tray. "You forgot your apple," she exclaimed. "Put it in your pocket."

He looked at the apple and then at her. "No thanks," he said.

What had she had to think about before Staver came to her door? For now, all afternoon, she wondered why he wouldn't take the apple. Perhaps he was angry because she had given him only half a day's work. She would try to think of something for him to do when he cut the grass next week.

Early next morning the phone rang. "Staver speaking. Got anything for me to do today?"

"Why no, I haven't. I told you yesterday—"

"Yes, but I need seventy-five cents more for the rent. I got to pay it today."

"I'm sorry. I haven't got anything."

What would he do, she kept wondering all through Saturday and Sunday. Surely he wouldn't be put out with a little baby for lacking seventy-five cents. It was almost a relief when the phone rang on Monday morning.

"Staver speaking. Any work for me today?"

"Did you—did you get your rent?"

"She let it go over to this week. I got to get three dollars now."

"Well, there's the grass Friday—"

"Couldn't I do it sooner? If you got anything else—"

He came to cut the grass on Tuesday but she had to keep him from coming again on that day for he spoke of Mrs. MacPhedran as "the servant".

"Shanty Irish," Mrs. MacPhedran said. "Look out for that kind."

"You let yourself get roped in," Francis said sourly. When he came in he sniffed at the faint thread of cigarette smoke which Staver left behind him. He smoked a cigarette after his lunch and Edith suspected that he often had one while he was waxing the floors.

"He does the lawn nicely," Edith said.

"That's the trouble. I don't get any exercise and I feel the difference. The doctor said I needed some exercise."

"You never liked to cut the grass."

"Of course I did. I don't see how you think we can afford a man around all the time."

Her allowance was strained to pay Staver but he was a necessity. Her thoughts had lifted out of the old vague round of bule or brown for a dress, paper the dining room this fall or next spring, and had settled into the round of Staver's problems which seemed far more real and engrossing. She thinned her wardrobe to outfit Mrs. Staver and began to knit the baby sweaters and socks.

Every week the burden of raising the $2.25 pressed upon her like a nightmare. He seemed to find very little work beside what she gave him and she was desperate to find jobs for him. He said nothing, he did whatever she asked, but his green eyes stared proudly through hers till she looked away. For he looked on her not as a woman, not even as a human being. Francis said it was dangerous for her to have the man alone with her in the house. She would not have liked him to know how little dangerous it was. To Staver she was only the means of raising his rent and a clumsy enough instrument, his eyes assured her. But just as the struggle to find work for him grew almost insupportable, the tension relaxed. He said:

"My wife's gone with the baby to her mother's. I'm moving to a smaller room."

His rent was now only a dollar a week. Edith breathed again. But he telephoned as urgently as before and she ventured to ask, "Do you need as much money now your wife's away?"

"More," he said coldly. "A man by himself don't get relief."

When she brought him his lunch he said in a hard, quiet voice, "I ain't had nothing to eat since yesterday morning."

He was being theatrical. It couldn't be as bad as that. She was on edge, thinking of a young man starving while Francis picked at his omelet. But he ate no more than usual and she dared not offer him food to take home.

Edith asked about his wife. "She keeps askin' if I got work," Staver said. He was often sullen now and he would work for a whole day without speaking. Then he got another yard to cut regularly and that helped. It helped until the terrible day of the garden party.

A friend had persuaded her to go to a garden party on the church lawn. On her way she went to speak to Staver who was cutting grass in the back yard. In her new blue dress and hat, walking in her

shining white shoes over the crisp, sharp-smelling grass she wished childishly that Staver would notice her. He turned round.

"I'm going out," she said. "I'll leave the back door open so you can put away the mower. Here's the money."

He took the money and looked at it in the way the annoyed her. It was as though he expected to find the sum not right or one of the coins counterfeit. He looked at the money longer than usual and then he said slowly, staring right at her:

"I think I should get more for this grass cutting. It's a big lawn. It's worth a dollar."

Her heart gave a leap of anger and she felt all her muscles tighten as though she were going to strike him. Her voice was quite steady.

"You said you wanted forty cents an hour and that's what I'm paying you."

"Grass cutting is worth more," he answered obstinately. "It's hard work. I should get a dollar for cutting this lawn. The other place I get a dollar."

She heard her voice rising with anger. "I never paid more than fifty cents before you began to cut it. It's absurd. The other lawn must be bigger."

"Some, but this is harder."

Why harder? She felt the sunny yard and Staver with his blue shirt and staring, insolent green eyes turn like a pinwheel before her. She had never been so angry in her life.

"I won't pay a cent more. If you don't like it, don't come."

She walked proudly to the gate, thankful that her long skirt hid the trembling of her knees. But when her anger was over, like an illness, and weak recovery had set in, she worried what he would do now. But he would telephone tomorrow and come next week as if nothing had happened. A quarrel wouldn't halt Staver. But he neither phoned nor came.

A week. Two weeks. She could not sleep for worry. She saw him on a park bench starving, standing in line in a hostel to receive a bowl of soup, or begging—but Staver would never beg. She began to understand how men could turn to crime. But then why had he been so overbearing and unreasonable about the grass?

Not a sign for three weeks. Perhaps he was dead. But Staver was not the man for despair. He must have a job. She felt sure that he had a job and set about, during sleepless nights and the long, lonely days, to rehabilitate Staver and his family. Yellow oilcloth, dotted muslin curtains, she furnished them a sunny flat, dressed the wife and baby in pretty clothes, filled the cupboard with food. She thought, as she had often thought during the long, still summer, sitting opposite Francis in the cool room near the lamp, how curious it was that while her husband thought her absorbed in darning his underwear or reading a book on Russia, she should really be downtown with the Stavers. She had lived all summer with them and Francis did not know. He was glad that Staver did not come any more.

"You're well rid of him. He was an insolent fellow."

She looked at Francis sitting, thin and narrow in the big chair, with his green slippers and his nearly bald head.

The next morning she was thinking about the Stavers' new prosperity when she heard the click of the letter flap. It was not time for the postman. On the hall floor lay a folded page from a small notebook, bearing a pencilled note: "My Dear Lady, would you kindly trust me with 50 cts untill the weekend for the purpose of getting some food and Lady excuse me for been a nuisance to you, Thanking you Lady, (Staver)."

She looked quickly through the glass pane of the door. He sat on the step waiting for her answer.

She could not go out for a moment because she was crying. She could not get over feeling that he had had the job she had imagined for him and somehow lost it and that he must be feeling disappointment as well as humiliation. For she could not have believed that Staver would so humiliate himself even when he was starving.

But when her mouth was steady and she could speak to him she found him not humiliated in the least. He stood up and looked at her; he was thinner but as haughty as ever.

"If you haven't got any work," he said impersonally, "I thought maybe you'd let me have fifty cents till Saturday."

"I have got work," Edith assured him quickly in a trembling voice. "You can wax the dining room floor and wipe down the kitchen walls and wash the cellar windows." She did not dare mention grass.

Though he showed no shame, she was sure that he was inwardly ashamed and that he would work willingly as he had done at first. But he had never been satisfied or grateful, he had only tolerated her and done her work scornfully because he had to eat. He was more scornful and impatient than ever. He no longer telephoned but simply came to the door and waited for her to show him work. When he stood there she could hardly deny him and he pressed hard on this discovery, coming two or three days a week.

Edith had to admit to herself that Francis was right. It couldn't go on, Staver was too much for her. She felt feeble and exhausted; Staver had consumed her like a long illness. His need was as great as ever but she could no longer supply it; she had lost strength and heart for the undertaking. When he dragged the lawn mower up the cellar steps his eyes were too scornful to bear. He seemed to feel that she had taken advantage of his necessity and to bear with her niggardliness only because he must. She hesitated to answer the door for fear he might be standing there. Yet all the time she was so sorry for him that she could have wept.

Early one morning in September she went downtown on one of her infrequent shopping trips. As she started up her own street she saw a figure coming toward her about a block away. It was Staver. He was coming away from her house, having found no one in. Suddenly the thing seemed unendurable. She was tired and the sun was hot on the long, unshaded street. She couldn't think of anything for him to do now, she couldn't face him at all. In sheer self-defence, like a small frightened animal popping down a hole, she crossed the street and turned west. She walked quickly with her head down. She could hear his footfalls ring in the silent street and for a dreadful second she thought he was following her, but the steps went on. He couldn't have recognized her and she would think of something for him tomorrow. But the next morning he did not come.

She looked for him every day. The old circle of wonder and worry closed round her again. Suppose he was starving; if he grew desperate and did something wrong it would be her fault for having failed him. But perhaps he had a job. Then suddenly she knew what had happened. In a way she had known all the time. He had seen her avoid him that day on the street. No wonder he didn't come.

If only she could reach him to say that she still wanted to help him, that her brutal rudeness on that day had been the result of fatigue and a hot sun. In a way it was peaceful without him. Francis was pleased and things went along quietly. But the quiet was dismal. She missed Staver's strong step, his confident movements overhead. He would never come again — she felt a sinking of her spirit that was almost despair. But she tried to remember the time when he had come so often, driving her till she almost wished she would never see him again.

And then late in the autumn as she walked on a downtown street with Francis in the evening a great figure brushed quickly past her. She caught a glimpse of him so brief that she could hardly be sure that it was Staver, and yet she was sure. He wore a new overcoat and a new hat and he was walking very fast with his head up as he always did. He must really have got a job this time; some wonderful piece of good fortune had come to him. He would never need her again.

She felt her world go black but she made so little sign that Francis was not interrupted in the remark he was making. But he had to repeat it twice before his wife answered him.

The Present Capitalist Boom

By JOHN STRACHEY

I HAVE received a number of letters on the question of the present economic situation. Hence I should like to give an account of the present economic situation and future prospects as they look to us in Britain. Here is a letter which puts a point which seems to be worrying a number of people.

> I would welcome a reply to the following question. In 1929 with the commencement of the great slump, the Communist explanation of its causes was the only acceptable one. The Marxists went further and showed in a reasonable and logical way that this was the final crisis. Yet today we find production returning to the 1928 level. Admittedly unemployment remains as pronounced as ever and also that much of this activity is in preparation for war, the capitalist way out of the crisis. Nevertheless the layman may be inclined to think that capitalism has again confounded the critics. Perhaps John Strachey or others might explain.

I do not know which Marxist writers are referred to as saying that there would be no recovery from the slump. In these matters one had perhaps better speak for oneself.

I certainly never suggested that the economic crisis which began in 1929 was the final crisis of capitalism in the sense that there would be no further periods of relative recovery. Here is what I wrote in a book called *The Coming Struggle for Power,* which was published in 1932, that is to say, at the very bottom of the slump:

"It is quite possible that the present conditions of acute crisis will pass. Let us suppose for a moment that the best hopes of the capitalist world are realized and that the present crisis is overcome. Even in that event it seems most unlikely that any boom comparable in magnitude, duration or stability to the period 1924-1929 will recur. The 1924-1929 boom itself was far less general, secure and vigorous than were the great pre-war booms of the heyday of capitalism. In fact, in Great Britain, it was considered to be merely the mitigation of permanent depression.

In the same way, it seems clear from the amount of permanent and irreparable damage that this slump has already done to world capitalism, from the extent to which it has forced all the great states to disrupt the world free market and from the degree to which it has sharpened imperialist antagonisms that the next boom period, if it comes, will be comparatively short, patchy, hectic and unstable. And not only will future booms, if any, be patchy as between country and country; they will be patchy as between industry and in-industry in the same country. In general then we may say that while there may be further periods of capitalist boom, they will have the characteristics which the philosopher Hobbes attributed to the life of primitive man. They will be nasty, brutish and short."

I am bound to say that after four years this forecast seems to be to stand up fairly well. A period of marked recovery has occurred in certain capitalist countries; for example, Great Britain, and now also in America. But even in these countries it hardly amounts, as yet at any rate, to true boom conditions. On the other hand, there are other parts of the capitalist world, for example, France, Switzerland and Holland, which have shared hardly at all in this recovery. This upward movement of the trade cycle as compared at any rate with the upward movement of the 1920's has in fact been extremely patchy both between country and country and industry and industry. Moreover, imperialist antagonisms have clearly become far more acute.

There is a sense, however, in which Marxist writers do talk about the existing situation as representing a final crisis of capitalism. But in this case they are not talking about the familiar seesaw of boom and slump. They are referring to the fact that, dating from 1914, capitalism as a worldwide system and taken as a whole began to enter a period of permanent and irrevocable crisis. If you look at the figures of world trade and world production you will find that up till 1914 they represent a zigzag, but taken as a whole, ascending line. Booms and slumps succeed each other pretty regularly, that is to say. But each boom takes world trade and production higher than the preceding one and each slump fails to reduce them to as low a point as the preceding slump.

From 1914 onwards, however, the opposite is true. The zigzag line continues, but now taken as a whole

it is a descending line. Each slump, that is to say, takes the figures of world trade and production lower than the preceding one and each boom fails to raise them so high as the preceding boom.

(I have made the picture look a little clearer and simpler than it really is. There are several conflicting factors. For example, we have to take into consideration the rapid increase in world population so that even if a particular recovery takes the figures back to the same level as that reached in the previous boom, there is still a decrease in trade and production per capita. But the above is the general picture.)

Now capitalism must expand or die. Hence Marxists, noting that since 1914 it has evidently failed to expand and has probably actually contracted, say that it has entered a period of permanent crisis. Nor as a matter of fact are Marxist economists alone in this view. The best capitalist economists admit that this is the case. For example, the ultra-orthodox capitalist economist, Professor Robbins of London University, stated in his recent book, *The Great Depression,* published in 1934, that "We lie not in the fifth but in the nineteenth year of the world crisis." I do not think that Marxist writers always make it quite clear whether they are talking about the permanent general crisis of capitalism which has gone on since 1914 or about the cyclical crises. (As a matter of fact, a failure adequately to distinguish between these two things is a defect of my book, *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis.*)

I am also inclined to think that Marxist writers have tended to exaggerate the effect of rearmament as a basis of the present upward movement. I am inclined to attach more importance to the workings of the ordinary economic factors which as Marx described in Vol. III of *Capital* always will, given time and opportunity, produce recovery from the depths of a depression. But again, as Marx showed with incomparable clarity and subtlety, these economic factors only bring recovery by laying down the basis of a new crisis. Hence it seems to me to be certain that some time between now and 1940 we shall experience the outbreak of a new economic crisis. But exactly when it will come or in which country and in what form it will first appear are very much more doubtful questions.

From the point of view of economic theory there are reasons for supposing that the new crisis will break out in that country which is experiencing the greatest degre of recovery. This is what happened in the 1930's. Today Britain is experiencing the greatest degree of recovery. Hence the new crisis might on these grounds be expected to break out here. But it would be most rash to prophesy definitely that it would. For today the political situation of the world is so unstable that purely economic considerations are almost certain to be offset and over-ridden. It may even be that the outbreak of a large-scale war will prevent the coming of a new economic crisis in the ordinary form. This is what happened in 1914 when a crisis was just beginning in America. But a war does not solve the problems of capitalism. On the contrary, it only postpones slump by creating conditions which lead more rapidly than any other to the destruction of capitalism.

New Forces in American Literature

STORIES of the poor and their hardships, of course, have always been with us. And, as in the case of Whitman, faith in the common man, admiration and love for him, have been voiced. Novelists, with more or less success, delved into the lower strata of American life. Too often these accounts have been the expressions of well-meaning but seriously stultified observers. It required the shattering economic collapse of 1929 to launch definitely a strong literary movement postulated on an affirmative rather than a negative note, and dedicated to the struggle against economic injustice.

As early as 1930, when most people entertained nebulous hopes that the Bull Market would come back, Michael Gold's vivid *Jews Without Money* appeared, and it was followed by other novels which did not evade the social implications of the American scene. Intellectuals who had been holding down soft jobs or living off the royalties of indifferently written books were unceremoniously dumped into the ranks of the unemployed. Expatriates who had been unable to draw inspiration from the raw, brutal American soil and who had fled to Paris to commune with Dada, Joyce and Proust came limping sadly home to face reality—and privation. Book publishers decimated their lists; magazines turned up their toes and died. The survivors slashed remuneration to contributors. Woe! Woe! Woe! Mencken's jibes at the yokels of the bible and woodtick belt were not as funny as of yore. His valiant roars over the iniquities of prohibition could not arouse the fighting spirit in those who sometimes found boiled potatoes hard to come by. Came the dawn, as the movies put it, cold, gray, and desolate.

At a meeting following the recent American Writers' Congress, Joseph Freeman spoke of the various phases of his creative live. At first he was a poet who believed that art and economics were separate fields and their orbits could never coincide. Then came a day when Freeman realized that all was not well with the world, and he began to study economic laws. He was so much impressed that his verse took on a purely didactic tone. It became sloganized and mechanical. There ensued a period of sterility and despair, after which he learned that the goal of the revolutionary artist is to fuse fervor and economic truth with rounded and colorful expression. To accomplish this last aim is the major problem of the new school of American novelists, playwrights and poets.

No artist worthy of the name can disregard the period in which he lives. Siegfried Sassoon, one of England's war poets who is now a vigorous fighter against reaction and militarism, was able to write, in 1914, from the placid security of the English countryside:

> Where have you been, South Wind, this May-day morning?
> With larks aloft, or skimming with the swallow,
> Or with blackbirds in a green, sun-glinted thicket?

But Sassoon did not remain in his peaceful retreat, insulated from the world outside. He went to war, lived through its horror and madness. He wrote:

No doubt they'll soon get well; the shock and strain
Have caused their stammering, disconnected talk.
Of course they're "longing to go out again,"——
These boys with old scared faces, learning to walk.
They'll soon forget their haunted nights; their cowed
Subjection to the ghosts of friends who died,——
Their dreams that drip with murder, and they'll be proud
Of glorious war that shattered all their pride . . .
Men who went out to battle, grim and glad;
Children, with eyes that hate you, broken and mad.

Similarly, those American writers who are sensitive to the life about them cannot escape the impact of the times: starvation and degradation in the midst of abundance, the ominous rumblings of threatening war, the manifestations of an embryonic fascism which, if not scotched, will brutally repress all art and literature and persecute all honest artists as has been the case in Italy and Germany.

But it required almost three years of severe economic distress before the proletarian literary movement in the United States really got under way. Harry Hansen, summarizing at the beginning of 1934 the events of the past year in his New York *World-Telegram* column, noted the "small tidal wave" of proletarian novels and short stories by authors whose "dominant note is recognition of the class struggle, and an attempt to interpret society rather than the individual." Publishers sought proletarian novels, and Horace Gregory remarked humorously in the New York *Herald-Tribune* book section that "revolution was in the air" and even the rental library school was experimenting with "cop-slapping heroines."

But it was no ripple in the millpond that was disturbing the authors, critics and readers alike. With the partial breakdown of the publishing apparatus and the death of many of the established outlets for new writers, non-commercial "little" magazines jumped up like summer toadstools all over the nation. Some of them were printed in cowsheds of the hinterland on pulp paper, in striking contrast to the sleek elegance of prosperous periodicals which evaded with astounding agility any hint that the social system of America had not been handed down by God to stand till time should be no more. Other newcomers were mimeographed, and none of them ever attained anything near a large circulation. As is always the case with the forerunners, these intrepid pioneers were fated to an early death, but they lent courage to a whole new school of young writers, many of whom have since published novels or appeared in magazines of general circulation.

A book club, the Book Union, was inaugurated last October, and its first selection was an anthology of over 200,000 words, *Proletarian Literature in the United States*. The Book Union's selections are from books expressing "a new vitality and meaning . . . . dealing with real people instead of the stock figures of 'polite' literature, not archaic or romantic plots, but actual situations facing ourselves and millions of our neighbors—a valid and believable interpretation of what is really happening in the world."

No great proletarian novel has been published, no great poet of the proletariat is at present writing in America. But a solid body of competent and moving novels, poems and short stories have been produced. We are still looking to the future for the great poet, the great writer, as did Walt Whitman, one of our spiritual forefathers, in 1860:

Poets to come! Orators, singers, musicians to come!
Not today is to justify me, and answer what I am for;
But you, a new brood, naive, athletic, continental, greater than before known,
Arouse! Arouse — for you must satisfy me — you must answer.
I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future,
I but advance a moment, only to wheel and hurry back in the darkness.
I am a man who, sauntering along, without fully stopping, turns a casual look upon you, and then averts his face,
Leaving you to prove and define it,
Expecting the main things from you.

JACK CONROY.

Madame Tchernavin's Escape Complex

THE more I see, hear and read of Madame Tatiana Tchernavin the more I become convinced that she has what in this day of advanced psychological knowledge can be called an escape complex. Madame Tchernavin, as everybody knows, claims to have escaped from Soviet Russia after nobly trying to save her country from extinguishing the bright light of Tsarist intellectualism. And her document *Escape From the Soviets* to the contrary I contend that Madame Tchernavin did not escape. To escape from the Soviets infers that the Soviets were trying to restrain her from leaving and for me that is enough to blast the whole story.

I have delved deeply into Madame Tchernavin's life as set forth by as favourably inclined a person as Madame Tchernavin herself and claim that any government that would occupy its police agents trying to keep her within its borders would be credulous enough to believe Sir Samuel Hoare. Madame Tchernavin describes herself as an intellectual. Unless she does not believe her own story of Soviet Russia, which is too good to expect, she is *the* Soviet intellectual. She decided soon after the Soviets took over that "the intellectuals as a class were doomed." From then on she throws herself so heartily into a description of the OGPU shooting down people who could read and write that to this day the Soviet government has had to prop up such mental defectives as Gorky, Pavlov, Myerhold and Stanislavsky in her place. In short we surmise that the Five Year plan took four years to complete due to all the energy diverted to hunting down non-morons.

In any case she and her husband, Professor Sergei Tchernavin, were soon arrested for the cardinal crime of knowing what letter comes after "a". No space, of course, is wasted in telling us on what trumped-up charge the OGPU held them. It is thus that the flower of Russian culture was crushed underfoot.

It is at this point that Madame Tchernavin belies her close association with Tolstoi and other great Russian writers. The author had abandoned herself so completely to getting across horrific conditions in Soviet Russia that the whole prison scene is an anti-climax. After reading these chapters I should still have chosen imprisonment to the ravages of Soviet life outside the cell. Indeed when Madame Tchernavin has herself firmly ensconced in a rat-infested cell the

best she can rise to is a chapter called "pigeons" which is meant to demonstrate the brutality of the OGPU. Apart from the fact that it is lightweight prose it smells strongly of Chillon and the only reason I don't suspect plagiarism is that Madame Tchernavin has no need to borrow from Byron's imagination, or anybody else's imagination for that matter.

It seems that "Our only joy in prison were the pigeons." But the OGPU is hell when its gets going on intellectuals and pigeons and soon the pigeons were killed; though only a scholar of Madame Tchernavin's standing knows what governmental decree declared pigeons un-Marxian. They even killed three birds whom Madame Tchernavin one day apostrophized thus: "Dear, Friendly birds, it's time you flew away! You little care that the sentry is waking up, that the wardress begins her walk down the corridor, but I'll get into trouble." Here I revolt. Any bird that survived that certainly should have been spared.

From the jail we go to the penal camp at Kem, near the northern Finnish border. The Tchernavins are once more united. By this time they are firmly convinced that they cannot save Russia from the Five Year Plan and have decided to escape. One day they set off, as though on a picnic, taking their nine-year-old son, Alexei, with them. Here again we have ample proof that Madame Tchernavin does not learn by experience. The escape should be a crashing finale rising from the pigeon tragedy to hope of a new life with the OGPU foaming at the mouth behind. Instead we are dropped into the slough of some sickly animal husbandry to excoriate the Soviet system.

While stumbling blindly through the Karelian swamps the party comes across a large elk. Little Tchernavin, showing the benefits of intellectual companionship, asked: "Do you think it is a Finnish elk, daddy? He looks proud like an English lord and so well-fed. I am sure he is not from U.S.S.R." And, though I didn't think it would go that far, Madame Tchernavin, after making light of the remark, soliloquizes that "psychologically there was some truth in what the boy said." And this, in the loudly heralded escape, is what we get in place of OGPU guards. Not murder or death but pigeons and elks. The whole escape is tragically deminiscent of the last act of *The Emperor Jones*.

Now some people may plead that this stuff was written under poor conditions but even that doesn't hold. Recently Madame Tchernavin, who is trying to convince William Randolph Hearst that Communist Russia is a failure, with some degree of success, debated Anna Louise Strong, editor of the *Moscow News*. The debate was "Are Soviet Women Happier?" This article possibly would have been better called Madame Tchernavin's animal fixation. Because here, in ideal conditions, surrounded by the Daughters of the American Revolution, Madame Tchernavin, having exhausted pigeons and elks, drops down to cows to prove that Socialism doesn't work.

Instead of thumping this failing system from top to bottom Madame Tchernavin spends half her time basing a tenuous argument on a cow. The gist of it was that Russian women no longer have the family cow they had in the days when the late Little Father was watching over them. And this lover of pigeons stands up before 2,000 people and claims the failure of an economic system on the fact that women no longer fraternize with cows in the kitchens.

I know Stalin is a busy man but I am convinced of one thing: had Madame Tchernavin spoken to him for five minutes he would have taken time off from his labours and personally escorted her to the Polish border on the sole condition that she carry on the traditions of Tsarist intellectualism in some less busy place.

WILLIAM E. KON.

A Criticism

The editors of New Frontier asked Morley Callaghan to comment on the stories in our first issue. Mr. Callaghan writes as follows:

THESE three stories have one good quality in common; they are honest. Unfortunately the three of them are to some extent variations of the same theme—the man out of work.

Mrs. Innis writes very sensitively. She has a nice feeling for words and for people and she is determined that her stories shall come out freshly, but in this particular story the emotion is too diluted, especially in the body of the piece. She has sympathy and she is close enough to her characters but she simply fails to record her good feeling sharply. That may always be her trouble. In her case I don't think it's so much a matter of whittling down but of getting the sharp feeling before she begins. That's what she should try to do anyway.

The Katharine Bligh piece is one of those long, honest pieces, the authenticity of which can not be questioned, and where there is no doubt that the author's heart and even her head maybe is in the right place, but which for all that is singularly devoid of feeling. Right here is the place to state emphatically that class consciousness, or an intention directed toward that end is not enough. Then, too, there is this to be remembered: if you are going to write in the colloquial speech it is assumed that that is being done so you will get added freshness and life in your stuff. If you don't get it, it means that you are picking out the cliches of speech rather than getting the juicy racy flavor you ought to get.

The brightest and most amusing of the three pieces, but probably the least authentic is "Friends, Romans, Hungrymen." A. M. Klein knows how to use words sharply, and in this piece he often gets a sharp and vigorous feeling. Its weakness is that the very great determination to pull off striking effects defeats the authentic quality of the bitterness of the piece and leaves you with a feeling that few men out of work and walking on their heels would be quite so determined to be so amusingly bright.

It is odd that these three pieces should have been on the one theme—the man out of work. The editors tell me that this was not a deliberate selection, but that nearly all the stories they received were about men who were out of work. If this keeps on it will appear that either all the young writers of the country are out of work, or that they all feel a little frustrated, a little cynical, or even defeated, and that living in this country doesn't leave one with a strong feeling. That may well be. But soon we ought to be hearing a lustier crowing, soon someone ought to tell us that there is some passion in the land.

MORLEY CALLAGHAN.

NEW YORK LETTER

FEW spots on this continent are more provincial than Broadway; and few provincials more provincial than the Broadway columnist. His chief preoccupation, as you very well know, is with the current personalities, their minor loves, their trifling hates, perpetual divorces and intermittent blessed events: the whole performed against the backdrop of a glamorized Manhattan. You and I, who have lived in the sticks, know that Mr. Winchell and his confreres are merely writing the old "social and personal" column of a smalltown newspaper. It's a little more dramatic and noisy and jazzed up, but there the difference ends.

Then there are the "lights and shadows of Manhattan." These seem to preoccupy certain columnists, too overwhelmed, apparently, by the diffuse realities of this metropolis to chronicle them cogently. They prefer reflection to form, shadow to substance. In the iridescence of the lights they blink confusedly and can't see very clearly. In the depths of the shadow they cannot see at all.

It would seem much more to the point, therefore, to glance at New York beyond the Broadway hour, say 4.30 or 5 a.m. and see it, not as one who is just leaving a nightclub, but as one who has torn himself from a warm bed and is officebound to start a day's work. At that peculiar hour of matutinal quiet the Broadway chroniclers, ardent little playboys, are heading homeward and their perspective is even more blurred than usual. You crawl into the creeping subway and find yourself among sprawling, sleepy workers, they, the supremely tired and browbeaten, facing the ordeal of another day's work that will be like so many hundreds of ordeals already endured and still to be endured. The train clatters along. You read the tabloids or Mr. Hearst, along with everyone else. What else is one to read at that hour? It invariably requires leisure, patience—not to speak of heroism—to read the *Times*.

You climb the stairs and turn left to gain the street through the little passageway shoe shine stand at Grand Central. The lights and shadows of Manhattan! A sight for Mr. Winchell! Here, crowded one against the other, lying on old newspapers, locked in each other's arms to keep warm, huddled together, in a stupor you can't call sleep——for sleep is rest, and a bed, and warmth—spread over the stairs so that you climb over and around them, a group of the city's derelicts. "Strays," breathing their own fetid air, covering themselves with newspapers picked from rubbish cans, taking a brief respite from consciousness. Presently the tired little Negro will clear them out to render the passage inoffensive for hundreds of white collar workers bound at the more normal hours of 8 and 9 for their bandbox offices.

Not a strange scene: the chronic disease of world capitals—of the world——whether manifest under the bridges of the Seine or in the shoe shine passageway under 42nd Street.

Decidedly it is not enough to write of Manhattan's minor titillations, especially when one is acutely conscious of restless masses shaking off the glutted futility of the '20's and touched with the burning fever of the '30's . . . and above all its surging, questioning youth, eager, querulous, enthusiastic, dissatisfied with old worlds and challenging the new. They give pointed utterance to the fine skepticism and intellectual liveliness and ferment that is stirring within the framework of this mad metropolis. And one must be aware of this if he is to chronicle, however haphazardly, the intellectual and artistic trends—these the most expressive elements——in the life of a great city.

Consequently any mention of the current season in the theatre, music or cinema calls, more than anything, for consideration of the artist in a society shaken and muddled by 25 years of cataclysm. How is he to maintain his artistic integrity in a society that presses upon him constantly, a social order that forces him, if he is to live by his art, to reduce it to the lowest common denominator, and in the case of a fascist society, making him subservient to official taste—if taste can be said to exist there—and opinion? How, if he is to approach the wild confusion of the contemporary scene, is he to render it, as he must, if he is to render life at all? And above all, he must ask himself, is it enough to survey the scene, is there not some legitimate call for militancy?

These and other important questions lie, directly, or indirectly, before more than 300 painters, sculptors, photographers, gathered in New York from all parts of the United States to attend the first congress of artists ever held in America. Their common enemies, depression and want, a society that seems to have but little room for them, have brought them together. The artist is no longer, has never been, genuinely self-sufficient, whether he was the art for art's saker of the last century, who discussed and weighed the refinements of his craft with his fellows—giving ample proof of the need for discussion, amplification, criticism and estimate, the very antithesis of self-sufficiency—or the French naturalistes, who of a Sunday afternoon gathered at Flaubert's to "discuss art, form, manner." Those meetings in cafes, the constant congregation of fine spirits and creative personalities in the stuffy salons of the past have given way to 20th century congresses that deal realistically with the wider horizons of the age.

All this bears decidedly on our given scene. It means that those artists who are aware of the shift and change of our times alone create the interest and controversy upon which art thrives. That is why Albert Bein's *Let Freedom Ring,* portraying the awakening consciousness of the worker within the shadows of a factory had an explosive force among Broadway's tailor-made dramas this season, and why even so immature a work as Clifford Odet's *Paradise Lost,* filled with a wide play of ideas, inventiveness and creative power, breathes new life into a jejune theatre that either resurrects the past—witness *The Old Maid, Victoria Regina* or *Parnell,* to name only three of many—or loses itself in a morass of gangster plays and other trivia in imitation of the program picture. With the two mentioned above one might be tempted to name *Winterset,* a modern Romeo and Juliet set on New York's waterfront, written in blank verse and

avowedly Shakespearian, if it did not end in a note of defeatism. It is solemnly bitter and inveighs with considerable force against the social order. But Mr. Anderson's people inspire only despair and futility; there is neither the exultation nor the triumph of the greatest characters ever set upon the stage.

The Theatre Guild remains a useful institution. It mounts plays prettily, and they are usually pretty plays. But neither this season, nor the last, has it given us anything that can be written down as new or interesting or—shall we say?—useful to the present temper. I make one exception, *Rain From Heaven,* in which S. N. Behrman showed us how confused liberalism can be. The Philharmonic continues along its well-marked rut, heavily dependent on Signor Toscanini who is with us all-too-briefly, and who next year will no longer be with us. It needs, sorely, to be turned into a developing, rather than static institution.

Happily there are in our midst young composers and musicians, and an infinite number of dance groups, dissatisfied with the endless reiteration of the old. Self-conscious, like much of the so-called proletarian art, they at least are reaching out creatively, fully aware that the world constantly must renew itself and art with it. It is to them we must look for vitality and freshness.

Best of all is the growing sense of unity and purpose among writers, musicians, artists. And, I take it, *New Frontier*—it very name bespeaks it—takes up this common cause in Canada. On which note, and with the fervent expression of hope that its influence will be felt and its aims appreciated, let me end this letter from a city of many causes.

LEON EDEL.

ART

CANADIAN artists, especially Toronto artists, have a yen for staying at home, presumably to develop an indigenous art; or those who do travel occasionally go to foreign countries nervously, with a pathetic fear that they may assimilate some of those dread modern innovations. Yet there is something to be said for this point of view. All honour to those valiant pioneers, the Group of Seven, who dared to paint new pictures, inspired by the brilliant and sharp country they saw before them. It took courage and foresight to break away from the cloying traditions that came from the anaemic pseudo-realistic schools of England, France and Holland. At that time there was nothing jaded about the refrain: paint the boldness and bleakness of the Northland, become as straightforward as the hills, the rivers, and the rock-bound lakes. Only now, in 1936, the refrain is barren as some of those grey rocks.

Although Thomson and MacDonald are dead, the fort is still held by Lismer, Jackson and Harris. In the twenty years they have been exhibiting these artists have not changed in any fundamental way. Still it is the call of the North, still those pure lonely landscapes; only now they seem empty and sterile where before they held promise. From their conventional stand it is to the newer artists we must turn—to see if they are changing, and if so, how?

The long gallery of the Toronto Art Gallery gave a gala effect at the second exhibition of the Canadian Group of Painters, each artist vying with the other to produce the brightest colours. It seemed more gaudy, more daring than the old group. Challenging but raw, these younger artists are striving to break away from the old tradition. What they lack is not vitality, it is direction and new inspiration. The forms and indeed the subject matter are the same. In the midst of the same overwhelming impression of landscape it is a relief to come upon K. Daly's habitant interiors. Still in the Canadian idom (this time French), they are human documents rather than quaint folklore. Another more sensitive painter is Emily Carr of British Columbia, who has developed some of the delicate qualities of modern French art.

The west galleries are more lively. Here nature gives way to man. There are the vivid market scenes of Bieler from Montreal, which are alive in subject and treatment. Pegi Nicol, too, has several figure paintings. Here is someone who has freed herself from old standards: she has a definite plan, her forms flowing into one another, her colours alive, and over all a sense of balance and restraint. Murray Bonnycastle has matured although his style has not changed greatly. He is still more interested in interpreting the individual. This is true of most of these artists, but Pegi Nicol has possibilities of development. She is interested in people and is not inhibited from expressing group feeling. There is already a feeling of mass, a blending of the human and artistic experience.

To sum up, while there is a good deal of monotony and imitation in this exhibition there are healthy signs of experimentation, a searching towards new fields as yet undefined. This muddled groping is characteristic of some of the younger artists, but among them there are one or two bright spots who are aware that something is lacking, and that it is worth struggling to find.

When the Canadian Youth Council decided to sponsor a poster Competition and arts and crafts exhibit for children, the subject selected was "Peace, Freedom and Progress," for which the council stands. What would children's reactions be to such abstract qualities? The answer to this question is in the exhibition that was held at the Toronto Art Gallery on Wednesday, February 27th.

Twenty-three groups contributed to make a varied show. The arts and crafts included nearly everything that children like to do, painting, lino-cutting, clay modelling, pottery, soap-carving; as well as making model aeroplanes, masks and puppets.

The ideas in the poster Competition might have been a little stereotyped, but they showed what is going on in the child's mind when he thinks of such things as peace. A child of ten showed in her winning poster a picture of men fighting, and below them a group of children playing. The caption was: "Why this? Why Not This?"

Many of the crafts were not so directly concerned with Peace. There seems to be a great interest among children in making aeroplanes. I do not think this should be regarded as a warlike interest, but rather a sign of the child's desire for progress. But aside from these definitely educational exhibits, all the work, in whatever medium, was creative.

SOPHIE LIVESAY.

THE SCREEN

CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S long-heralded film *Modern Times* is now at large after two and a half years of secret preparation. You remember the furtive visits of eager newsmen to Charlie's private lot, way back in the '30s, and the impressed way in which they reported that no publicity was being given out. The film didn't even have a name then. The general concensus of opinion was that it would be funny, but beyond that nothing was known. Now with everything told, the general concensus is that it is funny, but it is more than that.

The plot is meant to be seen, not read. Charlie is a worker in a factory where efficiency and the speed-up have raised the life of the workers to the high level of a caged squirrel. In his efforts to meet the organization half way he wanders off the conveyor belt, screwing noses tight and nuts loose. When the efficiency expert decides that the men take too much time for lunch, he invents an automatic feeding machine, and experiments with the luckless Charlie, who has trouble keeping up with the corn-on-the-cob.

There is a strike. Charlie is jailed, and on his release adopts the child of a killed striker and is taken home to her Hooverville cabin, built, if you can use that word for the sheer luck that holds it together, with running water (in season) and wild doors and walls (in all seasons).

Paulette Goddard, as the orphan, gives a fine performance. She is the only woman with any considerable part in the film, being far too young to supply love interest but old enough to help preserve the connection between this phantasy on western industrial society and warm human beings.

The high spot of the film is probably the wharf-side hotel scene, where Charlie, after doing dizzy acrobatics with a tray and a roast duck, swings into a song-and-dance in the high romantic manner. Incidentally, it is the only scene where his voice is recorded.

This is not simply good natured tom-foolery, and it is not a social document. *Modern Times* is in a class by itself—high burlesque in the best pantomimic manner of the great themes of this our modern times. It deals with employment in the raw, with unemployment and strikes, with poverty and the desire for a better life, without once dropping the high level of burlesque which Chaplin has set for himself. The idea is that *Modern Times* is a film to be seen and enjoyed.

This is not the case with another labour picture now being released in Canada. Jean Harlow and Spencer Tracy lead the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer version of the recent San Francisco longshoremen's strike. *Riffraff* goes down in history as one of the first openly anti-labour films to use stars with an accredited public.

Jean is a waterfront girl, Hattie, wise beyond her years in the ways of men. She falls in love with Dutch, a waterfront organizer, just blown in from a bit of seditious activity in South America. Tracy is a man of great strength and completely zero intelligence, who gives the thoughtless longshoremen un-American advice. A certain amount of police action keeps law and order intact.

But Tracy is not entirely bad, and is able to respond to the proper softening feminine influences. Hattie is divinely in love with him, and he with her. They fight and make up. Then they make up and fight again. Try and figure out how it ends.

If *Riffraff* were an isolated phenomenon it could be patronized out of curiosity, to see what views the film industry has on civic affairs. Unfortunately it has a long series of predecessors, running from the strange and wonderful *Red Salute,* in which the university radical plays the devil with the football team, to the super-supers: *Shipmates Forever, Annapolis Farewell, Stranded,* and *Westpoint of the Air.*

It is galling to find that the transition from the happy never-never land, where love is the only solution to economic difficulties and everyone has a little five acre home in the hills, to the land of hope and glory is made with such apparent ease. Already we have seen Dick Powell grow up from a cheerful playboy to a big Army and Navy man. Kay Francis has found occasion to give up social work for strike breaking. And now Fred Astaire's producers are warning the public that Fred's new picture will be called *Follow the Navy!* In all the crush of flag pictures, *Modern Times,* written, directed, and produced by Chaplin himself, comes as a refreshing interlude.

C. P. H. HOLMES.

A. Redfield

"At last - - the perfect type for a union organizer."

MUSIC

IT seemed somewhat presumptuous, to a reviewer starting a department in a new magazine designed to give expression to progressive and artistic thought across a wide Dominion, merely to attend and report on a few recitals and concerts in one particular locality of that Dominion. I felt this to be the case knowing all the arguments about the universality of music and the importance of the critic distributing knowledge about it. Yet, unless the person who is sufficiently misguided to read a music reviewer's comments is to get nothing whatever out of them, he must to some extent share the reviewer's musical experience, for the reason at least that he might comment (preferably derogatorily) on the reviewer. I say this although I live in a city the majority of whose music critics seem to experience things so esoteric (and incidentally, so unrelated to the music they are reporting) that they are quite beyond the reach of the common man in matters of musical good and evil.

But we can all hear gramaphone records if we want to. Although there are obvious disadvantages in the gramaphone as against the radio, an increasing number of the unfortunate tribe known by the horrible term "music lovers" are finding radio diet somewhat thin (with certain important exceptions) and are turning back again to cranking and changing needles. As a result of all of which, this department decided to limit its activities for the current month to a discussion of some of the interesting recent recordings that are being talked about.

We shall start (as all things do) with Bach. For a long time now, people have been going to the houses of friends of theirs who owned gramaphones, to hear Harriet Cohen's recording of the first half of the *Well-Tempered Clavichord*. I predict a steady diminution in the popularity of these friends, for a few months ago the Bach Society in England issued two folios containing three dozen of the Preludes and Fugues with no less a pianist than Edwin Fischer attending to the keyboard.* Regarding the playing of this person, who is far too little known here, it need only be said that he possesses brilliant technique, excellent taste and a profound respect for and understanding of the harmonic and melodic possibilities in the music. When you go to the store I suggest that you ask to hear the C minor, C# minor, and G major. This is a fair sampling and represents an adequate test of the man's playing ability. Not that one need necessarily always agree. For instance, I might have liked a little more weight and less *a tempo* playing in the short *recitativo* of the C minor fugue. But this is only a difference of opinion; and the point is that I liked listening to Mr. Fischer's opinion.

While we are on the subject, and assuming that you are occasionally interested in sheer excellence of virtuosity, ask for Victor Record 1597A, played by the same man. You will have the additional joy of hearing a Chaconne by Handel, which I confess to my shame and sorrow, I had not heard before. If you are in the same category of unhappy mortals, please waste no time. The record is a 10-incher.

One of the most interesting bits heard in a long time is Stokowski's recording (Victor 8919B) of Harl McDonald's *Dance of the Workers* from his suite *The Festival of the Workers*. The form is a sort of broken *rondo*, the major theme being announced by the bassoon. The atmosphere of the whole work is heavy, and much as I dislike reading sociological implications into music, made me feel that at the back of the composer's mind really lay the idea "Dance of the Robots." The Movement is semi-vital, not fully alive, stirring sluggishly to a compelling and binding rythm—perhaps the rythm of the machine. Hear it for yourself and see what you think. The other side has a less interesting Rhumba by the same writer.

LOU EPSTEIN.

* We should like to express our appreciation to Heintzman & Co., Toronto, for their kind co-operation in the use of records.

Books

Heat and Light

A Stone Came Rolling. By Fielding Burke. International Publishers. $2.00.

ARE revolutionists people? Though the devotees of Hearst papers believe them to be lusting worms, and though even subscribers to the New Republic incline to see them as malcontents, fanatics or party mouthpieces, yet readers of *A Stone Came Rolling* will find the answer triumphantly affirmed.

In Fielding Burke's second book walks again Ishma Hensley, a sketch for the woman of the future carried out on the canvas of the present. When she comes to the Carolina mill town near which her husband is farming, the community is quiet in its impoverishment, trusting in a Heavenly recompense for overwork and malnutrition. At the end of the book a disciplined band of strikers come to rescue her from her enemies. Against this cyclorama of growth and conflict stand out many incidents and figures. If the author had less skill and intensity of purpose, the book would be a collection of stories rather than a novel. When the Emberson family unite in deceit to keep the son's misdoings from his mother; when the strike leader is hijacked by a band of sympathizers from the constables who purposed losing him to a lynching gang; when Ishma's son Ned defends a Negro school teacher from unjust arrest; or, a final example, when the story of Essie Starbo is related, the religion-crazed mother who never took her eyes from the grave of her son, whom she believed to be in Hell: two or three such relations in every chapter would provide a fictional unit. But all these are artfully woven into the fabric of the industrial conflict in Dunmow and connected up with the career of Ishma, thereby enriching both immeasurably.

If these people whom we meet only once or twice, as heroes of these "minute epics," are clear in our minds, much more so are those with whom we become friends and sympathizers. Opposed to Ishma in social position, though akin in philosophy, is Bly Emberson, liberal-minded owner of a hosiery mill. Bly would be glad to see a happier world where a man could be at

peace with himself; he keeps wages high and defends the victims of society even to his personal danger; but, tied down as he is by his factory, his family and his bourgeois traditions, he cannot find any satisfactory way to life. When he comes to the breaking point, he prefers oblivion. When Ishma's values, on the other hand, are shattered by the murder of her husband, she wins through to renewed struggle.

As Bly is contrasted to Ishma in position, so his wife Verna is contrasted in personality. Verna, the super-respectable matron, a pillar of the church, who honestly believes in and greatly suffers for her religion, makes life unbearable for her family, while all who contact Ishma are warmed and drawn as to the sun. Where Ishma reasons out her annoyances and defeats, Verna goes into a faint, whispering for the eleventh Psalm; though she believes she is undersexed, it is her husband she wears out with her demands for the physical satisfaction which she confuses with spiritual comfort. Where Ishma is a healer, Verna is a scandalmonger; where Ishma is charitable to weakness, Verna lifts her skirts to escape pollution; where Ishma's son has the strength and reliance of a much older lad, Verna's children are weakly neurotic or in angry revolt.

I labour these comparisons because in them lie a statement of the author's ideology. Verna is a typical product of the worst, and Bly of the best, of the old capitalist civilization which no longer exists. It is against this in all its manifestatons that Mrs. Burke spends the not inconsiderable force of her brain, her personality and her skill in the writer's craft. For the people who live under the remnants of this system, as people, she has only pity; but for them as tools, mouthpieces and saboteurs, misguided though they be, she has bitter irony and scorn and, what is more, a well-planned offensive campaign.

If the contents of *A Stone Came Rolling* were not so compelling, it would be unfair to pay so little attention to the writing of it. This writer seems to pass from the stripped, brutal speech of strikers' mass meetings to the rich and comely idiom of the locality and on to richly poetic narrative as easily as breathing. With every character she utilizes the most picturesque and forceful elements of their speech to give the heightened realism we associate with the best dramatic writings. She knows the old Negro charwoman who says,

"We's just perishing, that's all. We's just perishing. You standin' right heah whah de streets cross. Now you look up an' you look down, you look east an' you look west, an' not a soul dat lives in any house you see has got work. Evah whah you goes there's nothin' movin' but yo'self. It's been six months since Mis' Walker told me she couldn't give me no mo' work. But she lets me come on Sunday an' wash up de dishes. Then I gets my dinner, an' a quarter, an' scraps to bring to de ol' man an' my granchile. I ain't had what you would call work in six months—not a tap at a snake. I tell you, honey, our belly-buttons air jest hanging loose."

These observations have merely dipped into the well that is *A Stone Came Rolling*. There are many criticisms to be made. There is too much material in the book; more, probably, than Thomas Wolfe's pen disgorges; but it is all so live and so telling that one would not want to miss it. There are several characters too many. The transitions are sometimes abrupt. The close juxtaposition of poetic statements and dialectical speech is sometimes a bit upsetting. The book will not be popular in drug-store libraries. Ishma will not last in our memories as have Helen of Troy or Juliet. She has another destiny. "She turned toward the camp, trying to walk slowly. That was not easy with such a beating of power upon her, as if a sea were asking passage through her veins. She heard its voice, the voice of life that does not die. 'I would clothe myself with you; give me yourself for a garment.' "

To all who love literature I would recommend this book; but to those who love life more than literature it will recommend itself in the highest.

JOCELYN MOORE.

The Titanic

The Titanic. By E. J. Pratt. The Macmillan Company of Canada. $1.50.

THE *Titanic* disaster is still recent enough to be remembered by most of us. This White Star liner was built to exceed other passenger vessels in size and to win the blue ribbon from the *Mauretania*. She was said to be unsinkable and she sank on her maiden voyage after colliding with an iceberg. The poet deals with the experience in such a way as to bring out the sense of security felt by officers and passengers alike in a ship designed to meet any conceivable emergency. That feeling dominates the poem to the exclusion of other forces which a dramatic poet might have laid hold of in the tragedy. Pratt is an epic and not a dramatic poet. He sees accumulated masses of things: passengers trooping down to the dining-room like an army at the call of a bugle; he sees corridors and saloons as masses of decorative detail.

He makes all the episodes live for us in the present: we are at the launching of the ship, we board her at Southampton, we ride out to sea with her, we walk the decks, meet passengers, hear their chatter about what Smith, the captain, or Phillips, the wireless operator, said. We even read the messages as they come and go. We watch a demonstration in the gymnasium, we play poker at a stag party, we eat at a table where the talk is punctuated with a word to the steward and a glance at

> "That group of men around the captain's table,
> Look at them, count the aggregate—the House
> of Astor, Guggenheim, and Harris, Strauss,
> That's Frohman, isn't it? Between them able
> To halve the national debt with a cool billion!"

We hear the band "Zip her up." And, as the lifeboats are lowered away, we watch gentlemen salute departing ladies with "Castilian courtesy." Finally, as survivors, we watch the water climb up her decks thronged with fourteen hundred souls, until she sinks. He brings out the feeling by showing us characters and things in action, by building up a picture of the gigantic proportions of the ship, her speed, all her gadgets and appointments. The reader gradually gains complete consciousness of the majesty and miraculous workmanship of the colossus from the narrative:

> "Her sixty thousand tons of sheer flotation,"

from talk among the passengers:

"I heard Phillips say
He had the finest outfit on the sea;
The new Marconi valve; the range by day,
Five hundred miles, by night a thousand. Three
Sources of power,"

or in a direct way: by watching a group of boys gathered around a spot

"Upon the rail where a dial registered
The speed, and waiting each three minutes heard
The taffrail log bell tallying off a knot."

Dinner on such a ship

"gave the sense that all was well:
That touch of ballast in the tanks; the feel
Of peace from ramparts unassailable,
Which, added to her seven decks of steel,
Had constituted the Titanic less
A ship than a Gibraltar under heel"

Even after the collision some went up on deck but soon returned to their state rooms satisfied that nothing "could harm that huge hulk"; and when commanded to get into the life-boats they

"stepped inside,
Convinced the order was not justified."

Even at the end, after the last life-boat had vanished,

"In spite of her deformity of line,
Emergent like a crag out of the sea,
She had the semblance of stability."

To offset this accumulated feeling of security there is a running reference to sinister omens: the old salts' talk "Of whirling shags around the mizzen peaks"; the apparation seen above the funnel rim as they were leaving Queenstown; the maleficent influence of the Egyptian mummy they have aboard from The Valley of the Kings. But all omens explode when they meet the solid wall of security erected in the hearts and minds of the people. The *Californian* was continually warning her of icebergs.

"Say Californian, shut up, keep out,
You're jamming all my signals with Cape Race."

That feeling of confidence overrode the most elementary notions of prudence and precaution so that the ship threshed the serene waters of the night like a mighty but unwary marine monster scouting the very idea that any enemy could match her brawn and nerve. When she came up, the iceberg, lying in ambush, had no difficulty in ripping her bows. There was no struggle; she dropped and took "Her thousand fathoms journey to her grave," while "out there in the starlight," coolly looking on,

"Silent, composed, ringed by its icy broods,
The grey shape with the palæolithic face
Was still the master of the longitudes."

All this is experimental and epic method. Pratt has got out of the material all there was in it of epic value; in opposition to his natural penchant he could not resolve it into a fight between palæolithic leviathans. A dramatic poet, I say, by choosing from the episode a different set of objects or events, would have evoked a different emotion. Where there is no conflict there is no drama. This poem does not move us as *The Roosevelt and the Antinoe* moved us. Implicit confidence in machinery is typical of twentieth-century man but there is something in this tragedy that is alien to a scientific age, an uncalculated thing, an epic vestige the principle of which is fate. *The Titantic* belongs to the Greek order of tragedy in the sense that it is blind; it is epic rather than dramatic. No traveller who has ever crossed the North Atlantic will be moved to tears when he reads of the death of dollar princes and princesses who, with a tremendous ice-field ahead, felt nothing so much as a granite sense of security in the unsinkableness of their ship. If we could forget the unsinkable mass and the Roman luxury and think of the fragility of human passions that pass like a ship's lights under the eternal stars; if we observed a young couple on their honeymoon leaning on the rail of the doomed ship and heard the girl say, as she raised her eyes defiantly from the ocean: "This is our moment—complete and heavenly. . . . This is our own, for ever," then our hearts would go out to them in pity. That is not the feeling we have here. And when we reflect, it seems to be that dominant feeling of security that keeps order among the escaping women and robs the Castilian courtesy of some of its spectacular insouciance.

There are many lines of visible and lyric beauty in the poem, rare similes and rarer metaphors, products of an epic temper, but its power resides in its presentation of functioning masses, living men and women, and the accumulated feeling of security. Pratt has rejuvenated our poetry; a Canadian Masefield has enriched its vocabulary. He has reformed it by turning it away from dream-gardens, by overcoming its soft femininity by restoring its pulse with tonic realism. If a newer generation of poets render homage to Pratt while refusing Lampman and Marjorie Pickthall, it is because of his heroic imagination and his grip on life.

W. E. Collin.

Gathering Strength

American Writers' Congress, edited by Henry Hart. International Publishers. $1.00.

THIS book is a collection of some thirty papers delivered at the first American Writers' Congress, from which sprang up the League of American Writers—poets, novelists, playwrights and critics — "who invest what they have as writers in the working-class of America and of the world."

Here is a world of thought in the making. It is part of the world of thought growing within the shell of capitalism. It is the growth of thought corresponding to the needs of imaginative writers as they move into active alliance with the working people. The authors of capitalism, scarcely aware of their own class position, purposeless and bedevilled amid the rising seas of capitalist contradictions, would find it quite impossible to produce a work of criticism to-day as many-sided and yet with the large consistency of aim which comes from a growing knowledge of the social forces at work on man.

Among the subjects tackled, we have: poetry (Isidor Schneider), drama (John Howard Lawson, Blankfort and Buchwald), the novel (Edwin Seaver), the short-story (James Farrell), reporting (Joseph North), literary criticism (Joseph Freeman, Malcolm Cowley, Granville Hicks and Kenneth Burke), the problem of book-publishing (Trachtenberg and Henry Hart), the problem of minority writers (Langston Hughes, Eugene Gordon, Eugene Clay and Moishe Nadir), the problem of struggle against war and fascism (Friedrich Wolf, Harry F. Ward, Edward Dahlberg), the problem of personal growth and adjustment (Louis Aragon and Jack Conroy), of the revolu-

tionary writer's values (Waldo Frank), of freedom for the literary technician (John dos Passos), and many other matters. There is no final word on this or that; this is the breaking of ground, this is the sowing. But there is scarcely a section which does not open up for the reader *in the light of the actual needs of man* new perspectives, new values, new aims.

The writer who still accepts the premises of capitalism with the air in his lungs is not of course even aware of the tasks of his fellows on the Left. For him fascism is a vague possibility quite unconnected with the larger problem of wars for the re-division of the world, an incomprehensible *deux ex machina,* unpleasant no doubt for the common people who have a rather thin time of it anyway, but likely he thinks to leave himself at peace to cultivate his soul. And in so far as his interests and outlook coincide with those of monopoly capital (!) he is right. But for the writers who identify themselves with the working people, the linked problem of war and fascism is what it is for *them*—a matter of life or death. Dr. Harry F. Ward does not mince words in pointing to the task. The writers' craft has kept alive war's romanticism even in the period when "organized human slaughter cannot be carried on unless its real objectives are concealed behind high-sounding moral phrases. . . . The waging of imperialist war now depends upon the spreading of lies. Therefore it can be checked by the spreading of truth." The writer must reveal the nature of the society that is producing war and fascism, laying bare their organic relationship. He must portray the real objectives for which wars will be fought. He must make vivid to the middle classes the fascist repression upon workers, farmers and unemployed, and the degeneration of life that necessarily occurs under the fascist state.

Specially valuable to writers are the sections dealing with literary criticism. Joseph Freeman's paper on The Tradition of American Revolutionary Literature reveals the deep roots of the present movement in the past, and points out what is never observed by our enemies, that the class-conscious bourgeoisie of Europe in its time of revolutionary struggle and triumph called frankly for a *bourgeois* literature, animated by specific bourgeois values. (e.g. Diderot and Madame de Stael.) Malcolm Cowley takes up the question of What the Revolutionary Movement Can Do for a Writer. "It cannot give the writer personal salvation. It is not a church . . ." The principle gift it can make to writers is to give them a sense of human life, not as a medley of accidents, but as a connected and continuing process. It ties things together, allowing novelists to see the connection between things that are happening to-day in their own neighborhoods, at the gates of factories, in backyards and street-corners with the German counter-revolution, with the fight for collectivization in Russia, with the civil war now being waged in the interior of China; and it connects all these events with the struggles of the past. It gives the values, the united interpretation, without which one can write neither good history nor good tragedy.

The writer is thus helped out of his two main culde-sacs of subject matter, of which one is the portrayal of the individual's conflict with society and the other is the repeated portrayal of the artist's own anchorless self, interminable *monologues interieurs,* endless contemplation—to borrow a phrase from Joad—of the writer's "own divine abdomen". By making comprehensible to the writer his experiences of the outer world of desperate contradictions, the revolutionary movement restores to the writer the desire to picture with courage and purpose what he now understands.

On the Values of the Revolutionary Writer, Waldo Frank attacks the inorganic concept of Left literature as being primarily "informational", "reflective", "propaganda". Art should not of course "subserve" politics. Art is an autonomous kind of action, a part of the dynamic substance of life. Its basic social function, he suggests, is "so to condition men that they will, as a social body, be the medium for the actions of growth and change required by their needs."

James Farrell gives us some model criticisms of proletarian short-stories, and warns of the "glued-on endings" and the "lack of internal conviction" too often found in the work of writers who are in the difficult stage of transition and whose new appreciation of theory runs ahead of their experience of facts.

As bourgeois literature deals so largely nowadays with the unrepresentative and esoteric, it has become almost critical "bad form" to ask that life be a part of the discussion. As for the author's audience, that is something the average critic does not consider at all. So in reading the critical thought of the Left writers one is strongly impressed by the fact that they regard a book—not as a thing in itself, not even as a means of killing time (!)—but as an outgrowth of life, something that must be looked at both in relation to its author and subject, and to its living readers on whom it must produce some effect. This is the kind of criticism that really interests writers themselves. It brings their books out of the clouds down where they want them to be. It gives them hope in the time of their frustration. Above all it restores to art its responsibility to man. So you may take this book knowing that what is said in it is said with care and with the full consciousness that it will affect men's lives.

ERIC DUTHIE.

Tchekov in the Bronx

Paradise Lost. By Clifford Odets. Random House. $2.00.

LAST year the star of Clifford Odets appeared over Broadway. It was hailed with an enthusiasm equalled only by the acclaim which greeted the drama of Eugene O'Neill in the first years after the war. Three of his plays were running concurrently in Group Theatre productions: *Till the Day I Die,* an anti-Nazi depiction of communist activities in Germany; *Waiting for Lefty,* an exciting propagandist drama of the recent taxi-drivers' strike in New York; and *Awake and Sing,* a Tchekovian study of Jewish family life in the Bronx. In all three plays critics recognized a new and exciting talent—an emotional power in the handling of dialogue and situation, a capacity for characterization, and an honesty and conviction, not matched in the work of any other playwright then represented on Broadway.

Last December the Group Theatre presented *Paradise Lost,* the latest play by its twenty-eight year old

dramatist. The play met with a mixed reception. Critics and public recognized its power and sincerity but withheld their complete approval. It closed on February 9 of this year after a moderately successful run of two months.

In *Paradise Lost* Odets went beyond *Awake and Sing* and attempted "to find a theatrical form with which to express the mass as hero". His theme is the decay of the middle class as a whole. The setting is "an American city". When the play opens Leo Gordon is the head of a prosperous middle class family. His business fails and he is at last dispossessed of his home. Each of the characters is symbolic of a type disintegrating in the powerful solvent of economic change. In the final moments of the play Leo Gordon suddenly realizes the possibilities of constructive living in a new social order.

But Odets is a better artist than propagandist. This study of the middle class in decay is arresting because of his thorough knowledge of his characters, because of his love for them and his deep sympathy for their plight. He sets them passionately before us. He communicates their hunger and tragedy to us. But Leo Gordon's change of heart in the final moments of the play is not consistent with his characterization. The entire close is incredible and undramatic. It is as if Odets suddenly put away these people in whom he has been so interested and said to himself, "I am a playwright of revolt; I must end with the trumpet call to the new order." Throughout the play the call to the new order has been implicit in the bewildered protests, the longing of his characters—a minor note sounded insistently and successfully. The change in emphasis is unexpected and artistically dissatisfying.

Odets himself has professed disdain for art for art's sake. "At least once before I die I would like to write a fine revolutionary play. That is no easy job!" *Paradise Lost* is not a great revolutionary play; the revolutionary elements in it are undigested and at odds with the essential humanity with which its characters are conceived, and they prevent it from attaining greatness as a projection of character and emotion for their own sake.

Awake and Sing was good entertainment. One followed the experiences of its Jewish family with a certain amused complacency, saying as it were, "Thank God I am not one of these!" If one's sympathies were radical, Jacob's prophetic words meant much; if not, it was a good show anyway. But with *Paradise Lost* this smug complacency is no longer possible. The playwright insists that his characters are representative of each and every one of us. It is not the disintegration of a single family but of an entire society which he presents. Here, of course, the majority of his audience refuses to follow him. We refuse to believe that the dishonest Katz, the dying Julie, the gangster Kewpie, and the furnace man Pike, are representative types. Even Communists admit a vitality and a healthiness in the middle class which *Paradise Lost* denies.

Two steps must be taken by Odets before the content of his plays will equal the measure of his talent. He must determine, firstly, whether he is artist or propagandist—whether he is interested in experience for its own sake or whether he proposes to treat it merely as a stimulus to action. *Paradise Lost* suffers because his intention is not clear in this respect. In the second place he must widen his grasp of life and character as a whole. Up to the present time he has drawn young revolutionaries, New York taxi-drivers and Bronx middle-class types successfully. In *Paradise Lost* he has tried to persuade us that his decadent and tragic Bronx figures are characteristic of American life. This we refuse to believe.

There is no more bitter page in American drama than that in which the disheartened athlete Ben turns to his brother and sister: "Orphans of the storm! We are low enough to crawl under a snake. Julie, Pearl, rise and shine! One of the living heirs must amount to something in this Goddam family." One is reminded of the admonition of Lucinda Matlock, the old pioneer in the *Spoon River Anthology* who had lived and worshipped 96 years under the sun:

> Degenerate sons and daughters
> Life is too strong for you.
> It takes life to love Life.

Not until Odets can see beyond these frustrated types and recognize an essential greatness and worth in man rising above the imperfections of the social state, will he write truly great drama, the drama he is capable of writing.

HERMAN VOADEN.

The Final Crisis

This Final Crisis. By Allen Hutt. Gollancz, London; $1.75.

IN these days Canadians are searching for assurance that the people of Great Britain will not be laggards in the world wide struggle against entrenched privilege. The twentieth century history of the British Labour Party has led casual observers to believe that the British working class is stolidly conservative, welded to a habitual subservience which in practice guarantees the perpetuation of the existing social-economic system. To many Canadians the caste system in Great Britain seems so rigid, so deeply crystalized, that it looks depressingly like the Brahmanic hierarchy in India. It is refreshing, therefore, to review with Allen Hutt the actions of the British working class during the three major crises of the present-day social system in Great Britain.

In the 1840's the industrial revolution brought to life not only an entirely new ruling class: it also formed an entirely new ruled class. The establishment of the labour market meant the abolition of serfdom as organised under feudalism, an operation carried out by the "freeing" of the worker from possession of, or free access to, the means of production. The modern proletariat was born through the double action of the Enclosures Acts, which dispossessed the common people of their land and handed it to the new industrialists, and of the development of power-operated industry which rendered obsolete the slow methods of handworkers.

The hopeless economic position of the individual worker led to united action which culminated in Chartism. "England, the classic soil of capitalist production, is not so generally regarded as the classic soil of proletarian revolution. Yet that is the fact, and a highly significant one." Chartism was a class movement. It has been customary to deplore the fomenting

of the class-war spirit as something alien, un-British. But an examination of the ideas current during the emergence of Chartism indicates very clearly that Chartist leaders had no doubts about the impracticability of the amalgamation of classes. One of them said: "There is no common interest between working men and profit makers."

Chartism was a revolutionary movement. It worked for international working-class activity, celebrated the anniversaries of the French Revolution and the Polish insurrection, opposed Palmerston's foreign policy, and agitated for the self-government of colonial Canada. A speech made by Harney in London in 1846 foreshadowed the battle slogan of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848: "Workers of the world, unite!" It was only by a judicious mixture of concession and repression that England's ruling class survived the crisis of the 'forties.

At that time the world was the oyster of the British industrialists. England had become the world's railway contractor, the world's shipbuilder, the forge, the banker, the carrier, the clearing-house of the world. In the 1880's Great Britain lost this manufacturing monopoly and substituted for it colonial monopoly—imperialism—a reorganisation accompanied by a marked increase in the importance of exported capital and by the completion of the territorial division of the world by the great nations.

The export of capital in place of goods, of course, has an immediate effect on the working class, and once again the governing class was faced with an aroused working class movement; again concession and force were necessary to stave off revolution.

The solution of each crisis, however, contained the germs of the succeeding crisis. In the tension caused by the Home Rule movement during the spring of 1914, concessions were no longer easily granted. The Peers, the Tory politicians and the army officers organized for civil war against Parliament, in open defiance of traditional English democracy, and in armed defense of their privileged class position.

The development of the Fabian Society in 1884 and the presentation of Socialism as something separate from the class struggle had a disastrous influence on the Socialist movement however. The Fabians served "as the main channel through which the rising working-class movement could be inoculated with bourgeois ideas and so preserved from revolutionary infection." A leadership interested only in minor reforms and the formation of a labour aristocracy devoted to the preservation of its own privileged wage level served to deflect and dissipate much of the movement towards socialism by the working class itself.

Today the social crisis has reached world proportions and the ruling body of Great Britain can no longer make easy concessions to the workers of the nation. By the same development, the working-class movement becomes increasingly impatient of excuses and delays in the realisation of the Socialist State. While Great Britain has tremendous productive resources it is becoming increasingly clear that only Socialism can open the sluices, set the machines at full-time work, and float the unprivileged majority from their present depressed condition. The British working-class has revolutionary traditions. Allen Hutt makes it clear that progress lies with them.

H. K. SMALL.

Two Canadian Novels

Go West, Young Man. By Bernard J. Farmer. Thomas Nelson & Sons. $2.00.

Jancis. By Leslie Gordon Barnard. Macmillan Co. $2.50.

EXTREMES meet in this review of two first novels. Mr. Barnard has clothed *Jancis* in an elaborately complicated web of delicate, entangled threads. Mr. Farmer's "Young Man" wears shorts, and little else. But both books are of interest to Canadians ,and in both their chief merit is sincerity, and the chief flaw a failure to suit the material entirely to a discriminating reader's taste.

As a Canadian short story writer, Leslie Gordon Barnard stands second only to Morley Callaghan in the amount of first class work he has produced. This is his first novel, and like Mr. Callaghan's first, it does not quite bridge the gap between the short story form and the novel. It deals with John Laveris and other somewhat sophisticated Montrealers who spend a vacation together near Metis on the lower St. Lawrence. Jancis and her "brother" Claude Bonte, natives of the district, come into contact with this group and the ensuing complications form the body of the novel.

Unfortunately the "body" is all that some readers will find in it. There is a "spirit" as well, an almost allegorical conflict of abstract qualities personified by various characters. That "spirit" was probably the author's main preoccupation, but he has veiled it too much in a web of tenuous streams of consciousness, soliloquies and retrospects. But one has to admire Mr. Barnard's syntatical acrobatics. No one else could set such galaxy of trained phrases and performing words jumping through his hoops, without completely confusing his readers.

This is a beautifully written book,—and at once an outstanding example and warning to those who wish to write beautifully. It is unique among recent Canadian books for that quality and for the mysticism of its spiritual theme. Mr. Barnard has made a heroic effort. He has done everything—except win the battle. He should ponder carefully the thought that battles cannot be won by the scalpel and probe alone.

Just as Mr. Barnard overrates his audience's power to absorb punishment, so Bernard J. Farmer underrates it. Mr. Farmer also is a proficient short story writer whose name is familiar to Canadian magazine readers. His style is naturally bare, simple, and unornamented, suitable enough for a short story, but needing some added quality if used in a full length novel.

In this book Mr. Farmer started with modest ambition and achieves it. He has given the story of a gently bred young Englishman's arrival in Canada, his sufferings, hardships, gradual adaptation, and final modest and contented success. The plot is as simple as it could be. The value of the book (which is to a considerable extent autobiographical) lies in its straightforward sincerity, which appeals directly to the reader's feelings, and in the vivid picture of a Canadian world unknown to most Canadians. Railway section gangs, construction gangs in the north country, mining, are types of labour usually politely relegated to newcomers by the native born.

Peter Cochrane works in all of them, and in other jobs. He becomes one of those helpless pawns of petty tyranny and economic drift who form the great "unskilled labour" foundation of our great industries and cities. Mr. Farmer's book does not complain, does not criticize, it takes things as they are and shows them, vividly, if too barely, and lets the reader judge.

Bernard J. Farmer himself did most of the things which his hero does,—and suffered much greater privations. When working on a Northern Ontario construction gang, part of a crane fell on his shoulder and rendered his arm useless for many months. In hospital, this young man,—with no literary affiliations whatever, started writing stories—the only way he could think of to earn a living when he got out. He never gave up that attempt. In the end he succeeded, and this first promising novel is his first venture into the larger field.

R. S. KENNEDY.

Debunking Mussolini

Sawdust Caesar; the untold history of Mussolini and Fascism. By George Seldes. Harpers. $3.50.

MR. SELDES is an American newspaperman whose ruling passion is the exposure of the Truth Behind the News. Propaganda enrages him, and in his previous books he has done useful work in revealing the way in which nations, corporations and other special interest groups are continually building up in the public mind myths which have no basis except in the interests of their proponents. In *Sawdust Caesar* he brings to a study of Mussolini the purpose and method which he has developed in his previous work. He gives us an exposure of all the composite parts of the prevailing Mussolini myth — Mussolini the strong man, Mussolini the saviour of Italy from Bolshevism, Mussolini the founder of the corporate state, Mussolini the man who made the trains run on time. The book is in no sense an analysis of Fascism, the treatment of which is purely secondary to the treatment of Mussolini.

Within these limitations the author has done his job well. All but the most convinced Fascists will be disillusioned by the story presented here. We are shown a man who, in his lust for power, has taken any road that has offered, no matter how often this has involved the betrayal of the causes he had proclaimed most vociferously until each critical moment. His betrayal of pacifism when French money offered him a place of power as editor of an interventionist newspaper; his betrayal of d'Annunzio and the Fiume expedition in return for the government's support of his own Fascist enterprise; and above all his betrayal of Socialism when capitalism offered him better terms and a more open road to power,—all these are told with a wealth of detail.

What emerges incidentally from the story of Mussolini's rise to power is the demonstration that the real leadership of Fascism, right from its beginning as an effective movement, has lain elsewhere, among the industrialists, the landowners and the army chiefs. The truth of this has long been recognized by students of Fascism but Mr. Seldes gives it added point by describing the servile role which Mussolini was forced to play in 1921 and 1922, after he had in effect sold his movement to the industrialists.

It is unfortunate that this comes out only incidentally and that it is not given more emphasis. For this is more important for an understanding of Fascism than is a knowledge of Mussolini's personal character. And the reader is left at the end of the book with the impression that Fascism can be explained in terms of Mussolini, the "achievements" of Fascism since 1925 having been dealt with as the achievements of Mussolini.

One further criticism is necessary. An author who sets out to present evidence for disputed claims should not be allowed to carry over the habits of journalism to the extent of Mr. Seldes' carelessness in quotation and in references. His documentation consists of frequent and lengthy quotations, the sources of which are generally given inadequately and often not given at all. This carelessness is a serious defect even in a book intended for popular consumption. Possibly Mr. Seldes is taking it as proven that the people who have accepted the myth are not too meticulous in their demand for evidence, but his book would have been a more valuable weapon had more care gone into its making.

C. B. MACPHERSON.

Mr. Briffault Again

Breakdown. By Robert Briffault. Coward McCann; $2.50.

OF the books written since the beginning of the crisis the most decisive in its influence on the minds of Canadian intellectuals has been John Strachey's *The Coming Struggle for Power.* The conclusions reached in this book, couched in a curiously ingratiating style, have impelled many into active assistance in the working-class movement in this country.

Another book that will appeal to the intellectuals of Canada is *Breakdown,* by Robert Briffault, author of the novel *Europa.* Written in 1932, the book has been re-issued recently with a long addition bringing the work up to date. This is not a book loaded with tables and charts. Frequently assuming (with just certainty) the catastrophic nature of capitalism in decline, Briffault traces in a style rich and salty the effects of a failing economic system on men, and particularly on the mentality of men.

The peculiar value of the book lies in its complete demonstration that the problem facing mankind to-day is not, primarily, a problem in ethics, but a problem in social mechanics. Particularly arresting is the distinction he draws between individual ethics and collective social conduct.

Pursuing his object of exposing the collapse of traditional civilization, Briffault contends that the increasing divergence between it and social reality is the main reason for its breakdown. The traditional civilization of capitalism can command no longer either the loyalty or the respect of thinking men and women. He explains the dilemma of the intelligent and humane person in capitalist society to-day: "He is compelled to eat bread while others are starving. He knows that every joy and every indulgence he allows himself cost

misery and degradation to some human being. He is compelled to be a party to depredation, to iniquity, cruelty, and injustice. And he is asked and expected to regard the system which requires of him those things as something sacred, claiming his loyalty and devotion, something to be defended and promoted. If he is not blinded by the inconceivable insolence of those claims, he knows that the thing which mendaciously puts them forth, the unorganized traditional savage horror which blandly terms itself civilization, is an unspeakably hideous and criminal atrocity."

In those areas alone where the working class has attained political power does Briffault observe a union of social ideas and social reality achieved. " . . . the Soviet Union is living while the rest of the world is decrepit and dying. Traditional civilization is desperately striving to maintain the authority of tradition, of antique formulas grown no longer credible. It is subsisting upon pretences, high-sounding sentiments suspended in mid-air, long-convicted untruths which nobody can be said to believe. In the United Soviet Republics the crushing incubus of an all-pervading make-believe has been lifted off the human mind. Its functioning has reverted to realism." Wherever the capitalist system continues to prevail he observes its main buttress to be the stupidity or cultivated ignorance of its victims, whereas the Soviet Union finds its main strength in the adherence of the most intelligent and socially-minded of its population.

Briffault in this book reaches the same conclusion as does Palme Dutt in *Fascism and Social Revolution.* We in the capitalist world are faced with the necessity of choosing not beween communism and conventional democracy, but between a fascist state and a socialist society. The illusion that the "exquisite choice" is, even at this late hour, still possible, is effectively dispelled by the unsparing terms in which Briffault addresses those who would continue to drink the pale drug of liberalism. No one can evade a decision, since apathy lends strength to reaction. Briffault shows how frail a buckler constitutional democracy is when interposed between the gigantic contending forces in modern society.

Here is a type of mind very agreeable to those who like a writer who cleaves cleanly to the heart of a question. The scope and complexity of this subject are too great for the author to treat with adequate thoroughness in the limited number of pages in this book. Had he avoided a slight excess in phrasing he might have produced a finer work. However, because of the extreme directness of its prose this book may have at the present time a more intense effect on all who read it fervid pages. Rarely has capitalism been so thoroughly indicted. Briffault commands an urgent and valuable pen. It is well that he stands in the ranks of the progressive forces.

R. S. KENNY.

Brief Reviews

Freedom, Farewell! By Phyllis Bentley. Macmillan Co. $2.50.

YOU and I have it on the unquestionably respectable authority of the personage responsible for the display cards in Eaton's Book Department that *Freedom, Farewell!* is apposite to our own times. I am glad to have this authorization, but I am a little doubtful if the copywriter got much further than the title page. I should be glad also to have explained why Miss Bentley abandoned industrial England for Imperial Rome, and millworkers and gentry for senators and generals. If Walter Greenwood had written this book it would be less surprising; though Miss Bentley's talent for stripping volitions and springs of emotion is used here with far better effect than could be Mr. Greenwood's Dickensian characterizations.

This study makes Julius Caesar, with whom it mainly concerns itself, a surprisingly interesting and consistent character. It is rather a treat, though a quite legitimate one, to hear the man who divided Gaul into three parts making tender love to Brutus' wife in a garden. The other notables, as for instance Pompey, the bungling *honnete homme* genuinely in love with Caesar's daughter Julia; Crassus, the skinflint millionaire; Cicero, the fussy little idealist with the golden voice and the termagant wife; Octavious, "who had as usual turned up when the fighting was over with an air of having been there all the time"—all of them come home to the mind better than does their *zeitgeist.*

If I had read it as a historical tale alone I should have enjoyed *Freedom, Farewell!* very much. It is well written in a fluent prose that never makes itself felt, either for better or worse, and there is much in the book to ponder over or chuckle over. But since I believed it to be a presentation of the timeless conflict between democracy and dictatorship, I finished each chapter with the feeling that surely the *next* would establish the intended social significance. After twenty-eight disappointments, even the suavely-worded epilogue failed to convince me of the book's very great importance.

J. M.

Theory of Flight. By Muriel Rukeyser. Yale University Press. $2.00.

A first volume of poetry by a young revolutionary poet whose work has appeared in most of the little magazines. Extraordinarily mature and self reliant, this book gives great promise for her future work.

The Pulitzer Prize Plays, 1918-1934. Random House. $3.50.

These plays seem to grow progressively less important during the sixteen years following the war. The truth is that this collection is a record, not of the decline of the American stage, which has gone ahead rapidly during this period, but the growing conservatism and general incompetence of the judges who made the selection. However, the volume includes some of the best plays ever produced in the United States.

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