new frontier

A CANADIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF LITERATURE & SOCIAL CRITICISM

TORONTO
JUNE, 1936

Corbin
A Company Town Fights For Its Life

Dorothy Livesay

A Direction for Canadian Poets . . . . . *Leo Kennedy*

United Front in Toronto—1872 . . . . . *Betty Ratz*

$150.00 Prize Contest for Canadian Plays

VOL. 1, NO. 3 25 CENTS A COPY

New Frontier

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Rates 25c a copy; six months subscription $1.00; yearly subscription $2.00. NEW FRONTIER welcomes the work of Canadian artists and writers. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by return postage. As NEW FRONTIER is a co-operative venture, it does not pay for contributions.

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THE TREKKERS ON TRIAL

AS we go to press the trials of the twenty-six young men arrested in connection with the notorious Dominion Day riots in Regina are continuing. These riots, begun by police and the R.C.M.P., who attacked a peaceful open-air meeting of citizens and striking relief camp workers, seem destined to have serious repercussions in the history of the Canadian labour movement.

Despite the virtual boycott of the trials by the daily press, facts have been made public which give a good deal to think about. The refusal of the King government to drop the charges of rioting, although the arrested trekkers are obviously innocent of responsibility for what occurred; the biased attitude of the presiding judge; the confused and conflicting testimony of the police and witnesses for the prosecution; and finally the savage sentences already passed on those of the trekkers who have stood trial, provide a beautiful object lesson in the workings of capitalist democracy. What is more important, they demonstrate more convincingly than any occurrence since the Stratford strike the necessity for the unity of all progressive forces to uphold the right of free speech and freedom of organization in Canada.

The most encouraging aspect of the affair has been the organization of a national united Citizens' Defence Movement which is carrying on the defence of the trekkers and organizing public opinion behind a campaign for their release. The defence has already won an important victory when it succeeded in having the Section 98 charges against three of the trekkers dropped. But it is handicapped for lack of funds.

At present it is appealing for financial and organizational assistance to all individuals interested in seeing that justice is done. *New Frontier* is glad to endorse this appeal. The address of the Citizens' Defence Movement is 406a Kerr Building, Regina, Saskatchewan.

LEFTY GOES TO OTTAWA

THE social play has come into its own in Canada. For the last two years an established fact in the United States, written about, argued about, praised or condemned, it has at last been admitted to be the most vital hope for a waning American stage. Its reception in Canada has been a different matter. Early attempts by little theatre groups at producing plays with some sort of social content were ignored or sneered at. Now for the first time, two social plays have captured the highest laurels of the Canadian theatre—the Bessborough Trophies at the Dominion Drama Festival.

These two plays, Eric Harris' *Twenty-Five Cents* and Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty*, were not the smoothest performances of the twenty-one which were entered in the finals at Ottawa. They had something, however, which set them far above the rest, and that was an affirmative recognition of the facts of contemporary life. Granville Barker called *Waiting for Lefty* "a sign of the renaissance of the drama" and praised the actors for their enthusiasm and sincerity, for the honesty with which they interpreted the author's spirit.

The next few years should see a great change in the character of the Dominion Drama Festival. More and more plays of a social character will be seen, and the more pretentious and artificial stuff will be dropped. Only in this way will the Canadian theatre grow up.

In this issue announcement is made of a play contest sponsored by the New Theatre Groups of Canada. We believe that this contest will do much to provide Canadian theatre groups with new and vital play material for their future work. A tremendous potential audience is waiting for this material, an audience tired of plays which are remote from their lives.

FRANCE SWINGS TO THE LEFT

AGAIN it will be necessary to evoke the argument that the political phenomena of any country have taken place *in vacuo*, completely insulated from any influences not peculiar to and unique in that country. We will undoubtedly hear it said that French (like Russian) farmers are totally unlike Canadian farmers. Already it has been argued that the reason for the victory of the Front Populaire is to be found in the traditional *radicalism* (sic!) of the French farmer, and that the same thing could not possibly happen here because the Canadian farmer is traditionally conservative.

We must grant, of course, that a United Front program will not be successful in Canada *because* it has been successful in France. On the other hand, we distinctly remember having been led to believe that like causes produce like effects, and that therefore since the United Front succeeded in France because the French people disliked Fascism and War, the same

dislike might bring about the success of anti-capitalist unity here. The inability to come to such a conclusion may be based on one of two premises: first, that Canada is not in danger of going to war, and that the R.C.M.P. and various other official and unofficial manifestations of anti-liberal and anti-progressive forces are not incipiently fascist; or second, that we have nothing to learn from history.

In any event the Front Populaire has 378 seats in the *Chambre*, more than enough to ensure the formation of a cabinet on June 1.

There are still, however, certain disquieting possibilities in the situation. The fact that (at the time of writing) the reconvening of the Chambre is still almost a month away, leaves considerable time for a *coup* on the part of the fascist forces, which are still thoroughly armed. Nor is the attitude of the military too reliable, particularly in the Command: the animadversions of the ancient but still powerful Marshal Petain are still fresh in our minds. On the other hand the decisive popular defeat of the right elements may have produced sufficient demoralization in the ranks of the fascists to make them doubtful of any desperate attempts. At the present time there appears to be a silence from these quarters which may or may not be ominous.

In spite of persistent rumours to the contrary Leon Blum has accepted the premiership, which theoretically should be his. It is sincerely to be hoped that the unequivocal mandate of the French people will prevent the vacillation which has so often in the past resulted in the violent destruction of all progress, and that the Front Populaire will insist on a rigorous program the first plank of which should be the immediate disarming and outlawing of the fascist leagues and the removal of all known fascists from key positions in the gendarmerie and the military. Only such a step will ensure the possibility of the government's being able to carry out the social program on which it was voted into power.

GERMANY AND BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

IT appears to be beyond doubt that Hitler's recent move in offering 25-year pacts to Belgium, France and the states on her eastern borders was an exceedingly well-calculated one. At any rate its illusory promise of a quarter-century of continental peace has succeeded in befuddling British public opinion, both as to the significance of Germany's most recent flyer in unilateral denunciation and as to the nature of her foreign policy in general. Indeed, the skill displayed in this checkmating of France and Locarno by an almost uncanny foreknowledge of the direction in which the British cat would jump, indicates that the policy was devised with a finesse hitherto foreign to German, and particularly Nazi diplomacy. It would be the height of naivety to suppose that the British Foreign Office, backed by the insistence of the Government that the German proposals be "listened to" before being compelled to abide by the Locarno Treaty, shares the muddle-headedness of the leadership of the Labour Party: the facts of Anglo-German relations are becoming too startingly clear.

Bluntly, the key to the question is that Germany intends to attack the Soviet Union after re-establishing a German *Mittel-Europa*. The latter is not, as has been claimed, an ultimate objective of German policy, but only a means towards the loosening of the French controlled Little Entente and the consequent weakening of France's continental power. This has become particularly important since the ratification of the Franco-Soviet pact. The non-aggression treaties offered the eastern states are bilateral, i.e. between Germany and *each of the powers*. Thus if German policy necessitates the abrogation of any one of the treaties, the other powers are bound not to help the nation attacked since this would itself be the abrogation of a non-aggression pact. The whole thing, of course, is insignificant, since to any capitalist power, policy is dictated not by prior undertakings, but by immediate necessity. The general tendency, however, would be to immobilize the individual nations while Germany dealt with each, or "borrowed a frontier" for an attack on the Soviet Union.

In the West, the situation, owing to British policy, is much more serious. The 25-year non-aggression pacts offered France and Belgium under a new Locarno including Britain and Italy would involve a British attack on France as a fulfilment of such a treaty if France attempted to fulfil her obligations under the Franco-Soviet pact. The question, then, is whether the policy of England is orientated toward or against German policy. Unfortunately there seems to be little doubt about this. The discovery last year of British loans to Germany was tantamount to a discovery that Britain is financing German rearmament. Three weeks ago there was a further announcement, following almost directly upon the Rhineland invasion, that an additional loan of almost half a billion dollars (£85,000,000) had been granted Germany by British financiers, bringing the total to almost a billion dollars. Shortly afterwards, Chancellor of the Exchequer Neville Chamberlain, in answer to a question from the Labour benches said that he "felt sure that they (the banks) had done nothing contrary to the wishes" of the Government—a singularly frank admission that the present Government of Great Britain was in accord with German rearmament and the whole policy for which the rearmament was intended—war on the Soviet. It is now clear that the Anglo-German Naval Agreement is part of this thoroughly consistent policy of British imperialism. One feels that the cordiality of the King, expressed in his recent greetings to Hitler on the occasion of the latter's birthday bears special significance in view of the program of the Foreign Office and the dominant Government policy.

Parenthetically it should be noted that recent loans by Britain to Japan now total about four hundred million dollars (£80,000,000), while Japanese aggression has carefully avoided encroachment on the 240 millions of English pounds invested in China—an investment which can be guaranteed only by the victory of Japan or the Nanking government, or a coalition of the two, over the Red Army there. Thus Britain's greatest financial stakes outside the Empire proper, lie in the success of the policies of the two powers whose avowed and (the rumours persist) joint purpose it is to attack the Soviet Union.

Those Canadians who suggest that "we resist the temptation to take sides in Europe" simply do not understand the situation. The choice is between war and peace—war by the power diplomacy of finance-

capital and peace by collective security against the powers driving towards war. We cannot avoid war by ignoring what is taking place in Europe. In Germany a book has recently appeared which surveys the rich possibilities of Canada as a future colonial possession of the Reich. Those who would loftily turn their back on the problem must not forget that by doing so they are putting themselves in the ideal position for being thoroughly kicked.

Ottawa Notes

THE new Liberal government's first budget was presented to the House of Commons on May 1 by Mr. C. A. Dunning, Minister of Finance. Heralded as the first step in balancing the budget, it will reduce the nation's deficit by approximately $62,000,000 for the coming fiscal year. As might have been expected, this reduction will be effected by slashing the purchasing power of the Canadian people through a higher sales tax, while the increasing profits of the rich are left practically untouched.

Income taxes remain the same. Corporation taxes have been increased from thirteen and one-half to fifteen per cent, and in the case of parent companies and subsidaries lumped in one, from fifteen to seventeen per cent. The government estimates that this will produce about $6,000,000 of new revenue. The biggest taxation increase lies in jumping the sales tax from six to eight per cent, the highest it has been in our history. This will yield about $23,000,000 extra, and bring the total revenue from this source up to $103,000,000. Proceeds from sales tax revenue will once again exceed those from income tax by approximately $20,000,000.

There are a few exceptions to the new sales tax, including paper and ink used for the manufacture of magazines, crushed stone and gravel, liver extract used in medicines, and educational films.

A wide reduction in tariff duties will counterbalance the sales tax to some extent. Two reductions of greatest interest are the slicing of duty on farm implements from the former rate of twenty-five per cent, twelve and one-half by the Canadian-American agreement last January, to seven and one-half per cent; and the removal of specific duties from all manufactured British fabrics of cotton, yarn and artificial silk, with the halving of specific duties on American goods in the same category. Undoubtedly the reduction in duty on farm implements will help the farmer, though it may have an unsettling effect on wages and employment in our own industries. The manufacturer is aided by the removal of duty from British made iron and steel machinery which is not being produced in Canada.

"The upward swing of the business cycle is currently establishing higher levels of activity generally throughout the industrial and commercial field", said Mr. Dunning in his budget address. This is amply borne out by the fact that net dividends for March of this year topped those of the same month last year by fifty per cent. In spite of Canada's one and a quarter million relief recipients, money is being made. Why then, should the wealthy receive preferential treatment? For it is obvious that the sales tax is destined to come from the pockets of the farmers, workers, and middle class. The Liberals believe that they can restore trade and bring back prosperity by slowly balancing the budget. Does this seem logical when the method cripples the purchasing power of the people?

* * * * *

Parliament has now decided that the relief camps are to be closed no later than July 1. The Rigg Report, unsatisfactory though it was to the many sympathisers with the trekkers, could only condemn the system as a whole. Until July men in the camps will receive fifteen dollars a month instead of twenty cents a day. In the summer ten thousand of the sixteen thousand boys now in the camps will be given five or six months work on the railroads. Though the government will loan the railroads $6,412,000 to carry on this work, there has been as yet no definite statement regarding wages or working conditions, nor has it been stated whether the railroad workers now unemployed will be also given work or simply forgotten. The six thousand single men thrown jobless from the camps will, as far as we know, swell the ranks of the unemployed in the cities.

The foundation for a national unemployment agency has been laid, but at the time of writing little has been done on the project. With Arthur B. Purvis of the Canadian Industries Ltd., as chairman, the six remaining members of the commission have yet to be appointed. Mr. Woodsworth has already opposed it in the House as a "business man's commission" and there will be stronger opposition before it becomes a fact. Meanwhile the government, while theoretically creating employment with one hand, has cut the grants-in-aid to the provinces by fifteen per cent; the provinces in turn will be almost forced to hand on the cut to the municipalities.

* * * * *

While the relief camp strikers charged with rioting are being sentenced in Regina, the Liberal government continues to procrastinate on its election promise to repeal Section 98 of the Criminal Code. Will the present session see its repeal?

DILLON O'LEARY.

Corbin—
A Company Town Fights for Its Life

DOROTHY LIVESAY

PUSHING its way through the dusty mountain roads of the Crow's Nest Pass, Alberta, the car spurts up an incline, slows to a stop. From an office at the side of the road an officer steps out, red-faced and bull-necked, wearing the uniform of the British Columbia Provincial Police.

"Where you from?"

"Coleman," the driver beside me answers.

"What's your name?" The officer jots down the answers in a note book. Then he searches the driver's face, with a puzzled look. "Coming back tonight?"

"Yes."

"Going far?"

"Corbin."

"Corbin, eh? Who you going to see there?"

"My sister."

The officer gives us the onceover, appraisingly. "O.K. You can try it. But the road's in bad shape."

The car darts forward. We lean back, smiling. Plenty of other cars from the mining towns of Alberta have never got across the boundary. Leaders of the Mine Workers' Union of Canada are on a blacklist. This isn't Germany, but British Columbia, April, 1936.

The Corbin road is a narrow track skirting the edge of mountains, almost washed away in some places by snow slides. For an hour it climbs above desolate valleys, snow slashed, some green with Jackpine, others sentinelled with trees like burnt fingers. There is no one else on the road, no settlements. We push ahead under a grey sky.

"Sure, it's romantic country," my driver says. "And a rich country. Over twenty-five years ago the mine was opened, and there's still 75,000,000 tons of coal to be mined. But I wouldn't live or work up here —though I've been a miner all my life. For one thing —you have winter, and then July. But that isn't the only reason. You'll see."

Corbin lies in a narrow crescent between mountains. Three rows of identical shacks, unpainted and soot-coloured, are perched on the slope facing the tipple. There are no lanes or streets between them. An empty store and cafe, a boarding-house, a school and a union hall are the main public buildings, likewise unpainted. Above the village there is only snow and burnt timber. There is no sound or activity anywhere; since the strike 15 months ago every hand has been idle. The town is living on contributions from other miners.

Today is ration day. Miners of all nationalities—Scotch, Welsh, Belgian, Czechoslovakian, are crowding into the union hall to get the week's rations for some 200 families. The relief committee, consisting of men and women, is on hand to mark off lists and parcel up the provisions from behind a counter. One of the single men, who "batches" with his mining partner, explains how many supplies each adult is entitled to weekly. All staples are covered, such as flour (5 pounds), sugar (¾ pound), butter (½ pound), potatoes (6 pounds). Jam or peanut butter cannot be had every week, beans and cheese are likewise rare, one pound of meat has to go for ten days, eggs vary from two to eight per person per week.

"But we get along pretty good", the young man grins. "I can make such swell bread now I'm baking everybody's, almost."

"And can I wash floors?" another man adds.

"Well, none of you can beat me at puttin' out a snow white washin'," says a third. I begin to wonder if the women have anything left to do, so one of the miners suggests I go up to his home and "meet the Missus."

It is one of the shacks in the middle row, with scarcely any room between houses for children to play, and the front family's back yard with its ashes and garbage almost on this doorstep. The kitchen and front room are neat, but shabby, with the oil cloth worn bare and the walls askew. Mrs. W., a thin, freckled young woman, greets the visitors happily. "Well, imagine you being from the east! I was born down in Ontario. Come in and sit down."

"I see you brought the flour, Ben. Now I can make some biscuits." She laughed then. "We women had a terrible time about the flour. You see, the union had to base the rations on some budget, so they used the army list. I guess the men in the army like lots of hot cakes, so they need lots of flour. But our children don't. We had some time to convince the committee to buy more vegetables and less flour."

The supplies, she explained, were brought up every two weeks from Lethbridge by truck. Union and Corbin defence relief funds are allotted at the rate of 68 cents a week per person, and the diet expands or is restricted according to market prices.

"It's hard sometimes to make a meal seem different, especially if you have no meat. The biggest trouble is not having any fresh fruit and so few green vegetables. We can't always get the dried fruits. That's hard on the children—they aren't really undernourished but they're not getting everything they should have. And if a person is on a diet it is impossible to get it—we couldn't ask the union for that."

Milk comes—about a pint for each family—from a dairyman who gives credit in exchange for having his hay brought for him. "But two of his cows died, and he lost two because he could not pay up for them."

Since Corbin is a company town (Corbin Collieries, Ltd., an American firm), everything in it belongs to the company. The water system was frozen all winter, and nothing done about it; electricity was turned off "so our radios are no use"; sanitation has "gone out of business"; stores are closed; rents are unpaid—"they wouldn't dare evict us because that might draw too much attention to the condition of the houses." Most iritating of all, Corbin miners are no longer taxpayers, so the school trustees are no longer elected by them, but appointed by the company. "This

year there is only one, Walter Almond, who doesn't know anything about schools or teaching. He supplies fuel as well, and acts as janitor—which is against the law for a trustee. But what can we do?"

The only thing the company has been forced to do is to keep open the school and pay the two teachers. Classes only reach the eighth grade, however, and there is no way of getting children to a high school. For two months during the winter the only doctor was 15 miles away, so the government had to keep the road open. Then finally a doctor came, his salary partly paid by the government and partly by the miners themselves, who are supposed to supply rations, rent and electricity. They are already behind on the doctor's rent, so he is leaving at the end of April.

"Corbin is fairly healthy, except for influenza," the doctor told me. He is a military man, used to hard fare. "The diets are all that prairie children would get. The great trouble is weakness of the heart, especially among many of the women. It's due to the high altitude and of course has nothing to do with the present situation." He meant with the attitude of the company, which refuses to negotiate with the miners.

"I'm glad you want to know the truth about Corbin," another miner's wife told me. "At the beginning I used to send stories about our life up here and why we went on strike to the Nelson News. Then they began sending letters back asking, 'is your story authentic'? They would not print our facts, but lies that came from the other side. After that I quit bothering. But it makes you sore to think that people on the outside don't know what happened."

"Yes," another young woman said, with some bitterness, "some friends of mine in Lethbridge would hardly speak to me because they read I was throwing a fence post at an officer. The newspapers helped the police to frame us."

"Tell me why you went on strike?" I asked a group of miners up in the union hall, men both single and married who had been strike leaders.

"A year before then, our strike should be," a Czechoslovakian burst out.

"Yes, we must have been asleep, though we were all in the union since 1925. It wasn't the wages so much, it was the conditions we had to live under."

"Yes," agreed another, a Nova Scotian. "It got so we saw that life was dearer to us than the mine."

They told the story of those shacks built in 1909 of green lumber, costing only $175 to build and bringing in $5.00 per month rent ever since, besides $3.50 for water and light, 50 cents for radio use, 50 cents for a garbage collection that only came twice a year. The houses shrunk, fell apart, and with only an outer wall it was not uncommon that snow drifted across the bed at night. Ice formed on the wall and even stuck to the beds and any effort to get the carpenter to come and do some patching was met with vague promises and a general run-around. It took one man two years to get his door lintel mended. The health officer reported that the houses were "absolutely antiquated", and he condemned 78 out of 80 houses.

Besides these conditions there was the situation in the mine itself. Nearly a mile from the village where the bath-house is the men had to walk to the mine in mid-winter clad only in their work clothes, and were often held up outside the mine to do road work. As a result they might start work soaked to the skin, and return home with the clothes frozen to their backs. In one mine there has been a fire blazing for years, and nothing done to protect the men. Pay checks went through some extraordinary gyrations, sometimes being short and taking months to get adjusted, or else being much too high. In the latter case the correct amount was pencilled in on the envelope and given to the miner, but the mistaken amount remained on the books. "Somebody was getting something."

"The company's excuse was always that they weren't making money. Yet in the B.C. mines report for three years back of 1934 it shows that Corbin was geting 5.4 tons per man, as compared with 1.1 tons on Vancouver Island and 3.0 tons at Michel. The seam is one of the richest, that's why we want a government investigation, to prove to the world the mismanagement of the company."

Mismanagement was shown most clearly in the negotiations that went on between the Mine Workers Union and the Company. In the face of an expiration of the agreement in March, 1935 and the possibility of a wage cut at that time, the union set forth its demands in January of that year. The union secretary, J. Press, had been fired by the company on the pretext that he did not work full time one day (this situation had been "fixed up" by the foreman). Reinstatement of Press was the first demand and equal to it in importance was the demand for repair of miners' houses. Equal distribution of work was requested, to stop abuses in that direction, and also it was held essential that miners taken from the working face should be paid the full rate of $5.60 per shift. The miners were willing to arbitrate these demands before calling a strike.

The company dilly-dallied but for two months after the strike was called no effort to work the mine was made. Then there were open hints that "The Big Show", which is a huge face of coal projecting from the mountainside and requiring no mining operations but only a steam shovel to work it, would be opened shortly by non-union men. Then at the beginning of April, about 6 provincial police were called for by the company and took up their residence in the town. Against all provocations the miners continued their peaceful picketing.

On Tuesday, April 16, the company met a delegation of the strike committee and appeared to be willing to sign the agreement. Then they stated that they would have to wire the head office in Spokane for a final decision. The delegation reported this to a meeting of the miners and it was agreed that they would deal with Spokane. But on returning with this decision to the company the delegation was told that they were "too late." A telegram had just come from Spokane refusing to deal with the demands.

"After that," as one of the strike leaders put it, "we knew something would happen. The police were getting restless, they had been called in to keep law and order and there wasn't a single instance of any trouble. On the morning of April 17th I walked down the road early and saw that the scabs from out of town were manning the caterpillar tractor, and filling it up with gas and water. We called out every man and woman in the town and had a mass picket line, feeling that we had to stop the tractor from taking those men up to the Big Show. The womenfolk were grouped in the middle and some were up front. Suddenly, as at a signal, the full detachment of police ran

out from the hotel and grouped themselves in two squads on either side of the caterpillar, flanking the picket line. . . . Before we could understand anything the caterpillar was moving forward, straight at our women. And the police, instead of clearing the way, suddenly closed in, hemming us in on both sides, beating miners and their wives with pick handles and riding crops. . . ."

Mrs. W. was one of the women at the front, heading the women's auxiliary. "That morning," she said, "we didn't have any fear. We'd been told that the police were there to protect us, and we just imagined they were called out to clear the road for the tractor. Then the tractor advanced with its sharp knife edge right on us, cutting at us women in front and the cops moving forward with it. We turned to run and the police closed in, beating us. . . . That was when our men went wild. They had no weapons at all, for all the lies them witnesses told. They had to go down to the creek and dig up stones out of the snow to throw at the police, so as to protect us.

"There was nobody killed, though the papers made out there was. The police, some of them just youngsters, started all the violence. Before that happened I used to be patriotic, I'd stand up on my little Maple Leaf in front of anyone. But I learned my lesson. We all did. The police were sent down by the government to protect the American company—not the Canadian workers. Yet all we were asking for was a a decent existence. We couldn't go on the old way any longer. . . . Well, one thing it done, was to bring all the miners together—solid. We've never been separated since."

Mrs. C. was one of the women who was badly hurt—a young, lithe European women. "As the tractor moved down on us Inspector Elmsie leaned over and hit me on the back of my head. I got away somehow, and was walking in the opposite direction toward the Cafe, when I saw a bunch of cops looking kind of queerly at me. But I was alone, and just running away, so I didn't take any notice of Inspector MacDonald coming up alongside me. All of a sudden he struck me a blow from the rear, across my right ear, it must have been from his riding crop. . . . Anyhow, I was knocked down unconscious. . . . For days after I kept fainting, and the whole side of my face and neck was swollen.

"I testified at Corbin, but not at Fernie. Maybe the lawyer thought I'd get too violent and spoil things. I felt violent, when I seen the way they lied—swearing they had seen all seventeen of the arrested men during the riot, when those same police were passing them by in the street the next morning, out with a warrant but unable to identify them! And going into garbage piles to find steel bed rails which the miners were supposed to have been armed with! No one was showing the bloody pick handles the police were swinging, but we found them afterwards hidden under a mattress!

"I sure learned something about governments during those days, something I never would have believed before. My husband used to get *The Worker* and I just couldn't believe the stories I read in it. After the riot, 'You see, I was right', he says to me. . . . Before, I never would have believed they would attack defenceless people. I guess the moral is, go armed. . .

"Sure, right now I feel pretty bitter, I don't go to no meetings because it makes me feel too sore. Here the government is doing absolutely nothing for us and we're just living on the sweat of other miners. Maybe I shouldn't say it, but we in Corbin are just sapping the life-blood of Crow's Nest Pass miners. I figure we ought to be getting relief instead."

Getting relief is the big question in Corbin. It is not so simple as it sounds: many workers think it would be a mistake. In the first place, the doctor definitely told me he had it from the Government Inspector that Corbin could not receive provincial relief unless the families agreed to leave the town and go to a place where work might be possible. The miners feel that this would just be a move to help the company: as soon as the town is cleared of union men the company can move in scabs to work the Big Show—a very profitable operation not requiring skilled miners. Wages would go down to about $3.00 per shift and this would mark the beginning of a move to crush the union in other towns. Again, going on relief would have a bad effect on the single men, many of them union leaders, by forcing them out of the town into relief camps. For in spite of the Federal Government's promises, these camps remain open in Alberta and B.C. Lastly, relief would not be granted to all miners, as a goodly number of them have property in the shape of automobiles bought during boom days—the only means of communication with "the outside."

Possibly the greatest argument against relief is the fact that in this way the company can no longer be negotiated with, and full government inquiry into the management of the mine, the riot, and the keeping of five men in Nelson jail (even after one of those committed, David Lockart, died there on March 6), would be ignored. The report of the committee on evangelism and social service of the United Church declared that "nothing less than a judicial inquiry would satisfy justice." Dr. Hugh Dobson, one of the United Church secretaries of social service, in a wire to the Provincial Secretary, urged "an impartial inquiry into all circumstances." As well as this a strong fight in Parliament has been led by Mr. T. Uphill, Labor M.L.A. and the C.C.F. members in the B. C. house. Such actions, the strikers feel, justify a further attempt for an investigation.

"Maybe we will have to go on relief, to stop draining Blairmore," one of the miners said. "But if so we will all go on relief together, and stay in our homes, and bring the real question to the fore: that of getting the mine reopened. It is still being kept in condition, though fire has burned out one mine entirely. But the equipment is still here, the upkeep continues. What are they waiting for? Spokane will give *us* no answer. But what if the Mackenzie King government should live up to its pre-election promises, and threaten confiscation of the mine if the industrial magnates refuse to co-operate? It looks as if the Canadian government and the American company are sleeping in the same bed.

"Well, the miners are together too. Not only Corbin is holding fast, but all the miners of Alberta are behind us, each man in the union from Blairmore giving $2.00 a month to keep our children alive and our union strong."

This is why Corbin is waiting. Corbin is not through fighting.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *Readers of New Frontier are urged to send all Corbin relief funds, clothing and books to George Taylor, Secretary, Corbin Central Defence Committee, Balirmore, Alta.*)

Engines in An_Orchard

Charles F. Comfort

Thunder Over Alma Mater

S. J. PERELMAN

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Last month there appeared in the Canadian edition of* LIBERTY *an article exposing the red menace in Canadian colleges. Not to be outdone by any foreign magazine,* NEW FRONTIER *has obtained from a special investigator this amazing story of the havoc wrought by the red firebrands in American institutes of learning. Mr. S. J. Perelman is eminently suited to write about conditions in the universities, having once attended one himself. He has chosen to reveal his findings in the form of fiction rather than that of straight reporting, but the story he has to tell is just as startling as the* LIBERTY *article, and just as true.*

"Thunder over Alma Mater" is dedicated to that small but patriotic band of Canadian students who unflinchingly raised the swastika among the horde of unwashed radicals assembled in Queen's Park, Toronto, on May Day, 1936.

"IT'S up to us to crush this Red menace, fellows!" The speaker was none other than our old friend Tom Rover, and as he looked into the intent faces of his classmates, his eyes flashed fire. For once the Rover Boys, fun-loving Dick and serious-minded Tom, were united in a common purpose. Not in years had the hoary walls and storied elms of old Effluvia College been threatened with such a crisis. But let us hear it from Tom Rover's own lips as he awakened his fellow-students to the danger facing them:

"I found out just in the nick of time," vouchsafed Tom in manly tones, producing several newspaper clippings. "These sneaking Reds have been plotting a revolution right here in old Effluvia! Certain weak-minded members of the faculty, goaded on by insidious alien doctrines and abetted by unscrupulous students, are preparing to seize power, set up a soviet in the Administration Building, and nationalize the girls of Sweetbread Hall!" The collegians exchanged startled glances but Tom's charges were irrefutable, for everything he said was supported by the clippings from the Hearst papers he held in his hand.

"This is an unexpected turn of affairs," frowned Dick gravely. "Who is responsible for this disloyalty to our ideals and institutions?" Tom's sense of sportsmanship would have prevented him from replying, but at this juncture the culprit revealed himself unwittingly. Muttering a coarse oath, skulking Dan Baxter, followed by several of his toadies, slunk from the hall. Seizing the opportunity, Tom followed up his advantage.

"As you know, men," he continued, "one worm in an apple is often enough to spoil a whole barrel." His epigram was not lost on his hearers, as several appreciative chuckles testified. "This hulking bully whom you all know as Dan Baxter is really Dan Baxtrovitch, a notorious single-taxer, anarchist, and firebrand who has been sent here by Moscow to foment discord in the ranks of American youth." At his mention of Moscow, his audience recognized the name of a poorly-ventilated city in Russia which the unsuccessful revolutionaries were using as a base. Fortunately its downfall was imminent, as the gentle but firm armies of several nations were on their way to deliver its cowed inhabitants from a reign of terror.

"Those ruffians will stick at nothing," declared Tom, compressing his lips. "Hourly they are widening the rift between capital and labour and swaying the freshmen. They use specious arguments such as our twelve million unemployed, when everybody knows that there are more than enough jobs to go around if the lazy scum would only work. But their real designs are even more loathsome. They are scheming to divide up our allowances evenly, convert our football team into shock troops, and force us to subsist on beet soup!" A great roar of protest welled up from his listeners as they realized how the subversive forces had been boring from within.

"Is there still time to outwit these destructive elements?" demanded Tom's cronies in determined accents.

"If we hurry," returned Tom, alive to his responsibility. "Come closer, fellows."

With a will his friends gathered in a resolute little knot around him and in hurried whispers prepared a plan of battle to combat the impending menace to dear old Effluvia.

The college librarian blinked in surprise as the door of the reading-room swung open and a group of earnest students entered. In a trice he was courteously trussed up like a fowl by several juniors while the rest of the unit searched the shelves for incendiary literature and carried it outside to the waiting bonfire. Soon the works of a number of inflammatory and un-American writers of the crazy so-called "modern" school such as Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, and Carl Sandburg were swelling the blaze amid the vociferous applause of the student body. Alert and clear-eyed volunteers joined enthusiastically in the hunt and gave vent to righteous wrath as volumes of "dry-as-dust" economics and sociology by firebrands like Veblen and Babbit advocating the overthrow of democracy crackled into ashes.

Meanwhile another band of stalwart athletes led by Dick Rover had cornered several of the younger professors in the English department, who had openly been inciting underclassmen to revolt by sponsoring collective bargaining. The pitiable wretches were given an opportunity to recant by their gentlemanly captors but countered with stubborn refusals. Only when a

copy of *The Nation* was found secreted under a pillow did the vigilantes' patience come to an end, and after some innocent horseplay involving castor-oil and a rubber hose, the cowardly "intelligentsia" admitted their mistake. Some of the more exuberant youngsters were for riding the offenders out of town on a rail, but under the restraining hand of Dick Rover, the chop-fallen radicals were allowed to take the oath of allegiance and remove their coats of tar and feathers.

Fifteen miles out of town Tom Rover, bending low over the wheel of his speedy rocket car, glanced hurriedly at his wrist-watch and raced forward through the darkness. Would he be in time? One of Dan Baxtrovitch's minions had confessed that beautiful Eunice Haverstraw, head of the Sweetbread soccer team, had been abducted to a low roadhouse by his leader. Tom uttered a silent prayer and pressed the throttle to the floor.

Baxtrovitch, his coarse features suffused with vodka, had pinned Eunice in his non-Aryan embrace and was attempting to rain kisses on her averted face. Plucky albeit she was, Eunice's cries echoed in vain in the sound-proofed room. She was almost losing consciousness when the door crashed inward under Tom Rover's powerful shoulders. Crossing the floor at a bound, he drove several telling blows into Baxtrovitch's kidneys. Flaccid from years of easy living, Baxtrovitch realized he was through preying on young American womanhood and sank to the floor, shamming a dead faint. But close on Tom's heels a party of his fellow-clansmen entered briskly, wearing conical soldier hats improvised from copies of the *American Weekly* and *Liberty*. The radical leader, who had hoped to escape by simulating unconsciousness, was securely bound and removed to face charges of syndicalism in California which had been pending for some time.

"Oh, Tom!" breathed Eunice, as she nestled in the protection of his brawny young arms, "I—I was afraid you might be too late!"

"Not Tom," came an unexpected voice. Turning, the pair descried the lineaments of elderly Job Haverstraw, head of the Haverstraw Woolen Mills, field officer of the Key Men of America, and Eunice's father. "I knew he'd be on the spot. Thank you, son," he added, his eyes suspiciously moist. Then a twinkle invaded them. "And after you're married, I'll need you as general manager of my plant. Some of the workmen have been grumbling about our fourteen-hour day, and I know you can set them an example of Americanism and fair play."

And there, face to face with success and their new destiny, let us leave them until the next episode, "The Rover Boys and Their Young Finks."

Night Letter to Walt Whitman

Earth smiles on radio-infested rooms at a green distance
At the steep cities ugly and elaborate They snort
Growl snore a few great motors purr luxurious
Earth smiles at the cities steep swarming at terminals
Sullen and meek with gun-men wealth spliced with want streets
Strewn with refuse Earth smiles her large lap

Deep grown with weeds burdock and thistle rank
Slowly to swamp to bad land returning Earth smiles and smiles
Her green idiot smile at the deranged city
A dirty wench a slut farms and mills deadlocked
Corn none Cotton none Hogs none Cloth none
Dust riffled in dunes below the plane of the worried blond

Official from Washington on Soil Erosion errand
Flow low Look long
They are brother and sister City and land They are sick I think
They are going to die I swear I want another pair
A swarthy sister with strawberry mouth I say
Another smelling of new-mown hay and the furr of cattle
I want the well-curried coat of the meadow again

And images of order plenty equal work with ease
The combine harvester clever gigantic slim elms
Lilacs manifold orchards pruned fences gone tresspass antique
The sister's arm around the city the athlete boy
Clean able quick Both lavish with goods and peace

Bla Bla
The radio coos lies blather dope
On the bad land
The thistle
Scatters
Wrong

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD.

Conference

The age-long urge of lover flow
Comes deep and wild:
But shall we let it roll us so
To form a child?

The tiny fists we bring so fresh
To steel-bound lands
May live as dull, unwanted flesh—
More idle hands!

ALAN CREIGHTON.

East Nine

JACK PARR

EVERYWHERE pulleys rattled incessantly. The vibration of the floor, the screaming of the knives and the flicker as the belt lacing shot up and over, up and over, merged into one continuous rhythm of feeling, sound and sight. The whole rickety plant roared as though an express train thundered through its dismal bowels. Old Sam's mill was busy. Six thousand frames! In the dingy office Sam and the bookkeeper wisecracked over the steno's frowzy head. "God bless the busy little bees!" Sam wheezed, and the salesmen, infected with the return of prosperity, roared approval. Six thousand bee-hive frames for a new apiary. Spot cash. Delivery in two weeks.

They could make it. Sam pushed out into the shop and let the noise flow over him like an invigorating ocean wave. The boys were doing well. Grumbling a bit, but that was a good sign. He moved over to Carl Thorsen's plane. "How's it, kid?" His eyes followed the man's gesture to the high corner where the big thirty horse thundered in majestic isolation. "You gotta get that brace fixed," Carl shouted, reaching for a fresh board. "The back's rotten from the water leaking in." "Right away", the boss agreed. His mind grasped without reflection the disaster that would follow on a major shutdown. "You do it. Get Steve to quit checking. He can handle the plane for a couple hours".

The man looked Sam in the eyes. "You want I should fix the brace while she's on?" The boss grinned. "Maybe if you're scared, Carl, I can do it myself, eh?" Then, soberly, "We can't throw her off now. The sanders would be out too, they're caught up to you already. Right away, o.k.?"

Carl straightened his back and wiped his hands with a wad of shavings. "I'll get the new ladder", he said, and moved away. In a moment Steve, the clumsy apprentice who never would be able to move beyond that rating in Sam's mill, was standing on the little platform feeding the long white strips of pine along the polished bed. The shriek of agonized wood once more echoed through the plant. Sam nodded contentedly. His boys were good. Lots of trouble this last year, but with the work coming in again that was over. Better than relief, wasn't it? He went back to the office and settled down for a cigar.

Carl, high on the ladder, thumbed his nose down at the men, chuckled, and talked to the big motor as he struggled with the brace bolts. "We couldn't have you comin' down on our heads, baby, could we? Oh, no! You sure got to stand by Sam, honey. You're just like the Mint right now. Keep on like this and maybe we get back three or four wage cuts. Like to see the fat old bastard up here!" He swore at a skinned finger, shifted his weight. Hard job replacing a four-by-four, needs two men. The hole was off centre a bit, but he could force it in with the crowbar. Then he'd go downstairs for half an hour. Sam couldn't say a thing. He understood about fixing braces with the power on, even if the inspectors didn't bother him much. Carl stopped work, listening with admiration to the high whine of thirty horsepower playing with fifty tons of wood-working machinery. She could make it step! A honey for all her grease and grime.

The top rung of the ladder was wired loosely to a water pipe running under the ceiling. It began to move along the pipe. Slowly, you understand. And how could Carl feel it, with the ceiling shaking like nothing in nature? He couldn't. Not until his feet slipped. "Oh Christ!" he said softly, just as if he knew what would happen when he grabbed for the rafter. Trying to take his weight off the ladder so he could jerk it up straight again. The two-by-four split at a knot and then the whole thing moved to completion like something in the comic page. The belt from the thirty horse was big. When the ladder touched it, it spun Carl over like a piece of paper coming out of a folding machine. Right over with his back against the belt.

Mike, the handsaw man, was the first to see it. The shadow of Carl's big body hurtling into the corner, the slow tangling fall with legs flapping in an idling belt and the crazy way the ladder tumbled down. Mike screamed. But everyone had seen by then, had started running for the switches. Old Sam was out of his chair in the office the instant the complex harmony of the shop became a discordant protest of slowing machinery. He cut the belt himself although there was no need for that. A little time and the mechanic could have got it out of the way. Sam was pale. Sorry for Carl. Sorry for the shutdown. Sorry for the looks of the men. An old-fashioned boss, friendly with the men, old Sam was!

The police ambulance was a long time coming and they couldn't tell whether Carl felt anything or not. He just looked at them, all standing around whispering as men do after an accident. When they lifted him on the stretcher—a hard job, nothing seemed to grip—he swore softly. Filthy curses that relieved the men. "You're o.k. pal!" Steve said, his huge coarse hands trembling like a girl's. "We'll be up to see you!" yelled the boys as they lifted him into the wagon. Then they went back to work, four of them making a scaffold to finish Carl's job. Mike jammed a stick in the lever of the main switch. "Any of you punks come near the juice," he snarled, "and I'll rip you." The brace was repaired in comfort and silence. Old Sam stayed in the office.

The cops gave Carl a piece of inner-tube to chew. No matter how hard he bit he couldn't make his teeth meet, but sometimes he crunched a cheek and the blood spilled over his chin. One of the cops was nervous. Just a young guy, not long on the wagon. He pounded on the window when the heavy ambulance lurched into a snowy rut, but the driver only grinned. He'd driven in France and knew the ruts didn't make much difference. Carl just chewed faster. There were a lot of piano wires in his brain, all pulled tight and he had to keep them from slipping. He knew it would kill him if they all sounded at once. Gnawing helped to keep them stretched. But they were slipping off, one by one, by the time they reached the hospital. Each one went to a different place in his body and stayed there

quivering, so that when they hoisted him off on to a wheel bed he screamed. It cleared his head.

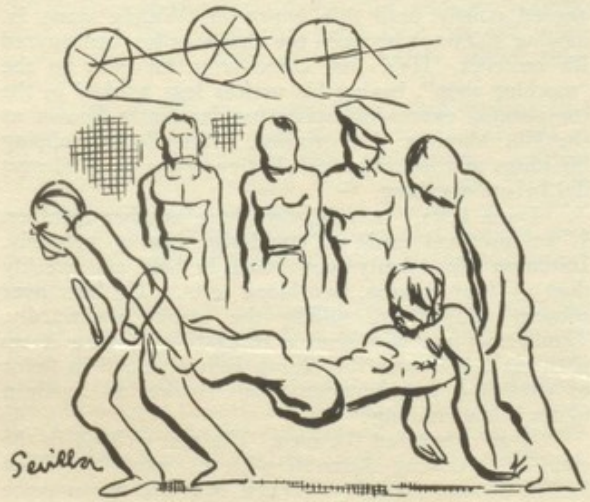
"Compensation case", the smoothly starched admitting nurse murmured. She listened to the police describe the accident, filled out a tag and tied it to the bed. A couple of internes came up as she went to phone. One of them lifted the blanket. "Right femur fractured," he said, feeling Carl's leg. The other one nodded and said: "Left one, too." Then they started to paw all over like kids looking for clover leaves. Carl had difficulty in connecting them with his sensations, but when he did the hallway echoed with the language of the mill.

Two younger nurses came towards the bed as the medicos lapsed into embarrassed silence. They chatted for a minute or so and went off to get an order for a hypodermic. Curious men and women hesitated as they passed the little group, glancing at Carl's distorted features and hurrying away, intent on their own suffering. The ceiling of the long hallway began to move past the injured man's gaze, unreal and without meaning as some trick movie shot with crazy perspectives. The nurses were wheeling him into the examination room.

Carl like the tall blond one. As his sensations began to lose their sharpness he studied her, but whenever he tried to turn his head the bones rasped and something like a dirty grey blanket floated over his eyes. The brandy choked him. Gasping as the spasms shot down his limbs he spluttered the stuff in the nurse's face and over her immaculate white collar. With methodical and expressionless care she wiped his bloody chin and then her own velvet face.

When one of the internes returned with a lank white haired surgeon, they put a shot in Carl's arm and found that it, too, was smashed. "Lineman?" queried the doctor, bending low over the sweating face. Doctor Fraser was a compensation man, trained in the dressing stations of the war, an expert in patching the unpublicized by-products of industry. He nodded with quick understanding as the nurse sketched the police report, gave a few directions and went quietly on his way.

The tall nurse stayed, absently rubbing Carl's forehead and staring out the window at the pale midwinter sunshine. Ages of time flowed on before the wrecked man became aware of brilliant lights, strange figures, sickening smells. The sharp cold rim of an enamelled pan came up under his chin a split second before he vomited. They were pulling and cutting the clothes from his leaden body. Suddenly a stifling cloud surrounded him. Someone started the thirty horse motor inside his skull. The whine rose to an unendurable pitch. Still higher. Up and up it screamed. Carl flew away on wings of anasthesia.



East Nine faces south and east, looking out over the river and the business district beyond. Its corridors are always filled with shambling men in faded pyjamas and dressing gowns, with crutches and canes, joking, grumbing, rolling innumerable cigarettes. Some of the girls like this ward, others dread it. The Super always prepares the probationers very carefully before they do duty up here. They're sent on the night trick at first, starting in the evening when he wives and children are visiting. That's when it's easiest. In the morning it's a tough flat, the boys are restless and their eyes are hard and bright, giving the nurses everything they'll take. White, wrinkled old Ma Thompson slips around from room to room, cooling the atmosphere, kidding and petting where it's needed, razzing the hard ones.

The boys knew all about Carl before he was rolled off the elevator. The sick ones hoped he wouldn't be put in with them, the convalescents longed for the diversion of a bad case. The six single rooms were filled, so Number 97, with fourteen beds, won the toss. Blinds were pulled and the stench of ether floated around the screens while three nurses and a couple of orderlies struggled with the fracture boards, spread rubber sheets and lowered Carl's embalmed body to the bed. A pound of plaster and steel for every pound of flesh and blood. It was quite a sight. The old orderly shoved small hard pillows here and there with an experienced hand, marvelling all the while at Doctor Fraser's skill. "Just falling apart," he told the boys outside in the sunroom, "hardly a bone not bust. They ain't half set yet, but they didn't want to keep him under any longer." The men knodded knowingly.

Ma Thompson stayed on late, keeping most of the visitors out in the hall and balcony, taking extra readings for Carl's chart. At nine o'clock she called a special and between the two of them they brought Carl Thorsen, ex-planer, out of the daze. When he grinned "Hyuh kid!" at the nurse, the old lady sighed and called it a day, going downstairs to sleep near a phone. You couldn't tell in a case like this, and Fraser would raise hell if all was not well in the morning. One by one the men of Ninety-Seven crawled into bed, or had their backs rubbed and tried a new position, lying awake in the dim light listening to the special and her patient.

Carl felt great. The huge mass of plaster was comfortably warm and his brain raced. No more piano wires. Just a sharp prick every two hours as the hypo rammed home. The special—by name June, very nice and very good on jobs like this—had a standing order and she intended to use it up before dawn. A little more each time, and he was a big man. She talked softly, on and off through the night, sympathizing, telling stories, not at all anxious to have the patient fall asleep. You never could tell with shock. Later, early in the morning, she kissed him, thinking of her

boy friend and wondering how many nights there'd be at six-fifty per.

When the weary night shift girls came in to wake and bathe the men Carl was still talking. His lips were dry now, the temperature curve sharply up. With one arm free he tried to hold June to the bed, and behind the screen she kissed him again. She went down to breakfast wondering why no woman had been to see a man with an arm and a smile like that. By tomorrow the fever would make him hideous.

When old Sam came up, just before noon, the men sensed him way down the hall. You could tell a boss, somehow, or maybe you just expected him. Nervous and smiling and quickly sober, just like the other visitors, but different. The droning chatter fell off and a sharp hostility permeated the ward. They knew all about the loose brace and the rush order to be filled. Mike and Steve had been up the night before, right after work, with Carl's father and the kids. Anyway, it was nearly always the same. Many a rush job had filled a bed or two in East Nine.

Sam felt old and weary. "Now you take me, f'r instance," Bushy Malone said to one of the boys, just loud enough to be heard as he shuffled past the desk where the boss talked to the Ward Super, "I can take it. Repairin' motors is me dish. Why I tell ye I once changed a wheel on a locomotive while she was hittin' sixty!" The boys laughed harshly. "O' course," the Irishman went on, "I lost me arms and legs and got cork ones instead, but what's that? We've got to speed up out o' this depression, ye lazy dogs."

The mill owner paled with rage. Hadn't he kept Carl three days a week all winter with hardly an order in the shop? Wouldn't the Board pay the hospital expenses? He cleared his throat. "Anything at all you think he needs, nurse, get it. Never mind will the Board pay for extras or not, I will." He marched away, fury and hate burning his stocky round body and speeding him up like two-twenty volts on a one-ten motor. Going down the elevator he composed the ad. in his mind. Wanted: Experienced planer, permanent work if satisfactory; good pay. Sam always paid good, when he had orders. No closed shop for him. Share with the men. Goddam that crippled Irish swine!

From ten o'clock on East Nine was visited by internes. They waited until Doctor Fraser had been up to inspect his handiwork. Fraser was queer that way. Picked one student each year and wouldn't tolerate any others around him in the theatres or wards. He took his work seriously. Every amputation cost the Board plenty, so Fraser patched and scraped and repatched until legs and arms could be moved. Just enough, you understand, so it wouldn't be a total disability. The queer remains, like the vets who make poppies and wicker chairs, would be put into offices, learning to write with their left hands or sitting stiffly erect in steel belts, until they could be let out during a slack period. It was cheaper to have them on relief. Every plant in the province had at least one Fraser specimen. They sent men to him from a thousand miles away. It was hard work. Most of the internes weren't hard enough.

Carl's father came in the afternoon, pale and shaken, tears on his face at the sight of his husky son. The men joked loudly, drawing the old man away. They knew what it was like. Carl's brain was just waking up and his forehead was green with agony, bright fever spots on his cheeks like harlot's rouge. He couldn't understand it. Swollen with pain and fever, his chest struggled against the smothering cast, forcing his heart faster and faster. Each beat sent hell ablaze in his bones.

He couldn't understand it. He listened to the men, sucked water from a china cup with a long spout, held by a nurse; he vomited, drank ginger ale and vomited again. Over and over. Finally they gave him two pints of luke warm soda, holding his nose and forcing it down, to bring everything up. Instead, it settled him, cooled him off. The boys watched intently, heads half turned away, of course, but following it all like hawks as you do in a hospital. They were waiting for the break, for the time when the will begins to lose control. When Carl started to groan, just a gasp or two at first, the men looked at each other and nodded, and those who were able went out on the sun balcony to talk it over.

Jack Delong, who had an arm that wouldn't heal, who cried softly all night long before each operation, trembled as he spoke. "My kid's going to be a doc if I have to beat him every day. He'll give guys like us a big shot and finish quick. What th'hell! Dat poor crock he in here two years before they get him rolling. Dieu! Why don't they let him go?"

"Stow it, yellowbelly! You been thinking about your blasted arm so long you got mice in place of your brains." Red, a lanky lead-poisoned Englishman, secretly agreed with Delong's euthanasia theories but couldn't bring himself to open admission. The others argued noisily until thin, worn-out Wardle came in, moving sideways between the chairs as he manoeuvred his crutches. He'd just come from an hour in the "machine shop", having his useless legs worked in the complicated exercising apparatus familiarly known as the Hot Mamma. He grinned, sitting down, rubbing his knees and looking around at everyone as he always did before speaking.

"I see, boys," he said, "we have another member. If we only had cards we could sign him up properly. Initiation fee, twenty-four hours in hell, and weekly dues of four enemas, two blood tests." He bent over tobacco and paper, rolling the smoke awkwardly. "Tomorrow we will send a delegation to take it up with the Commissar for Heavy Industry. All in favor of execution for demanding this worker to repair a motor while running?"

"Aye!" chorused the men. The roar echoed in the corridor, shocking them all with its intensity. They looked around foolishly. When Ma Thompson came

in to lecture them she selected the ringleader from habit. "John Wardle," she said in sudden anger, "if you could stop your agitating for a day or so I'm sure the poor fellow in Ninety-seven would appreciate it." The tall man stumbled to his feet. "Ma," he said, "accept my deepest apologies. Some of us, I must admit, are more concerned with the poor man's successors in this retreat than we are with its present inhabitants."

"Yeah," chimed Shorty Renko, waving a fingerless hand, "and wotsa use of being quiet for him? Maybe he be glad of some noise in a while!" He chuckled, enjoying the bitter flavour of his joke. Shorty was Wardle's faithful stooge in countless East Nine arguments, for the communist had put pressure on the Compensation Board, getting the man his treatment, his family bread and shelter. All the men respected him for this and other things, listened eagerly to his lectures on economics. But only a few supported him openly. The Board might yield to pressure, giving what it had to, but not a few soft rewards came for those who used their pull with the big political parties. The majority in East Nine were broken men, for whom union life and struggle were history. They looked ahead to tiny cheques, food for their wives and kids. "Good listeners," Wardle would tell his friends, "but devils to activise. And when they get out, the Board gags them into political sheep." But he kept on trying, telling himself in moments of despair that Lenin himself once lived like this in exile.

Carl didn't pay much attention to things that evening. The internes gave him less dope, tightened the screws stretching his legs and every hour or so tried him with the stethoscope. When the visitors had gone they brought the plaster shears and hacked away a half circle from the top of the cast. It eased the pressure and made way for the sounding instrument. Once an hour the nurses gave him an assortment of drugs. The men fed him with water when he wanted it, which was often, and gave him the bottle. They were very quiet that evening, studying the looks and whispers of the doctors with the experience of old hands. When Delong crawled early into bed, reading his Bible, they let him alone. The frail little coward was looked upon by some as the ward oracle. When he turned to scripture all East Nine heard of it and slept uneasily. Even the lonely souls in the singles were restless, wanting their doors kept open. All night long the call lights flashed above the desks and the nurses earned their pay.

At ten o'clock the special was called again. She hated cases like this with doctors fussing around at all hours. Not a chance to relax and snatch a quarter-hour sleep. She tramped back and forth between Ninety-seven and the Dispensary, carried an endless succession of bottles to the lavatory and thought with envy of her room-mate's patient, a sleepy old cancer sufferer.

But a little past midnight Carl began to talk, the whole room woke up to hear him and things became more interesting. Every once in a while a passing nurse would stop at the door to listen. Simetimes a fevered voice is remarkably clear and carries far down the hall to the embarrassment of the young probationers who have not become accustomed to the frightful psychoanalysis of delirium. But Carl spoke softly.

He murmured to the thirty-horse motor. He whispered to his wife and to the priest who had buried her. No one turned towards him. You can't look at a full-grown man, raving out his life and love in East Nine. Maybe you don't understand. If you can't, put it down to the dim light and the screens around the bed. But that won't explain it. You can't close your eyes, you can't look at each other, so you just stare hard up at the ceiling. And pray to God he'll shut up.

By three A.M. the men in Ninety-seven could have recognized Thora, had they met her resurrected body on the street. Even if they were blind men they could have felt her hair and nose and lips, her whole body, and known her as the dead wife of Carl Thorsen. Several times the nurse's hands would rise in startled gestures to her own breasts and neck, caught off guard by some painfully revealing phrase of the rambling mind. One by one the wide-awake men, those who could move under their own power, stumbled out of bed and sought the quiet of the hall or lavatory. Never again would they see a fair Norwegian woman without the memory of that ghastly night rising to blur their vision. Never again could they endure the sight of a woman suckling her child, as Carl's Thora had nursed the baby Sonya. A painter with words, a sculptor with phrases, this planer.

By the time a sickly winter dawn began to fight with the swirling storm outside, all was quiet. Carl was asleep, his temperature was down, and the X-Ray department received an order for a head-to-foot picture of one C. Thorsen. Ma Thompson followed Doctor Fraser's standing instructions: pictures as soon as the patient can be moved, and don't be too conservative.

It was not until nearly noon that there were enough orderlies and nurses available, for East Nine was busy. But they came at last. Carl, clear headed even after two hypos, was lifted onto a huge wheeled bed and sent downstairs. His going raised the ward to sudden gaiety. Card games sprang up, centering around the beds of the more handicapped patients, and crude jokes, laughter, made the work of the nurses lighter. The men held a Board of Trade luncheon, a satirical invention of Wardle's. There were many toasts with cups of weak tea and cocoa, ditties were sung, and when Shorty Renko rendered some workers'

marching song in a foreign tongue he was greeted with gusty applause. Temperatures went up, of course, but so did metabolism and the doctors were pleased. Morale, in the ranks of the class warriors of the Compensation Ward is as important as morale elsewhere. Thus, it met with official approbation.

Downstairs, meanwhile, far down in the cement hallways of the second basement, Carl waited. The X-Ray department was understaffed. The doctor in charge was away at his private office examining the internal organs of some prominent citizen's wife, and the two technicians were taking things easy. Carl was a major job, ten or more plates, no less. So the one who hadn't had lunch early went upstairs, the other fussed changing tubes or making secret signs on record cards. All the while he talked to the specimen on the table, describing the intricate maze of high-voltage wiring and explaining the reason and method for taking the pictures. Carl would nod his head in eager agreement as some point struck him. He was hot. Not fevered, but sweating under the cast with the exertion of holding himself together. The technician obligingly opened a ventilating duct, wheeled the bed under it, and let the patient cool off. The fresh conditioned air was a stimulant to lungs saturated with iodoform and countless pungent odors of the wards. Carl breathed it in, moving his stomach up and down to suck tiny drafts of air down under the cast.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon before all the plates had been taken and they had tucked Carl back into bed again. The ward was still in high spirits and his return did nothing to dampen them, for the night that had passed was temporarily forgotten. The men were having their weekly visit from a member of the Assembled Hosts of Jehovah's Faithful, an obscure sect that made the rounds of the hospital. "Are You Insured in Heaven, Ltd.?" read the current pamphlet. The old fellow propped one up on Carl's chest where he could read it by lowering his eyes nearly out of their sockets. East Nine enjoyed these visits, matching the wits of the Scotchman McCabe against the "reverend". Mac had first become aware of his hatred of all things religious way back on the Clydeside, after a sound thrashing from the Elders for some dimly remembered misdemeanor. As the years rolled over his sandy head he had accumulated an amazing fund of atheistic information, and all this he had systematized into sermons cleverly adapted to his unwitting victims. He could argue intelligently with a Dean of Theology and equally as well with a street-corner evangelist. Priest, Rabbi and Salvation Army lassie he took in his stride. He knew every doctrine from Buddha to Aimee MacPherson and would work himself up to an oratorical frenzy, leading the faithful into the pitfalls of hell itself, until they closed their eyes and raised their hands in supplication of their particular Deity for deliverance from this disciple of evil. Since his arrival in the hospital—during an argument with his foreman regarding the origin of Lent, Mac had absently slipped his elbow into a high-speed grinder—the ward had maintained a strong front against the succession of doctrinaires that passed through each afternoon.

Today the discussion revolved about the tortures of the doomed, the eternal fires that are reserved for such as McCabe. It was a good topic. Mac was at his best up here where hell on earth abounded. Could the Devil himself equal the handiwork of Industry? The witless knight of the Assembled Hosts did his

best, desperately and fatally siding in with Wardle, with whom, as a matter of fact, he was in strong agreement concerning the coming of the millenium, but to no avail. He was trapped and recognized defeat when he saw it. "Repent, before the Gate hath closed forever!" he admonished Carl, and turning over the booklet so that the helpless man could read the back page he buttoned his coat and strode out to more fertile fields. The men amused themselves making paper darts, for which purpose the printed matter of Heaven, Ltd., was particularly suitable; they smoked, chatted with friendlier visitors and debated the supper menu.

"Try a little strained soup, big boy?" The probationer, as pretty and as awkward as a schoolgirl in her neat little blue uniform and ugly black stockings, coaxed Carl to eat for the first time. He didn't want it but the girl was nervous and anxious. Anything to oblige, girls! He wanted water again. Plenty of it, too. Maybe ginger ale or lime juice with ice clinking merrily in the spout cup. But he gurgled the lukewarm broth and grinned his thanks. It tasted very funny, that soup. All evening, while his father and the two children sat beside his bed, Carl tried to puzzle it out. The stuff had seemed to go into his chest. Was his stomach bust? The speculation made him restless and he determined to take it up with the special if she came on again that night. He talked for a while, until that grew difficult, and then turned away and relapsed into silence, pretending weariness. He felt the pressure of a vague but irresistible force surging through him. His father could wait. The children could wait. This was urgent, it needed immediate consideration. Carl Thorsen had to think. Think hard and very, very fast.

Old Sam came up to the ward next morning. Over the phone, he hadn't been able to get any satisfaction. He was worried. The Board had asked him some awkward questions and his men had seemed most pleased to discuss the affair in detail with the Inspector. There was trouble ahead and Sam could smell it.

"No visitors," the desk nurse told him politely. "Mr. Thorsen is very ill. No, the Doctor isn't quite sure just what it is. You can phone this afternoon, sir." And so Sam went wearily away. Didn't he have a family of his own? That he should have to worry about his men as if they were his children!

Today, Doctor Fraser was in one of his pale cold furies. The plates had turned out even worse than he

had expected. The whole job would have to be done again, and splices and beef-bone screws put in both legs. Now, complications! He stamped through Ninety-seven searching for drafts and counting Carl's blankets with his own hands.

"Very strange indeed, Mrs. Thompson," he said with his humorless smile. "There was no sign whatever of congestion yesterday. However, it's done now. Have a special on until I instruct otherwise. I'll be up as soon as I've finished operating and you can call Doctor Morton if anything should develop."

Ma Thompson had already grilled the nurses. No, the windows had not been opened, the blankets had been kept on as directed, only his one exposed arm had been bathed, and so on. It remained for Bushy Malone to give the hint. "He was sweatin' like a cop in July when he went down to be photographed, Ma," he volunteered. "I remember that hole meself. Drafty as a chicken coop and dampish. And he was down there till long after dinner. See if I ain't right, Ma." But the Super of East Nine was not one to waste time investigating the spilling of milk. She was a mopper up by profession and she proceeded to mop.

Of course there wasn't a great deal that could be done. Carl had fallen asleep early the night before and awakened full of strange and bewildering sensations. Someone, it seemed, had put two rubber hot-water bags inside his chest. Slowly but surely they were filling up. Along about noon time the internes were listening in on those lungs with great interest. They had removed a great deal of the cast, around his chest, for Fraser was no longer omnipotent. Pneumonia! The surgeon steps to one side and another crew takes hold. No sense in bothering about bones until this is over. The medicos invited their student friends up to the ward to get first hand experience. Most instructive case. The pathology department couldn't report for 48 hours, but it was pretty easy to guess. Shock sweeps away the barriers holding back the invisible killers. Before the dinner trays began to arrive they were trundling the oxygen equipment down the hall towards Ninety-seven.

The day special was homely and very competent. In no time at all there was a rubber tube strapped to Carl's face, the end shoved up a nostril and the little gas bottle was bubbling away. He didn't strain quite as much for a while. He figured something was wrong and he took it quietly. All his thinking, about Thora and his old man and the babies, about Sam and the thirty-horse motor, all that had been finished the night before. There was a queer look in Carl's eyes. He watched everything, gazing hungrily into the faces around him.

Around three o'clock Doctor Fraser phoned the father. The old fellow, one grandchild in his arms, the other staggering wildly to keep up with him, half ran to the hospital. They let him look into the ward, then settled him out on the balcony where the men tried to bluff it off and nurses mothered the kids. Carl Thorsen, senior, was like a trapped animal, glaring wildly around and making strange noises deep in his throat. He knew the hopelessness of struggle here in the East Wing. It had been just like this, three floors below, when they'd called him for Thora. You waited. After a while, a day or two maybe——. He lowered his head and moaned. The men stared out of the windows and smoked furiously.

Wardle was busy that afternoon. He was even late for supper. Taking Malone's tip he had slipped downstairs to the X-Ray rooms and chatted amiably to the technicians. He found out all about it easily enough. Even got the name of the man who had opened the window. Were there any nurses in attendance? No, of course not. Where was the Doctor? Were patients in a critical condition usually left in charge of the technicians? My, no! They had their own nurse who came down from the Ward to see that the unpleasant business of taking the photos was done as rapidly and carefully as possible. Did the men know Thorsen was in a critical condition? That was as far as Wardle could get. He was ordered back to his Ward before a complaint was made to the Hospital Superintendent. Who did he think he was, the board of Directors? Weren't their bills all paid in East Nine? What do they want, the earth?

Over in the Exercise Room Wardle figured out his plan. He knew an alderman or two, and there might be a commission and a shake-up all around in East Nine. He would write about it to the labour Press. The union would organize old Sam's factory. But upstairs? Hell! Things like this upset Wardle. Delong would moon around for a week or more, leading religious discussions. Have you any real proof there is no Eternity? Why must you deny the existence of a God? And thus and thus. He would sit alone for a few days, Wardle would, and do some studying. He got off the machine, put on his bath robe and hobbled upstairs to telephone.

The men slept well enough. The bubbling of the oxygen was soothing to the nerves and the internes were soft-footed at night. But in the hospital you can sleep the clock around and awake with a head full of misery. It was that way in East Nine. The day was one of fierce little squabbles, rows over the food and complaints about dressings and treatments. You couldn't stay in Ninety-seven. There was that air about the place. Those who were bound to their beds threw magazines on the floor and cursed.

The old man would come in and touch his son's face. "He smiled, Miss!" he would say as the pain of breathing twisted Carl's mouth. Then they would lead him gently away and go back to the soundings and pulse timing and temperatures. On the balcony most

of the men spent the day gathered around Wardle. To his amazement they listened to every word and signed their names to a hastily drawn-up petition. Renko tried to organize a collection committee but the blank sheet for contributions was torn up in furious anger. Shorty, who had seen the War in a Polish village, couldn't make it out. He nearly wept when Wardle himself, in a kind of icy insanity, dug into the basket and ripped the paper strips to minute shreds.

Dan, the oldest orderly on the staff, an ex-Royal Navy man, remarked to Ma Thompson that it reminded him of the unholy night at Jutland when he had bandaged sweating men on the deck of a half-sunk cruiser, scrawling letters home for the dying crew while they prayed against hope that the can wouldn't sink. East Nine didn't get under Dan's skin. He hurried off to get a bed pan, chuckling to himself.

Silence, men! Can't you see it's time? There's the Swedish Lutheran minister. He's going to pray. Why? Ask old McCabe. Only shut up. Just a few words, anyway, that's all he'll say, for the old father. No, he won't kneel down. Thorsen might open his eyes and see him if he stands close to the bed. . . . *my Shepherd, I shall not want,* . . . What a hideous sound a man's breathing can become! Countless millions of invisible living things swarming through the blood stream of their host. . . . *the valley of the shadow of death* . . . . Is it their sound, their insect-humming, that rumbling noise? Suck hard, Lungs! Pump, Heart! . . . *I will fear no evil* . . . The medicos have it timed. They are watching the clock, listening. . . . *forever and ever, Amen.*

His lips quiver. The fluttering of a scrap of grey-green paper in the wind. Thora, can you see her, like a Nordic goddess, striding somewhere? Let the brain cells dream! Only a second or two. Yes, to you, Carl. That deep dark shadow, now, you disregard it. Keep the dream. To you, she's coming! You to her. To nothingness.

Turn off the oxygen. It's wanted somewhere else. Straighten your backs, doctors, gentlemen. You young ones wander down nonchalantly and have a drink. You, Ma Thompson, let it lie there just a while. Let all the men file in and look an instant, stiff-jawed and blinking. Time then to raise the windows, phone the morgue, get a fresh mattress.

Fellow-man, worker, comrade, farewell. The motor is repaired, the plane sings, the bee-hive profits mount. No longer wretched, no longer of this earth, rest. We of East Nine who struggle and have yet to die, salute you. No volley will be fired. Some other dawn-time the guns will greet your memory. Comrade, farewell.

United Front in Toronto—1872

BETTY RATZ

AFTER some unavoidable delay, on April 18, 1872, the first issue of Canada's earliest labour newspaper appeared, bearing at its mast-head the wicked words "The Equalization of All the Elements of Society in the Social Scale Should be the True Aim of Civilization". The very delay in publication was evidence that the first modest efforts towards such equality would not go unchallenged—some "elements" were in jail as the result of action taken by others higher "in the social scale." The fact was that three key men on the staff of the *Ontario Workman,* a co-operative venture of striking printers, along with twenty-one other members of the Toronto Typographical Union, had been arrested on a charge of conspiracy preferred by the Master Printers' Association.

So many events of importance to Canadian workers had occurred in that one week of April that they taxed the eight-page, small print capacity of the *Workman.* Though they came so swiftly they were not isolated events; their roots were in history. They might have been expected in just these early post-Confederation years when, though the strong stimulants of the trans-continental railroads and the National Policy had not yet been administered to Canadian industrialism, they were already brewing in the pot which was so soon to boil up prematurely into the Pacific Scandal.

The results of the rebellion of 1837,* the Act of Union, canals built in the 'forties and railways after 1850, were now apparent in Upper Canada. New means of transportation financed by British capitalists had transformed self-sufficient farming into wheat production to feed the growing hordes of British factory workers. Farmers were thus brought within the bounds of the market economy, and, as the railroads opened new areas to settlement, their numbers and their demands for machinery and consumption goods of all sorts increased. At the same time railroad construction itself had provided a market for products of the iron industries, and building booms in the urban centres had performed a like service for lumber-mills and the construction trades. With heavy immigration the population expanded rapidly and amongst the newcomers were workmen from Britain and the States bringing wth them little but their skill in handling tools and operating machinery.

Seizing these opportunities, a class of manufacturers gradually grew up in Ontario. By the prosperous year 1872, though still justifiably envious of the great fortunes built up in the fur and timber trades and still fearful of "usury capital" which had squeezed them on their way up, they were enjoying a righteous pride in their past achievements and an unprecedented confidence in the surety of their future importance. Clinging to the titles of a fast-disappearing industrial order, Master Printers, Master Cabinet-Makers, etc., —("Master Carriage Makers! Men that could not make a decent wheelbarrow", writes one signing himself "Woodworker" in a letter to the *Workman*)—

*See Stanley Ryerson's article in the May issue of *New Frontier.*

they were becoming increasingly conscious of their common interests as employers of labour.

Said the *Globe*: "When you speak of the workingmen of Canada you speak of everybody. We all work. We all began with nothing. There is no such class as those styled capitalists in other countries. The whole people are the capitalists of Canada. . . . The people have the entire political power in their own hands. What they wish done must be done." But the men working for wages in factories and workshops with tools and machinery owned by their employers could not achieve this mystic view of themselves as the "capitalists of Canada." They were not convinced of their supreme political power while the property qualification for the franchise still kept many of them away from the polls. They too in this year 1872 were becoming conscious as never before of their common interests. Great progress in the organization of union locals had been made in the two previous decades, many of them branches of British and American internationals. At first isolated and weak, their early difficulties had made them aware of the need for cooperation, and with their increasing numbers and better communication and transportation the possibilities of achieving it had arisen. In Toronto, in the Spring of 1871, came the first formal inter-craft organization—the Toronto Trades Assembly, president, J. S. Williams of the Typographical Union.

The great movements for the nine-hour day in Great Britain and for the eight-hour day in the United States were now in progress. Canadian workers, expressing their awakening, soon joined into nine-hour leagues of their own. Beginning in Hamilton in 1871, they spread rapidly throughout Ontario, and the new Trades Assembly assumed a vigorous leadership in Toronto. Employers began to be alarmed. The *Globe* editorials progressed from a benevolent interest in the progress of the movement in Lancashire to a distrust of the monster meetings in New York. By March of 1872, when the printers and bookbinders, including the *Globe's* own employees, had asked many times for the nine-hour day (and had been refused), the metamorphosis was complete. "Let us forget for a moment the impudence of the thing. Let us look at the proposal to restrict all daily labour to nine hours on its merits." Needless to say the editor could find none. Mental labour was more exhausting than physical. The "good sense of mankind has hitherto considered ten hours for work, seven for sleep and seven for food and enjoyment a wise and healthful distribution of time." That extra hour per day per man would amount to 125,210,000, hours per year and would "cost the country over twenty millions". Besides, "in the vast majority of industrial pursuits in Canada the man who thinks ten hours hurtful or oppressive is too lazy to earn his bread; and in the name of all the women of Canada we protest against sending home such a fellow to pester his wife for another hour daily."

Moreover this was merely a dodge of radical foreigners with unpronounceable names. One of these, a Mr. Trevillick from New York, had addressed a meeting in Toronto. The *Globe* thundered: "The idea of any employer of labour in Canada attempting to coerce or oppress his workmen is too absurd to be worthy of denial. It is in obedience to foreign agitation, carried on by paid agents who have nothing to lose as the result of their mischievous counsels that the printers of this city have succumbed. A slavish surrender of one's own free action is no sign of moral courage, real independence or true manliness."

But the Hon. George Brown, leader of the Ontario liberal or "reform" party and editor of the *Globe*, believed in action as well as words. Quietly he organized the printing and publishing firms of Toronto into a Master Printers' Association, and on March 22 issued a manifesto, signed with seventeen names, declaring for the open shop, for joint "regulation for the internal conduct of all affairs, the wages of employees, the price at which work shall be executed and all other matters affecting their common interest." The men had got wind of this declaration, though it had been set in type in the dead of the night by a "spaniel-like" printer, so on the very day the Association was announced it received from the Union a respectful request for a conference to discuss the question of hours. It was refused, and the next day the printers and bookbinders went out on strike.

"PRINTERS WANTED" advertised the Toronto papers. Police-court news began to record arrests and convictions of various printers on charges of leaving without giving notice, "the custom of the trade and the country being for employers and employees to give a minute's notice", as the Union pointed out. Men hired from Toronto detective agencies were sent to scour the country printing offices for men—"ten good non-union men arrived today" the *Globe* exulted on March 30. Out-of-town papers warned firms to "keep a sharp look-out for a couple of blacklegs and cappers" travelling about the country enticing workmen away, and the strikers, in every paper which would open its columns to them, called upon their fellow workmen not to come to Toronto. Amongst these was the *Leader*, whose proprietor, Mr. Beatty, alone of the newspaper owners, had granted the nine-hour day. As the Conservative M.P. for Toronto East and the bitter political enemy of George Brown, he took up the printers' cause with energy.

The Union stood firm, and the Toronto Trades Assembly supported it: Mr. Brown took further action. On April 8 there appeared a manifesto signed by 160 firms addressed to "employers of labour and the public generally", bearing strong internal evidence that it was from the same hand that wrote the *Globe* editorials. "Whereas certain mechanics and workingmen of the city of Toronto have formed themselves into Trades Unions and Labour Leagues for purposes antagonistic to the interests of their employers and the public at large" it began, went on to enumerate the objections to the nine-hour day (amongst new ones was the "stoppage of some branches of industry altogether, the necessity of sending money out of the country, and the equally injurious turning of capital from industry to usury"), and ended by declaring that they would resist the nine-hour day or "any attempts on the part of our employees to dictate to us by what rules we shall govern our business".

The line-up was now clear and the workers rallied their forces. On April 15 Toronto was given an impressive display of working-class unity. A mass meeting was called "as an expression of sympathy of the printers and bookbinders and in support of the nine-hour movement." All the unions and a considerable number of "workingmen of no organization", to the

tune of four bands, marched two thousand strong from the Trades Assembly Hall on King St. to Queens Park, where a crowd of ten thousand gathered. Along the route women cheered from the windows and as the Trades Assembly mounted the platform the crowd applauded lustily. Moderate but resolute speeches were made by various Union leaders, Mr. Beatty denounced the Master Printers and the liberal party, and a clergyman expressed his conversion to the principles of the movement on the ground that workmen should have time and energy for church-going and self-improvement. "Was there to be an intelligent class of men or were they to be merely machines to be worked at the will and pleasure of their employers?" he asked.

The answer came the next day: twenty-four warrants were issued against the whole committee of the Typographical Union. The Master Printers had obtained a legal opinion that, in the absence of any Canadian legislation such as had been won in Britain over a long period of years by the struggles of the unions, "a combination on the part of workmen to raise their wages or shorten the hours of labour is an indubitable conspiracy by the common law" and therefore criminal. The unions were amazed to find themselves illegal bodies no matter how peaceful their actions.

The news of the arrests spread like wild-fire. In the evening, as the *Workman* put it, "one of those sudden expressions of popular feeling" took place in the market square, when four thousand persons gathered to protest this invasion of rights and liberties. A resolution of indignation and pledge of support to the printers was moved by Andrew Scott of the Amalgamated Engineers and seconded by Mr. Lauder, Conservative member of the Ontario House. "Shall we be behind the Old Land where the distinction of class is so patent, in granting to the workingmen the privilege of meeting, organizing and declaring in a peaceable way how long they shall work, for whom they shall work and where they shall work?" The people answered: "No, no, we will have it." Late in the evening the meeting dispersed peaceably, having been marred only by one "ludicrous incident." A policeman "glancing nervously over his shoulder, thought the crowd was moving in his direction and, thinking the Philistines were upon him, ran for refuge to No. 1 police station where he reported that there was going to be a riot and that he had run for his life." The rest of the force did not rise to the occasion.

Bail was finally raised for all the prisoners and a defence fund to pay their lawyers grew rapidly. Not only from Toronto but from all over the province and from Montreal came donations and expressions of sympathy. Nine-hour leagues increased their membership, new unions were organized, and some firms, including two important railways, granted the nine-hour day. Letters and dollar bills began to trickle in to the *Leader* from small merchants and farmers who wished for "one law for all, rich and poor" and none which "crushed the spirit and liberty of free men." Petitions for a trades-union law were freely circulated.

More important than this, however, was the development of national and international class solidarity. Organizations throughout the country united—for the first time—in signing a plea for support from British and American workmen. They told the former of watching from afar the progress of the British nine-hour movement, and declared that sympathy and support would "show the employers that though the seas divide us we are actively allied and that any attempt in one part of the British Dominions to violate the principles of freedom we have so long been taught to possess will bring forth a scathing rebuke from the rest." Important, too, was the support working class women began to give to their men. A printer's wife, one of those Victorian women for whom the *Globe* had bespoken protection from an extra hour of her husband's company, wrote to the *Workman* declaring that "the Master having succumbed to the Man" her husband had been back at work for three weeks and, miserable fellow, spent his extra hour gardening, reading or playing with the children. "Workingmen's wives, don't let your husband 'rat' it. When the trade at which your husband works is compelled to strike—and I do hope there'll be no necessity—don't let him go back on the Union. Take my word for it the hour will not be spent, as some have said, at the Tavern. It will do good for all concerned."

Meanwhile the printers had been brought before the Magistrate for two preliminary hearings. (The cheers greeting their entrance caused him summarily to clear the court-room.) At the first hearing he thought conspiracy had been proven for obviously there was a Union. At the second he still thought so and the prisoners were committed for trial at the next assizes. However, some of the evidence of intimidation by the employers which emerged and the plea of the defence that combination by masters must be as illegal under the Common Law as that by workmen had begun to worry the Master Printers. One firm publicly deserted the Association, declaring that workmen had the same right to combine as masters and the latter were "untrue to themselves" in causing the arrests. Finally the charges were dropped, for Sir John MacDonald declared his intention of introducing a Trades Union Bill.

The Act was passed in May, unopposed by the Opposition. It was almost a replica of the British Act of the previous year and provided that unions, merely because they are in restraint of trade, shall not be deemed unlawful. At the same time, however, a Criminal Law Amendments Act, also identical with the objectionable British legislation of 1871, was rushed through in a single day. It succeeded in destroying much of the value of the former Act. With one hand the Conservative Party gave but with the other it took away. Four years of further effort were necessary before peaceful picketing was legalized—a legality, by the way, which was later nullified by many a subtle clause and tricky judgment.

What was won by the united front of 1872? Sir John A. MacDonald's short-lived success at the polls the same year? Perhaps. The long years of "Tory Toronto"? Perhaps. But all that does not matter, nor that the severe depression occurring a few years later disbanded many local unions, all city centrals and the first national organization which the events of 1872 had helped to create. There is no need to quarrel with history. The printers were freed, the strike was won, the right to organize was gained, and some workers in other trades were granted the nine-hour day. These successes were of more than immediate significance. The method by which they were achieved laid the basis for the unified labour movement which fought the early battles for Canadian workers.

Direction for Canadian Poets

LEO KENNEDY

I

EVEN though they have been frequently lionized by the leisured and philanthropic, English speaking Canadian poets have never been seriously accepted as interpreters of Canadian *life*. Perhaps that is because they have been content to function as interpreters of Canadian landscape. This easy preference sets its own penalty in the mediocre level which official Canadian poetry has reached at best.§

Today, in this sixth year of crisis and accelerated repression of civil liberties, the isolation of the Canadian poet from contemporary life is still taken for granted and accepted as an ideal, especially by the poet himself. In this time of impending war and incipient fascism, when the mode and standards of living of great numbers of middle class persons (from whose ranks Canadian poets hail) are being violently disrupted, our poets blithely comb their wooly wits for stanzas to clarify intimate, subjective reactions to Love, Beauty, the First Crocus, Snow in April and similar graceful but immediately irrelevent bubbles. In this they are abetted by what finds currency as Canadian "criticism". Here our professors of English Letters, commentators in the learned journals, and facile newspaper book reviewers are at fault. They have made no effort to locate Canadian poetry in its social place, and to see in its state of health or ill-health a register of the health or ill-health of Canadian society. Regrettably, our poetry is still regarded as an "art" which is to be attained for its own sake by a special cultivation of the senses.

It is the writer's contention that the time is now past for this kind of aesthetic flag-pole sitting. It is the purpose of this article to present the situation of our poets outlined above, out of the mouths of the poets themselves, and to suggest a direction to which their energies can be turned, with benefit to their own statures, and to a larger audience than they have ever before enjoyed. It is my thesis that the function of poetry is to interpret the contemporary scene faithfully; *to interpret especially the progressive forces in modern life which alone stand for cultural survival.* And it is my private recommendation that, setting theory aside, middle class poets had better hustle down from the twenty-fifth floor of their steam-heated, janitor-serviced Ivory Tower, and stand on the pavement and find out and take part in what is happening today, before the whole chaste edifice is blasted about their ears and laid waste!

II

There is a placid flatness to the run of Canadian poetry whether of 1882 or 1936 which invokes a smile of tolerance from the uninvolved observer, and makes the concerned participant—who looks for the work of adult minds—to squirm and suffer at so much documented obeisance to the namby-pamby. There is a hushed avoidance of self-criticism among the poets themselves, and a pious adherence to ideas and tricks of expression which have come to be identified with a tradition long since relegated to dust and archives. You have Jingo utterances from mental vacua; stereotyped descriptions of loons, lakes, pine trees, prairies and other natural Canadian phenomena; kindly and saccharine encomiums on fairies and dreams—especially dreams!—which might conceivably please children of tender and credulous years; apostrophied paeons in lame rhyming hexameters to Beauty, Life, Time, Love, Faithhopeandcharity; smug and safe sonnets with an obvious clinch in their concluding couplets; ill-phrased effusions on Rembrandt portraits or Beethoven sonatas which daub their original subjects with a dreadful treacle.

In the matter of treatment, of rhyme and metre, official Canadian poetry remains the stamping ground of antedeluvian formulae, of the second person singular, of e'er, o'er, yore, ye, of all the syllables clipped by the respected dead for metre's sake, and of all the consciously "poetical" words that enjoyed their day in Mrs. Heman's youth. It is as though a colony of shoddy late-Tennysonian poets had been miraculously preserved here in all the drab bloom of their youth, cut from improving contact with the outer world, and reduced for purposes of criticism and comparison to the glib affabilities of their own numbers.

Canadian poetry has not at any time been of the first or even the third water. No Walt Whitman sauntered on Montreal quays; no Poe fretted his life in a Toronto newspaper office. For generations Canadian poetry was the off-hour killcare of Empire Loyalist persons, who pursued their halt iambics and cornered their unresisting rhymes with all the zest of professional soul sleuths. Subsequently the domestic muse became paramour to a company of poets hailing from the east coast provinces, whose work was burdened with a prim Nordic consciousness and a second-hand Imperialism. The poetry of these well-meaning if limited individuals suffered from open-road infantilism in its later stages, as the work of Bliss Carman, Lampman, the Scotts and the several generations of Roberts bears glum witness. And the current crop of Canadian rhymers, with woefully few exceptions, has been prevented by its innate conservatism and imperviousness to the new, from swerving from the precedents laid down by the generation now mouldering under grass or in academic chairs.

Changes have taken place in modern English poetry; the United States has experienced a sequence of upheavals since the first crusading days of Harriet Monroe. In England and in the States those younger poets with anything to say have forced their way out of the back-water of the '20s. They have analysed the forces making for social disintegration, and have allied

§ See the *Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* and allied desiderata.

themselves with the progressive movement that offers freedom of function and hope of life. Reading Canadian poetry, you would hardly suspect this.

III

Consider the C.A.A.'s new *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and the various *Poetry Year Books* that preceded it. These official chapbooks offer a fair cross section of popular Canadian verse. Due to able and vigilant editorship, *Canadian Poetry Magazine* in its single quarterly issue published to date is years ahead of the old *Year Books,* but it is still full of sop. Basis and plan are sound: the editors publish and pay for the best poems they can get. They also award cash prizes for the best poems in a given issue. But they do not get many good poems. They are not being written.

There are fifty-three poems in *Canadian Poetry Magazine* Vol. 1., No. 1. Two of them are written with a feeling for the times. The editors are to be congratulated on printing Livesay's *Day and Night,* a long, and for Canada, major poem about flesh and blood men working under inhuman factory conditions. Nat Benson's *Depression Chants* is the other *contemporary* poem.

Hark back three years to the *Poetry Year Book* of '32-'33, which editorially professes a sense of social responsibility. Warwick Chipman, poet and editor of the chapbook, is disturbed by the economic depression. I am also: I embrace him. His preface suggests in effect that poetry and the imagination that motivates poetry, may offer some palliative for the economic depression. He begins, "In these anxious days when people the world over are asking the same grim questions, and receiving the same bleak replies . . . . when men have been betrayed in all their practical life; and, politically and economically, seem only to connive their greater frustration . . . let imagination remind us of the immense reserves of the human soul.

"It is a hundred years since Goethe died, and Scott. The world they faced was as torn, as helpless, and as frightened as our own; and they replenished it and gave it strength. And today it may be that if we lack the will and vigour to follow the wisdom of a Salter or a Stamp, *some genius of imagination is on his way to give us the tone, the temper, and the fulness from which wisdom and will are restored.*

Meanwhile our Seventh Year Book bears witness that the poets of this country continue undiminished and undismayed, remembering and reminding."

But let's look. The poems printed are announced to be the best of six hundred and fourteen submitted by three hundred poets from coast to coast. One observes that of the thirty-seven English poems, eight are preoccupied with God and Heaven in wistful, anticipatory terms. Others are concerned with our old friend Beauty, Dawn, Optimism, Gipsies and Blindness. A third group sticks to the fairies. There is nothing here to help those "men who have been betrayed in all their practical life", who, "politically and economically, seem only to contrive their greater frustration". The poems have no bearing on experience.

An ecstatic example of the tenor of the volume is taken from *A Fantasy*:

> I talked a while with Beauty
> And though she spoke no word
> Her presence touched the world with song
> And melodies I heard.

An intimate glimpse of the pre-maternal consciousness is afforded by the first and last stanzas of the poem *For My Unborn*:

> New life has crowded out my faery dreams,
> To make a little niche for life unborn . . .
> My feet that danced to greet the rising sun
> Are still, at morn.
>
> Dreams will return on naked flaming wings
> When I have quaffed the cup my lips must take
> But now I go, with wide unclouded eyes . . .
> And heart awake!

A chaste lyric to a *Barn Swallow* expresses these novel and touching sentiments:

> Skyward soaring, cleaving the blue
> Whither aloft, thou happy swallow,
> Give me the wings that I may too
> Thy rare adventures follow.
>
> Half on earth and half in heaven,
> A prophet-bird thou seemest,
> Leaving in my heart the leaven
> Of all the joy thou dreamest.

This is the dictum of a recluse to a loose-foot friend in a poem called *Vision*:

> Across the canvas of my wall . .
> Gay caravans of gipsies pass,
> And all the sunset clouds of night.
> If you could know the half I see,
> I'm very sure you'd envy me

Too many of our poets regard reality as a deplorable deviation from the philosophy of Peter Pan and Wendy.

A *Laurentian Lake* is apostrophied in nine stanzas. The first will do:

> Lac Bleu is where the fairies dwell
> With pageantry, and music sweet,
> And bells that never mortal eye
> Has seen at all, so hid they lie.

You are having a Roman holiday, but the worst is over. One veteran poet rehearses some overfamiliar rhymes:

> Some winter when the moon will rise
> And flood this lane with silver eyes
>
> And the Great Dipper will possess
> The tall elms' bitter loveliness
>
> In search of dreams of long ago
> The wind will stir the drifting snow.

Beauty, of course, is encountered a little further down the lane, and no doubt, the shade of a blushing de la Mare. Another male voice throws back a little further. This stanza is culled from a poem called *At the Sea*:

> O mansions numberless! O secret House enfolding
> All the dreams of myriad worlds in a single care!
> Ever the ultimate dream, the last adventure beholding!
> Ever from that bright wonder, that eager ineffable air
> Shedding prophetic heaven! and with fond fingers moulding
> Kingdoms and fellowships untold to greet Thee there!

That's fun. Michael Casey, Charles Bruce, Clara Hopper and Norman Hainsworth are technically well represented. But even these poets offer nothing for Mr. Chipman's betrayed generation.

IV

Now consider the published work of some Canadians who do not regularly appear in local chapbooks. You quickly observe that neo-metaphysical verse, so widely popularized by T. S. Eliot, is still being ardently re-written. Though classicist Eliot has

retired into Anglo-Catholicism, and his leadership has been generally renounced, the apostolic hand lies heavily on the verse of A. J. M. Smith and others. Edith Sitwell, delicate, graceful as a glass crocus, and just about as useful for the task now confronting Canadian poets, is reflected in the work of Robert Finch, A. M. Klein, doughty Zionist, is most praised for those poems in which he displays his considerable Biblical knowledge, and which re-create the ghetto history of European Jewry. Bruce of Halifax writes convincingly of the sea and ships, but his poetry carries the personal, insular emotion of one still unaware of immediates. E. J. Pratt is latterly aware in shorter poems of the deepening social crisis. Reclusive Audrey Alexander Brown, whose curious personal history has gone far to popularize her with Canadian readers, employs her undoubted talent in the manner and matter of Keats and Swinburne. And the others are of an ilk. Only Dorothy Livesay and F. R. Scott to date have quite shaken themselves free of the superseded traditions, the former by her study of marxist philosophy; the latter with pungent satires on the more revered of our national institutions.*

A. J. M. Smith is easily the most talented and painstaking poet of all under consideration here. Yet the snobbery and obscurity of his work has for years restricted him to publication in those journals which hold sternly to aesthetics come hell and high water. He consistently vacilates from such hale stuff as:

NEWS OF THE PHOENIX**

They say the Phoenix is dying, some say dead—
Dead without issue is what one message said,
But that was soon suppressed, officially denied.

I think, myself, whoever sent it lied,
But the authorities were right to have him shot,
As a preliminary measure, whether he did or not.

to such surrealist exercise as *Noctamble*: ***

Under the flag of this pneumatic moon,
—Blown up to bursting, whitewashed white
And clotted like the moon—the piracies of day
Scuttle the crank hulk of witless night.
The great black innocent Othello of a thing
Is undone by the nice clean pockethandkerchief
Of 6 a.m., and though the moon is only an old
Wetwash snotrag—horsemeat for good *rosbif*
Perhaps to utilise substitutes is what
The age has to teach us,
wherefor let the loud
Unmeaning warcry of treacherous daytime
Issue like whispers of love in the moonlight
—Poxy old cheat!

Robert Finch, precious, chiselled:

The fountain grows
to a tousled plant
shaking glass grain
in the merman's sieve:

Cut it down, breeze,
bind the bright sheaf
with a ribband of wind.

also has a capacity for cultivated satire:

CAUGHT†

It was none other than
The proud, the arrogant man,
The individual clan.

English, of course,
Or worse,
And a dark horse.

Stiff as a ferrule,
Icily virile,
He spoke to a squirrel.

Klein for all his concern with the past, has a lusty approach to contemporary living in the long *Soiree of Velvel Kleinberger* and *Diary of Abraham Segal: Poet*, which present the confused worker, bedevilled by the mechanism of an economy that has him firmly by the privates. Pratt's poetry is too familiar for quotation. The phenomena of Audrey Brown provokes it. You have the spectacle of Canada's most popular living poet, in 1936, completely untaught of any place or function for a poet in our society other than that of drawing room singer, writing and *being applauded* for writing such romantic nonsense as the following! Death personified, addresses Penelophon†† (Copheuta's baggage):

Come away, come away, beggar maid; gown you again
In the russet-red garment that kept you once from the rain;
Day has been long, too long, but day is over . . .

I who am Death have tendered gifts to give
My dead than Life can offer to those who live
And hunger and thirst and suffer and labour and sorrow:
Life gave you yesterday; I will give you tomorrow.

It seems the decent thing to line up sheep with sheep. My own single book of verse††† reverts by way of Smith and Eliot to something of the matter of the metaphysicians. It is all about the fertility myth and rites of imitative magic that you find in Fraser's *Golden Bough*, in a Canadian dress. This preoccupation with abstractions of death and rebirth really resulted in a few poems of some sensibility. However, these are entirely subjective and lack contact with the larger reality.

NOW! All this sort of thing could get away with itself fifteen, ten, even five years ago. But not today. Canadian poets must assume adult responsibilities, if they are to survive as poets, let alone as people. Take language.

V

The language of our poetry is only too lifeless. Morley Callaghan suggested recently‡ that we develop our poetic forms out of the richness and imagery of Canadian speech. He is entirely right: they can develop no other way. John Howard Lawson adds: "The only speech which lacks colour is that of people who have nothing to say. People whose contact with reality is direct and varied must create a mode of speech which expresses that contact."‡‡

Poetry cannot be both a living thing and an archaeological exercise. "The poet who, using an obsolete technique, attempts to express his whole conception is compelled . . . to be content with slovenly thought and feeling . . . (he) cannot expect to write well unless he is abreast of his times, honest with himself, and uses a technique sufficiently flexible to express precisely those subleties of thought and feeling in which he differs from his predecessors."‡‡‡

This much is clear: poetry not of the living scene cannot be genuine because of the artificiality and self-consciousness that writes itself in. Poetry that is of it, cannot worry along with the old forms, because they

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* See the files of the *Canadian Forum*.
** *New Verse*: December, 1933.
*** *Rocking Horse*: Vol. 1, No. 3.
† *New Provinces*: Macmillans in Canada.
†† *Canadian Poetry Magazine*: Vol. 1, No. 1.
††† *The Shrouding*: Macmillans in Canada.
‡ *Maclean's Magazine*: February, 1936.
‡‡ *Theory and Technique of Playwriting*: Putnam.
‡‡‡ *Michael Roberts: preface to New Signatures*: Hogarth.

do not fit. The progressive young poets of the United States and Day Lewis, Spender, Thomas and others in England know about this. We must too.

What phases of the living scene shall Canadian poets write about? *Any—so long as they are genuinely experienced and understood by the poet.* Because I have called attention to poems of factory life by Klein and Livesay, it may be felt that this article invites everyone to write them. Nothing of the kind! Industrial poems cannot be written by middle class poets who have no contact with the subject. The poet whose livelihood is still intact may have trouble conjuring a communicable emotion and indignation out of fifty shabby, unshaven men in a breadline . . . until he has thought the whole thing through and realized that breadlines in a wheat country are illogical and criminal, and that he and his kind may be only some steps removed from a like condition. He must touch life at a thousand points . . . grasp the heroism, joy and terror, the courage under privation and repression, the teeming life-stuff all round him that is also the stuff of great poetry! Poetry that is real, Canadian and contemporary can be written tomorrow by poets who worried about "dreams" and their precious egos yesterday. It will be welcomed by millions of Canadians who want their children to grow up straight-limbed to enjoy a heritage of prosperity and peace, and who want the kind of writing that will help bring this about.

We need poetry that reflects the lives of our people, working, loving, fighting, groping for clarity. We need satire,—fierce, scorching, aimed at the abuses which are destroying our culture and which threaten life itself. Our poets have lacked direction for their talents and energies in the past—I suggest that today it lies right before them.

The Screen

ATTENDING contemporary motion pictures as they appear here in Toronto is rapidly becoming a disheartening pastime. It used to be that a reasonably persistent patronage of local theatres would lead eventually to one's seeing an occasional worthwhile picture. But this condition no longer exists, if the offerings of the past month may be taken as a criterion.

Hollywood and the allied English studios seem to have made a final and complete disappearance into the dream-world toward which they have been moving for a long time. This tendency manifests itself in two ways: in historical romances and visionary stories of an unbelievable future, and in pictures contemporary enough but treating the present in an absurd, fanciful and anything but realistic manner.

The movement can well be summed up in that familiar word: "escape". Hollywood looks about it, and what it sees is not pleasant. Men, women and children are hungry, persecuted, homeless. So with incontravertible logic it sets about building a world of its own where everyone can be rich, happy and successful. That might be harmless enough, although hardly aesthetically stimulating, if no one bothered to look a little closer into the reasoning behind it.

The motion picture industry represents big business, and big business, showing a laudable insight which most Hollywood directors lack, realizes that so long as the average person is content to live in a comfortable world of fantasy he will not be so acutely aware of the conditions under which he is actually existing. What is more important, he will be much less liable to become ingrossed in any struggle to better these conditions. This of course has always been true, and my only excuse for repeating such a platitude is that the situation has become so alarming that even those of us who like to indulge in the movies as an opiate are finding the going rather difficult.

Let us look over the "outstanding" (most-advertised) pictures of the last few weeks, and see what they were and what they were about.

Everyone is willing to admit that *The Great Ziegfeld* was stupendous and magnificent. It was also colossal. But it wasn't very good. It is difficult to remain enthusiastic for three hours over the life of a man famous solely for overgrown burlesque shows and glorifying the American girl. Hollywood has its heroes, but they are rarely anybody else's. Clark Gable, Jean Harlow and Myrna Loy, I think, (it was three of America's great artists, anyway) appeared in a picture concerned with that most important problem facing the average American woman: wife versus secretary. Faith Baldwin wrote the story, so no one had anything to worry about.

Shirley Temple and Al Jolson were also appearing in new releases. Hollywood is overlooking a good thing in not starring those two together some time. That would be real treat for anyone interested in a good movie. *Little Lord Fauntleroy* was with us for two weeks, evidently staying over to convince the sceptics. From England came *Rhodes, the Empire Builder,* but there were no films from Russia because of the great movie-going public's well known aversion to propaganda.

Next month perhaps it will all be different. Perhaps some film executive will discover a calendar, or go for a walk outside the studio. If so it is just possible that we may see a picture portraying contemporary life as it is lived everywhere else in the world except Hollywood. It is just possible.

KIMBALL MCILROY.

Correspondence

I read your first editorial with interest. If you are sincere in your intentions to assist culture in Canada, why not, as a beginning, scrutinize the article on Art which appeared in your first issue? Do you think that the average reader will understand it? Do you think it would interest the public or encourage the young artist? Can you imagine anyone wanting to see the exhibitions mentioned after reading it?

It isn't necessary to write in jargon when writing about painting. I cite you Mr. Roger Fry, Mr. Tatlock, Mr. Jan Gordon, Mr. Frank Rutter, all noted English art critics, as examples.

To return to the article in *New Frontier*, what practical meaning is there in the following quotations: "There is already a feeling of mass, of blending of human and artistic experience", or "But . . . all the work in whatever medium, was creative?" Creative of what? It sounds like rabbits.

There is a need for honest art criticism in Canada. Perhaps it is necessary for an artist or an art instructor to write it, to make it really intelligible. I hope you will give this appeal for better art criticism your consideration.

Yarmouth, N.S. E. L. CANN.

Play Contest

The New Theatre Groups of Canada, comprising the Vancouver and Winnipeg Progressive Arts Clubs, the Toronto Theatre of Action and the Montreal New Theatre Group, announce a $150 Prize Play Contest for the best one-act play dealing with the Canadian social scene, past or present. $100. will be given as first prize and $50. as second prize.

The New Theatre Groups are producing plays which reflect the life and problems of the Canadian people who, bewildered by the great social changes which have shaken their lives to the very foundations since 1929, find no answer to their questions in the conventional drama or film.

A tremendous need exists for the dramatization of the great social issues of our time, for plays which will speak out boldly against hunger and unemployment in a land of plenty, against the waste of human life and the degradation of the human spirit, which will portray the world of today honestly and fearlessly.

Such social drama does not exclude treatment of the past. The great, but neglected or maligned figures of this country who fought on the side of progress and freedom offer a rich mine of dramatic material.

Canadian theatre groups are beginning to wake up to the fact that their audiences are no longer interested in the artificial productions which used to be their stock fare. They are waiting for plays which deal with the vital themes of Canadian life. Our Canadian playwrights must meet this need if the theatre is to live and grow.

« RULES »

1. Contest opens June 1, 1936, and closes September 30, 1936. Winners will be announced in the December issue of NEW FRONTIER.
2. The New Theatre Groups of Canada reserve all rights, including publication and performance of winning plays, and (with the author's permission) of other manuscripts considered worthy of production. Royalties will be arranged with the authors. The winning play will be printed in NEW FRONTIER, and in book form. The judges reserve the right not to award prizes if the material submitted is not up to the necessary standard.
3. Plays are to be 30 minutes to an hour in length, and no full-length plays will be considered. Any form and any scene arrangement is acceptable.
4. Two copies of each manuscript, clearly typed and accompanied by return postage, must be submitted. The author's name and address are not to be on the manuscript, but must be enclosed in a sealed envelope with the name of the play on the outside of the envelope. The playwright may submit any number of scripts. Send all plays to Play Contest, New Frontier, 989 Bay St., Toronto.

« JUDGES »

MORLEY CALLAGHAN, Canadian novelist.
GARFIELD A KING, director of the Vancouver Progressive Arts Club.
Third judge to be announced.

NEW YORK LETTER

MY letter last month was devoted to playwrights; this one is going to deal with parsons.

Like the playwrights, the divines are reasonably aware of contemporary miseries and injustices. Change and decay in all around they see, but they are less burnt up about it than the playwrights. But while they have less warmth, they have considerably more light. When it comes to clear-headedness, the parsons have all the dramatists, except the frankly left wing ones, skinned. Mind you, I don't claim that the parsons have better heads or even that they are likely to beat the playwrights to the truth (personally, I think the stage fellows will get there first), I only claim that of the two types the clergymen at present take the wider view of the American scene and they are the better acquainted with their own minds on that subject.

There are several reasons for this. First of all there are those that arise out of the differing natures of the ministerial and the play-writing job. Sermons oblige parsons to deal mainly with ideas, whereas plays oblige playwrights to deal mainly with emotions and story-telling. This means the men of the cloth are more in the habit of—I almost said thinking, but decided coming to conclusions about the world would be nearer the truth. Then, too, ministers are far more interested than playwrights in practical politics. Dramatists have recently been concerning themselves with the economic plights of their characters—principally showing how poverty utterly spoils life—but scarcely any have shown the connection between politics and man's every day existence. Also, until the radicals took to writing plays, dramatists always felt that they should write to entertain or to describe life, not to tell men how to behave. Clergymen, on the other hand, have always felt it was their first duty to control the morals of their flock. This means they have been far more active than playwrights in ruling men, and what is ruling men but practical politics?

There is also the matter of non-Platonic love. Parsons are less cramped by it than playwrights. They dismiss it briefly as either sinful or, much the same thing, unmentionable. Playwrights, however, make it their main concern. They devote easily ten times as much space to their characters' sex problems as to all their other problems put together. Vital and beautiful as love is, a mind that is almost totally preoccupied with it is a narrow mind.

Most of the great Christian sects have councils of social action and these councils have recently been bringing in reports which illustrate my contention that the heads of the parsons are clearer than those of the playwrights. They show that not only are the parsons aware of that evil growth which the playwrights have so far overlooked, Fascism; but also that, unlike the dramatists, they are pretty clear in their own minds as to where they stand on the livelier social issues.

The Roman Catholic Church states its position in the report of the social action division of the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York. Though the radicals have pussy-footed any antagonism they might have to Christianity, they haven't fooled the Catholics. The Church of Rome has the shrewdness to see that Communism is her most dangerous enemy. As a result she is fighting it more fiercely than any of the other churches. In the report she also puts in a word against Fascism. "The church is the ultimate bulwark," the report claims, "not only against communism but against all forms of State absolutism. When the State sets itself up as the absolute and ultimate, the church turns to the State and says, 'No! The people do not exist for you; you exist for them.'"

I haven't seen a comparable report from the Protestant Episcopal Church (the American equivalent to the Anglican Church). But since the Episcopalians have greater per-capita wealth than any other body of church-goers in the United States, it is only to be expected that they should be the last to be outraged by the unpleasant features of Capitalism. But even they have a Social Service Commission and last Labour Day its head, the Rev. Dr. Floyd Van Keuren, announced that "the Episcopal Church is deeply interested in the labour movement." He then attacked "social incendiaries" and warned his church against "advocating a new social and economic order if by that is meant repudiating and uprooting the old social order."

The Methodists and the Congregationalists are equally clear, but much more liberal. In their reports they note that Fascist tendencies increased last year, they attack suppressive legislation, and they assail the terror, force and intimidation that have been used against workers struggling for security and economic emancipation. The Methodist Federation for Social Service reports: "At last seventy-three workers, sharecroppers, Negroes, were killed in economic struggles during the year; no employers." Methodist pastors are urged "to take action to stop in their local communities the violence that is now being used against the poor and the weak," and Congregationalist ministers are urged to be "eternally vigilant, protesting every violation of free speech, free press and free assemblage."

And now what of the individual parsons? As the class struggle is sharpening, the more liberal ones are getting fired. This is certainly true in New Jersey. The Rev. Dr. Archy D. Ball, Methodist Episcopal, has been ousted from Englewood for preaching against armament appropriations, restrictions of civil liberties and economic greed when his wealthy parishioners, according to a spokesman, wanted "a more personal type of religion." The Rev. Richard A. Morford, Presbyterian, has been eased out from Morristown because the more influential members of his congregation feared he would "inculcate Socialist doctrine in the young people." And the Rev. Vincent Godfrey Burns has been removed from an interdenominational church in Palisade. Trustees claimed his conduct was "unbecoming a minister." That may well be, for he has been quoted as saying, "this bunch of greedy aristocrats and snobs are opposed to me because of my social program."

ROSS PARMENTER.

A New Civilization?

LORNE T. MORGAN

THE validity of any pronouncement on Soviet Russia is conditioned by its source. Hence the fact that the Webbs have written a voluminous work on the U.S.S.R.* is, in itself, of extreme importance. It would be hard to find two persons more admirably equipped for the task. Their reputation for scholarship has never been challenged. A long lifetime of painstaking research on practical as well as theoretical economic, political and social problems has provided them with a training, a fund of knowledge, and an impartiality, of international reputation. And there is no reason to believe that their latest effort is not as scholarly, as complete and as fair as any of those preceding volumes upon which their enviable reputation is based.

Soviet Communism is the result of two visits to the U.S.S.R. and four years of arduous labour. The Soviet government gave them every facility for going anywhere they wanted to go, and willingly answered their innumerable questions. They consulted those who are opposed to the present regime, both within and without the country, and they did not hesitate to criticize anything that seemed to call for criticism. Lastly, and perhaps most important of all, they show that they realize clearly the prime difficulty involved in their undertaking when they write, "We do not pretend to be without bias (who is?) but we have tried to be aware of our bias, and have striven for objectivity."

A second reason for the outstanding importance of this work is its comprehensiveness. Tract after tract, volume after volume on Russia has appeared, but all too often these treatises have dealt with but one aspect of that great experiment and have either enthusiastically praised or just as whole-heartedly damned the scheme in its entirety on the basis of the limited study made. To the Webbs the picture, if it is to have any real significance, must be viewed in its totality—"it is not the failure or the fulfilment of any one function that is significant, but the life of the whole; and, be it added, not what the ever-moving mass is today, as whence it has come and whither it is tending."

What are the aims of the Soviet leaders? What underlying philosophy motivates those leaders? What are the instruments used in attempting to achieve those aims? What new inventions have been discovered, and what new social relationships established? Is there a new ethical code? Is this colossal experiment, in its totality, a new civilization? If so, will it endure? And will it spread elsewhere? These, and other questions, the authors endeavour to answer.

Volume I, entitled "The Constitution", is a detailed description of the form and functioning of what is undoubtedly the most complicated and involved political superstructure in existence today. For no knowledge, no matter how detailed, of the sheer *form* of this political set-up is of much use in enabling one to understand how the Soviet citizen is governed, unless one is also thoroughly familiar with the actual *working* of the constitution.

In the first place, it must be clearly realized that the Soviet citizen acts and votes in several different capacities—as a citizen, as a producer engaged in "socially useful" labour, as a consumer who is a member of one of the innumerable co-operative societies, and lastly, if he is a member, as a member of the Communist Party.

As a citizen, he participates every three years in an election to determine his local governing unit. The right to vote and to hold office is extremely widespread, contrary to the opinion usually held by foreigners. Any person who is eighteen years of age and engaged in socially useful work is entitled to vote regardless of sex, religious beliefs, nationality, illiteracy, independent occupancy, period of residence, pauperism, the holding of public office, or criminal status except where loss of the right to vote is part of the sentence, and even then only for the duration of the period specified. Certain classes of people are specifically denied the right either to vote or to hold office. According to the law of 1934, the excluded comprise those who are engaged in business for profit or engage labour for profit, those who live on unearned income, those who were employed by the Czarist government, those who are mentally unsound, those who have been convicted of "mercenary" crimes, and those who are monks or clergy of any religious order. Exemption from the above excluded classes may be obtained from tribunals established for the purpose. The number actually excluded is surprisingly small, and is steadily growing smaller. By 1934, but 2.5% of the total population over eighteen were disqualified. The percentage of the electorate which actually does vote is amazing to one familiar with Canadian lethargy in that respect. Fifty point two per cent of the entire electorate voted in the Soviet election of 1927, 70% in the election of 1931, and 85.5% in the election of 1934!

The elections are times of intense activity. Anyone may nominate himself or anyone else. The Communist Party usually runs a slate, but for only a percentage (often a small one) of the vacancies; and that slate generally contains the names of considerably more members than the vacancies contested, as well as the names of persons outside the Party. In such manner does the Party try to avoid any charge of railroading its own members to office.

The election of single Soviet frequently lasts over several days, numerous candidates are considered, and accepted or rejected. Such a thing as an uncontested election, not uncommon in Britain and elsewhere, simply does not exist. When the candidates are agreed upon, the final vote takes place on the list as a whole. This vote, which is, more or less, a formality, is usually unanimous. Foreigners, however, usually attending only the final session, see but one slate, and frequently come away with the idea that no alternative choice has ever been presented and considered. Moreover, the electorate possesses the right to recall any of its representatives at any time. Lastly, a soviet election produces more than an elected body: it produces a host of resolutions and instructions from the electorate. In the

**Soviet Communism. A New Civilization?* By Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Scribners. $7.50.

1934 Moscow elections, over 100,000 resolutions were proposed, accepted and passed on to the successful candidates! Under the circumstances, it is not surprising to find the Webbs concluding that the local soviet governments are probably as democratic as similar institutions elsewhere in parliamentary countries. The local soviets have considerable power of an executive, legislative and judicial nature. Their powers are by no means rigidly established by law, and unless vetoed by a superior authority, are sovereign over a much wider field of activity than similar local governments elsewhere.

The local soviets, village or urban, are the only governing bodies directly elected by the voters. These soviets elect district soviets, which in turn elect delegates to higher bodies. The final and all-important body is the All-Union Congress of the U.S.S.R. From the All-Union Congress is chosen the powerful Grand Executive Committee, which in turn selects its Presidium and Council of People's Commissars. These latter bodies form the apex of the political pyramid. According to a resolution passed by the 1935 Congress important amendments to the constitution of the U.S.S.R. are to be made. The secret ballot is to succeed the open vote, direct election is to prevail in the selection of all officials from the local soviet to the central government, and equality of representation between town and country is to be established.

As a *producer* the Soviet citizen is represented by his trade union or by an owner-producer co-operative association, depending on his particular occupation. The base of this second pyramidal structure is composed of myriads of local units, its apex of a central body, indirectly elected, with headquarters in Moscow.

The Soviet worker in his capacity of *consumer*, as distinct from citizen or producer, is almost invariably a member of a local consumers' co-operative society. These locals are represented in Moscow by their All-Union Congress with its central committee.

Lastly, no one who is even slightly interested in discovering how the Soviet system works, can overlook the influence of the Communist Party, with its various organs and its junior organizations. The Party has no organic connection with the Soviet Government by statute or other form of law; it has no actual legal authority over either its own members or Soviet citizens in general; and its members enjoy no statutory privileges. Yet the Communist Party may easily be deemed the most important port of the effective constitutional structure of the U.S.S.R. Stalin himself is quoted as saying, "No important political or organisational problem is every decided by our soviets and other mass organisations, without directives from our Party. In this sense we may say that the dictatorship of the proletariat is, substantially, the dictatorship of the Party as the force which effectively guides the proletariat."

How has an extra-constitutional body developed such power? The answer is not far to seek. The Party achieved the final revolution, established a government which had dictatorial power, and used that power to further its own aims in the period 1917-1921. This initial advantage it has never lost. It keeps continually in the popular eye through the exploits of its members, whose enthusiasm in the new venture is apparently boundless. It consistently picks out for membership the most energetic and enterprising spirits among the workers. Its code of monastic severity and its not infrequent purges of membership tend to keep its numbers limited to a small percentage of the total population and to command the respect of the larger number of citizens who prefer the comforts of a more normal life to the honour and unremitting effort that go with Party membership. Finally, the solidarity gained by the Party in invariably voting as a unit is a factor of great political importance.

The Webbs deny the charge of dictatorship in the following words: "Our inference is that it has been, in fact, the very opposite of a dictatorship. It has been, as it still is, government by whole series of committees." They likewise deny that government in the U.S.S.R. is autocratic. "Our conclusion is," they write, "that, if by autocracy or dictatorship is meant government without prior discussion and debate, either by public opinion or in private session, the government of the U.S.S.R. is, in that sense, actually less of an autocracy or dictatorship than many a parliamentary cabinet." Perhaps they had in mind the situation in Britain from 1931 to 1935, when a government which obtained decidedly less than a 50% majority over its nearest political opponent had a *ten to one* majority over that party in Parliament. And when one recalls that the present British government was elected on a pledge to support League action against Italy, and then remembers the Hoare-Laval fiasco, one may well agree with the Webbs on the issue of dictatorship and autocracy in the U.S.S.R. Elasticity of connotation is surely the outstanding characteristic of the word 'democracy'.

In connection with the charge that Soviet Russia suffers from over-government, it must be remembered that there can be no simple political structure in a country whose area is roughly one-sixth of the earth's surface, whose population numbers 170 millions, and whose economy is communistic. Those living under a capitalist regime are often completely unaware of how large a proportion of economic activities are automatically regulated by what is known as the pricing process. Under a communist scheme, *government* control must supplant the pricing process of a capitalist economy. Its problems of government are, therefore, for the time being at least, that much more complicated. 'Over-governed' is as elastic a term as 'democratic.'

The second volume of the work is entitled, 'Social Trends in Soviet Communism". The material covered here is more familiar to the Canadian who reads at all widely than that of Volume I. It outlines the economic history of Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1935; it discusses at considerable length the pros and cons of a planned economy; it describes the essentials of an economy based upon production for use, the "remaking of man", the Soviet workshop of science, and finally the communist conception of the Good Life. The treatment is critical, exhaustive, fair—a revelation to those thoroughly disgusted with accounts rendered by ten-day-trippers, lecturers who live largely upon the gullibility of popular audiences, ex-princes and princesses (who have multiplied beyond measure since the Revolution), reporters who have graduated into the ranks of journalistic Peeping Toms, archbishops who are interested in "red famines" more because they are red than because they are famines, and women sports-writers on amorous perambulations. Soviet aims, pre-

mises, deductions, methods and the tempo of procedure, are thoroughly analyzed, and not by any means always approved. Mistakes are freely pointed out and condemned. But the general conclusions are distinctly favourable to the Soviet experiment.

The anti-religious front is seen as the result of two causes: first, that the Russian monasteries were discovered to be "nests of miracle-mongering"; second, that the Soviet mind can see no distinction between religion and superstition. Since the New Russia worships at the shrine of science, religion is rapidly being relegated to the field of anthropology. Some have contended that religion in the Soviet Union has about the same status as atheism in Ontaro, though this comparison perhaps does an injustice to Soviet tolerance.

The Webbs have decided, upon economic, political, religious and ethical grounds, that a new civilization is being born in Russia. Furthermore they believe that that civilization will not only endure but that it will also spread, though when, where and by what means they do not attempt to predict.

Reviewers are apt to make a fetish of discovering "flaws" (disagreements) in any work, no matter how praiseworthy in general. The present reviewer refuses to follow suit. No treatise on the U.S.S.R. is, or can be, "scientific". The Webbs have declared their bias and given an honest opinion. When a better one appears, produced by equally qualified and honest writers, this reviewer will be both delighted and surprised.

Music

"No Inch of Soil"

TWENTY-TWO years ago a Jewish carpenter in Chicago decided to take music lessons. He was then twenty-six years old and had no experience of music except that he had sung at the little synagogue in the small Russian town in which he had lived. His early interest in vocal music led him to organize a choir along with several other people in a Chicago socialist club. An early difficulty was the lack of suitable revolutionary songs, so the carpenter undertook the study of composition, counterpoint and piano and set himself the task of creating a repertoire for his choir. On Saturday, May 9, 1936, I went down to Massey Hall to hear for the first time his proletarian efforts at writing music and so far, two days later, I have failed to recover from an overwhelming impression that I have been privileged to witness the flowering of the most authentic musical genius of our time.

This is strong language, I know; and the statement is based on one single hearing of one work—"Kein Einzigen Shpan" (which I have translated as "No Inch of Soil") followed by a day's study of the score. Yet my conviction remains, although I have thought with becoming reverence of Sibelius, Ravel, Jensen, Hindemith, Gershwin, Reger, Shostakovitch and the rest: I feel that this musical carpenter, Jacob Schaefer, is the most authentic musical genius of our time.

Schaefer calls "No Inch of Soil" an oratorio. Actually it is no such thing—at least in the classic meaning of the term. Rather it is a choral symphony in four movements, based on an epic poem by Peretz Markisch, scored for full orchestra and mixed chorus. The structure of the work is in no sense traditional and yet, whether by accident or design, the four movements could easily be called by the traditional names associated with the symphony since Beethoven: there are respectively and recognizably the opening Allegro; a second movement which, while generally Allegretto in tempo, is not an andante movement in the ordinary sense but rather grave in the nature of its emotional mood; a third movement which could, with little stretch of the imagination, be considered a true Scherzo; and a final movement which is both Maestosa and Allegro, containing as its base the thematic material of the first movement.

I do not know under what circumstances the poem was written: whether Schaefer collaborated with Markisch or whether he saw the possibilities for musical treatment in an already created poem. Be it as it may, the final product is a perfect wedding of the words to the music, with the poetry standing as the basis of the thematic, formal and emotional development of the music. The poem itself is based on the speech of Stalin—"We want no inch of foreign soil, but we will not give up an inch of our soil to the invader." The opening lines announce the theme:

> "Our land has spoken,
> And our land has heard——"

referring to Stalin's words. The choir starts here, after a short stirring introduction by the orchestra, with a symphonic sweep that arouses and maintains a terrific pitch of emotional tension—a tension which never relaxes until the end of the movement, not on the tonic chord—*but on a suspension.*

The second movement apostrophizes Briand's dream of Pan-Europe and weeps over the sorrows of its people:

> "Hail to thee, thou great Europa,
> Hail to all thy mighty towns,
> Subterranean tragedy lurks
> To destroy thy majesty."

The third movement which I call the Scherzo concerns itself with an imaginary meeting which takes place between a "representative of God and a capitalist", who divide the corn, the wheat, the wealth of the country between them. One of the most delicious bits of musical humour in my experience is to be found in the elfin distortion of the Gregorian mode in which the Archbishop intones the sad fact that "even Heaven is full of the unemployed." The fourth movement is an extended recapitulation, both musically and poetically, of the first, with its insistence on peace and opposition to war, and in a smashing climax, reasserts that the free peoples of the Soviets will resist all aggression on the working-out of their own destiny.

It is impossible, in the limits of this review, to give a more detailed analysis of the music, of its power, originality in rhythmic and harmonic structure. I hope at some future time to write of these. But I am convinced of the transcendent, genius-like energy and the great belief of the composer Schaefer. This man's god is no orthodox god: his god is neither the father nor the son of man. His god is all men, and he is as completely intoxicated by his god's greatness as ever was any Spinoza.

LOU EPSTEIN.

BOOKS

Zola in Chicago

Studs Lonigan: A Trilogy. By James T. Farrell. Vanguard Press. $3.50.

OF the younger novelists in America whose books are adding flesh and blood to the radical critique of society, none is more noteworthy than James Farrell.

Farrell is everything that the 'artist in uniform' is held by the ignorant *not* to be. He is a hard-working novelist among novelists, a sportsman among sportsmen, an independent thinker among theorists, and a pugnacious and sometimes trenchant critic of his fellow writers of the left.

The publication in a single volume of over a thousand pages of his three most mature novels is an important event. In tracing the career of Studs Lonigan from boyhood to death on Chicago's South Side, he has built a work which makes the bulk of Sinclair Lewis look as meretricious as O. Henry, (though I am not with those who think it knocks *An American Tragedy* off the shelf).

Farrell is not out to "tell us a story". He does not seem to "describe" people, nor does he trouble to tell us much about places. But I doubt if there is another American writer who gives us a more vivid sense of people in conversation or of the streets in which they move. There to-day he is *the* American realist. So long as his characters have time to kill, be sure he is killing it with them, grinding out the reality of their talk and behaviour at the pace it would seem of life itself. Other writers have their moments, Farrell needs his solid chapters. He never gives us in a sentence what can steal upon us in a page, because the effects he is after are those that in life grow out of time. And when we have read his chapters we have got something that may stay as long in the mind as some of the flashes of the great.

Farrell's characters are forever talking. They do not talk more than normal people, but we get more of their talk than most writers would give us. We get hunks of their conversation with occasional streams of their thought (and what thought!) varied by a row with their parents or maybe a "drunk" or a dance or a sermon or a visit to a brothel or to the priest; and we are left with the abominable certainty that Farrell has translated into words the things he has seen and known, that the post-war years saw the last bourgeois Paradise on earth become a modern Purgatorio with a vengeance, and that the raw material of fascism is walking the streets of Irish Chicago at this moment.

But there is a limitation in Farrell's picture. Certainly he is no mere photographer. He has striven to show us the *characteristic* values and attitudes, successes and frustrations of middle-class Irish-Americans in the years of war and depression; and in this he succeeds. The limitation is in the fact that we see his people almost solely in their spare time. For some of them, of course, most of their time becomes spare time as crumbling capitalism turns them into street loafers and would-be gangsters. Still Farrell in *Studs Lonigan* too seldom follows his characters into such work as they do, restricting himself to what he knows best—the psychology of his old companions in the hours of companionship. His young men rarely mention their work or their hopes of work, unless beaten to privation. Their corner-talk is consequently vacuous, their defaulted minds ignorant with a terrible ignorance which Farrell, in describing their schooldays and family life, makes only too comprehensible; their drinking and sexuality become the only known escape from a vacuity which they themselves can never recognize as such. Take any single passage from Farrell

"The Bridge of San Luis Rey was a good book too. I wonder what ever became of it?"

and you feel: This is horribly true. But what of the larger truth of the whole with its re-iteration of spare-time chatter, spare-time brutality, empty-headed evenings of debauchery? We see these youngsters as a pack with little to do, their desires channelling to sex; young wolves of the pool-room and the bar, tireless in their pursuit of women. In spite of our sense of the reality of the parts, there grows in us a feeling of the sub-humanity of the whole. If we saw them in their working hours, their stature as human beings might rise, their sexuality might have perspective, and the criticism of society itself might be more comprehensive.

But when one recalls Farrell's *Gashouse McGinty*—an earlier novel dealing with workmen in an express company—one may feel that even this is a bit doubtful. The call department of that company was busily alive from beginning to end of the book: the spoken word was always dead right. And yet the spoken word was nearly always trivial, so that while it did not fail to characterize the speakers, it gradually involved a degree of the moronic in their characters. The most naturalistic of novelists, of course, is always a selector of his material, and Farrell is a conscious artist; but he has perhaps found it too easy to give us a sharp feeling of the actuality of his speakers by means of talk that is close to the insignificant, the selection being calculated to show a present reality rather than moments of development. Development is intended, but it does not sufficiently affect the reader's consciousness. The method puts a premium on a seeming lack of intelligence.

Why else are Jack Conroy's miners and steel-workers in *The Disinherited* more intelligent human beings than Farrell's? Why are Albert Halper's heavy-limbed foundry-men sensible fellows compared with the drivers and call-operators in *Gashouse McGinty?* Conroy of course is most interested in those of his fellow-workers who are awakening to the reality of their position under capitalism and whose minds are sharpening towards useful generalisations. But Halper, like Farrell, creates no class-consciousness where it is not. His workmen and Farrell's are almost equally primed with the social beliefs necessary for their bosses. And yet were I an employer buying labour-power or a Revolution looking for men, it is to Halper's *Foundry* I should go rather than to *Gashouse McGinty.*

Such dependence as Farrell's on conversation objectively recorded ends in the social consciousness of the writer being limited in effect to the level of consciousness of his characters. A Shaw or a Wells, being preachers, would manufacture a mouthpiece or intrude themselves. Farrell as a marxist and a realist has no mouthpiece, and would no more intrude himself than would Flaubert. Farrell's characters can see no social future for themselves. Consequently neither can we; (though we know they won't all die of hard liquor). So we may be left with the thought that Farrell's own method of picturing reality—conversation and thought at his characters' level of consciousness—stands between him and his realization in his books of the full meaning of that reality. He reveals the past in the present because their past is within the consciousness of his characters, but he fails to reveal the future in the present because the consciousness of the characters themselves is too undeveloped and too limited by their lives to be an adequate medium, while Farrell's own outlook and understanding—even the Samaritan in him—are largely drowned out of his books by the dictaphonic realism.

But the truth of his chapters is a great achievement. He captures the physical presence of words and speakers; imprisons his characters in any given passage of time; makes us feel—most dangerous of realism—the drag and wait of time. If we spend the afternoon up a tree in the Park with Studs and his schoolgirl sweetheart, the action is negligible, the talk is negligible; but time hangs heavy, sweet and precious: stealthily we feel the simple experience and understand why its memory will always be a part of Studs Lonigan. Let Farrell picture Armistice night in the streets of Chicago, and there we are it seems for hours, full-bodiedly, in a jostling madness. So too near the end when the red procession files past Studs' father, we feel by turns his impatience, his worry, his interest, his anger, his bafflement, his depression, while still the people come with their banners, and still they come, happy where he is not. And kids have stolen his spare tyre, and at the back of his mind he knows his son is dying at home.

It takes thirty-two episodes to project a single drunken party, a party which has been compared with the last gruesome reunion in *The Past Recaptured.* In the length of the blood-splatched night, Farrell shows us the human spirit running amuck in ways conditioned by the values of a sightless and disgusting materialism. There is no comment, of course; but the spectacle of lives once socially valuable jazzing themselves to insignificance and death is as horrible as the sprouting of new and useless limbs on the living body. But this import is too obvious. The real future is dark as a blind alley.

With his energy and talent, Farrell may be on his way to becoming a marxist Zola. In that case *Studs Lonigan* will be but a fragment of the pattern, which as it broadens to reveal more and more of the phenomena of our society will begin to show us in Radek's phrase "whither reality is moving".

ERIC DUTHIE.

Bootblack Philosophy

The Last Puritan. By George Santayana. The Macmillan Co. $2.75.

THE subject matter he chooses helps to define the artist. If 150,000 or so people have bought Santayana's novel, *The Last Puritan,* it is partly because they have expected a well-known philosopher to be aware of more significant problems than the ordinary novelist and to deal with them in a more profound way. In this expectation they have been mistaken. For his subject matter is that same puritanism against which so many writers on this continent have written in the last twenty-five years. There were the Greenwich Village and Floyd Dell years, and the Smart Set and Mencken years, and the Paris period of the '20's. With the help of this army of writers, and the constant aid of Freud, our intelligentzia has surely by now had the full opportunity to learn that the puritan ideal takes the joy out of life. Yet essentially this is all Santayana has to say.

One of the most obvious—and dullest—ways of treating puritanism in a novel is to take a person who is nothing but a puritan and follow him from birth to

death. This is exactly what Santayana does through 700 pages. "But," some one will object, "the development of character is always interesting". Yes, it is, but there is none of it in *The Last Puritan*. The hero, Oliver Alden, the descendant of a wealthy Boston family, is born old, and born a puritan, and Santayana escapes the task of saying how he became what he was. All he has to do is to picture Oliver in the normal incidents of childhood, adolescence and young manhood, and show that his conscientiousness, his sense of duty and his "moral" nature made him a joyless creature. In crude contrast, Santayana gives us Mario, Oliver's only friend—the perfect European gentleman, charming and witty, full of zest for life. The puritan has become for us so much of a conventional type that Oliver is likely to be accepted as a person, that is, to be recognized, when in fact Santayana does not bring him to life—nor, for that matter, any other character.

It is true that a novelist with no great understanding of human nature can interest us in types—if his ideas are interesting. But aside from the fact that nowadays an exposé of puritanism is tiresome, it must be said that the ideas which pass here for philosophy are so shallow and such excellent half truths that they have long since become common property. Santayana's "naturalism" tells us that man is an animal, with capacities for enjoyment, that he is as such admirable, but that he has one defect—a moral nature which leads him to construct standards of conduct, religions and philosophies which run counter to his animal nature and to the real world. If this is philosophy, then scores of modern novelists have been excellent philosophers. Accordingly the numerous "philosophical" essays which make up the bulk of the book call for no serious attention.

The pages are sprinkled with names of fine foods, wines, objects of art, allusions to expensive cars, clothing and houses, and descriptions of life on yachts, at Eton, at Oxford, on the Continent, at Harvard, and in the homes of the wealthy. Some of the best passages are appreciations of such expensive luxuries. From a technical point of view these references serve to adorn the story, and to lend a spurious air of importance to the characters and their doings. It is the technique of the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Good though it may be to learn from a philosopher how to live on a hundred thousand a year, the thoughtful reader may perhaps be shocked by the narrowness of Santayana's outlook. His social philosophy is reactionary. A few quotations will serve to illustrate the point. For glorification of the powerful politician: "He would return to work, if not eagerly or with an instinctive gladness, at least deliberately and with a clear mind, like Senator Lunt and the heroes of Homer, beautifully accomplishing their destiny". Of reform: ". . . and nothing seemed to him more odious in this world than the people bent on reforming it". Of the ugliness of Communism: "Yes, free, rare and delicate soul as he was, he would have accepted for himself this red Communist tyranny that puts a grimy revolver to our noses and growls: 'Be like me, or die' ". Of the poetry of Fascism: "Your modernness sucks in all the sap of the past, like the modernness of the new Italy." There are abundant statements about war and politics which indicate Santayana's fascist inclinations, and it is no surprise to learn that Mario, the exemplar of worldly wisdom and grace, has adopted the political ideas of the Camelots du Roi and Charles Maurras. "Narrowness of outlook" is too kind a term, however, to apply to a philosopher whose vision takes in all the trappings of wealth except that essential trapping, the poverty and misery of the masses. Rather should it be said that in Santayana philosophy becomes the bootblack of the rich.

VIRGINIUS COE.

Evolution of a Poet

Earth Call. By Alan Creighton. The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited. $2.00.

THE author of this book of poems was born in 1903 at Halifax. He worked for short periods on a farm, in an automobile factory, at newspaper reporting and commercial art. In addition to his poetry he has published short stories and essays. Under the title of *Earth Call* he has collected fifty or sixty of his poems, some of which were broadcast recently. The title, I felt, stamped the goods as Gaelic. I thought of calling voices, the rite of earth mothering, an ecstatic vision of nature, love of Loveliness above lovely things. I entered the book with my eyes open for elusive Loveliness. There are four parts to it. After "Nature" and "Love" one might expect "Death" to complete the triangle of tangible realities but this poet has "Portraiture" and "Insurgence"—some poems of which, I found, are epitaphs. How can a new poet, sprung apparently from Gaelic stock, interest me in nature and love? He wanders in fields, beside water of river or lake, among September fruits, along the beach. He speaks of "my path of winter dreams"; of "rest in flowered dream."

This is more akin to Rupert Brooke's world of boyhood sensations than to ecstatic visionariness. The art of the poem "Beyond," with its "lyric face," "beauty," "something remote," is not valid for our time but Creighton shows, in his descriptions, that he can discipline his vision and create wonder: "The bright *pour* of north wind," "ice-marbled shore," "dark-feathered squalls." What interests one is the poet's identification of spring with the May-urge in his own limbs.

In "Portraiture," which gives us an old farmer's reminiscence of a passionate moment, the story of a loveless woman become an old vixen, a city man out of touch of sun and the spring earth, and the epitaph "At rest," the art is progressing toward the last section where the poet deals with experiences known to his own generation. "Insurgence" renders passion in modern terms.

Creighton produces sincere and valuable work when he moves out his ego and youthful passion and lays a firm finger upon modern imagery to express emotions which are characteristic of our time. His best poems are "Storm Children," "Variation of the Species," "Conference," "Unemployed" and

FOR ARMISTICE DAY

"Walled by factories
Massed tightly with close roofs,
There are the voices of many children.
Though given telephone-lines
And radio aerials,
There is yet the clank of soldiers.

Is this a town
Or a farm, raising fruit
For a red harvest?"

W. E. COLLIN.

Why Women Write

The School of Femininity. By Margaret Lawrence. Thos. Nelson & Sons. $3.50.

ALTHOUGH, in this book, the author has dealt with something like forty-six women novelists, the work is far less a piece of literary criticism than a psychological study. From the literary point of view, Miss Lawrence's chief success appears in her treatment of the 19th century writers. She is a lively and sophisticated writer herself with a happy skill in fashioning impressionistic vignettes of her subjects. Considerable passages of her book, where the main theme is temporarily out of sight, are consequently both illuminating and entertaining. But the reader cannot escape the main theme for long. It keeps turning up with the monotonous obtrusiveness of Miss Lawrence's other prejudices—Irish, biological, psychiatric.

Women, whether consciously or subconsciously — says Miss Lawrence—are moved primarily in all they do by thoughts of the race; and in spite of temporary flights into the world of mental endeavour they are tied hand and foot to their biological function. With this in view she suggests that "The literary temperament is part of the artistic temperament, and is not normally the temperament of women." One readily agrees; since the literary temperament (a vague enough phrase, in all conscience) is "normal" neither in woman nor in man. More particularly she suggests that "When a young woman takes to writing it is because something has hurt her biologically, and she tries to escape the fate of womanhood." This is her thesis and it dominates her research. Women write either because they have failed to get their men or because, in some sense, they are unhappily married. In this light, then, she must see every one of her chosen novelists from Jane Austen (unmarried) to Olive Schreiner (married); from Dorothy Parker (married) to E. M. Delafield (married and a mother).

We have all observed women (and men, too, for that matter) turning to writing for solace. Consider, however, the vast majority of women who write today. Those who are unmarried, for the most part, started their writing when young. Are we to suppose, then, that they received their biological hurt before the age of twenty? The case of the married woman writer —the woman who did not begin her literary career until after marriage—is still more interesting. Look around the world, in England and in America, and you will see her. She is an educated woman; before marriage, more likely than not, she was a professional worker. In her first few years of marriage—and particularly if there were children—she was pretty fully occupied. But a little later, in reasonably comfortable circumstances, she found time heavy on her hands. The round of housewifely duties, of Bridges and Teas, of Home-and-School Clubs, of charitable organizations did not sufficiently satisfy her active mind. *She was trained beyond the only life now open to her in society.* A job was denied her as a married woman. The result was that, if she was capable of it, she turned to fiction. This is fundamentally a social rather than a psychological situation.

In common with many lay disciples of the "Viennese school of psychiatry", Miss Lawrence has a tendency to overemphasize the psychological factors to the exclusion of other factors or equal or greater importance. This leads her into shallow waters indeed. For example, when a woman chooses to live with a man who is secure financially in preference to one who contents her sexually it is not necessarily, as Miss Lawrence so nobly insists, a matter of the race. It may be, more radically, an affair of economics, often unhappily an affair of commonsense economics. And is it possible to maintain that women are originally moved—even though subconsciously—by thoughts of the children they may produce rather than by less hypothetical considerations?

While Miss Lawrence has shown women making enormous practical advances since the days of the French Revolution, in which she rightly says the middle-class feminist movement was born, she closes her eyes to the fact that women have as yet by no means reached their goal. The position of women in society is not stationary; the struggle goes on. Miss Lawrence would reply, of course, that no matter how much women emancipate themselves they will forever be fighting a losing war, for sooner or later they must be reduced to childbed.

It is true, in our experience, that the responsibilities and emotional complications of motherhood cripple the faculties of many women instead of increasing their experience in a socially useful way. This, however, is not without remedy. And it is being remedied, with a thoroughness that would astound Mary Wollstonecraft, in the Soviet Union to-day. Women's biological load *can* be eased by a society that requires women to throw off their tradition-ingrained lethargy because it has a use and a place for them that no society ever had before.

This book will serve as a glorification of that middle-class woman who feels "that femininity is a sheer and lovely quality which she cannot do justice to in the wear and tear of economic competition out in the world with men." But, along with such, there are to-day hundreds of thousands of women who, without any biological hurt at all, would be only too ready to risk the chiffon-beauty of their femininity for the sake of a real job of work.

MARION NELSON.

Kill the Jew

The Yellow Spot: The Extermination of the Jews in Germany, with an Introduction by the Bishop of Durham. Victor Gollancz. Cloth $2.50, paper-bound, $1.50.

ANTI-SEMITISM, always latent in capitalist society, becomes a special peril in times of economic and political crisis. Lenin has remarked the familiar ruse of using the Jewish race as a convenient lightning conductor for popular indignation at critical moments. The recent meeting in England where twelve thousand Englishmen bayed approval of every thrust of Sir Oswald Mosley at the Jewish race, shows that even in the fabled ancient seat of democracy and respect for racial minorities the peril of anti-semitism exists.

The publishing house of Gollancz has added another title to the long list of works in defense of liberal thought. This book, *The Yellow Spot*, is "a collection of facts and documents relating to three years' persecution of German Jews, derived chiefly from Nationalist sources", with an introduction by the Bishop of Durham.

The book is the record of the vicious humiliation of a racial minority. As in the case of the religious riots and racial feuds in India this mad excess against fellow-members of a community is the refuge of a population stung to fury by its economic position and yet not capable of confronting the true source of its plight, exploiting capitalism. It is not possible to enumerate in a short review the outrages against the Jews recorded in this book, outrages which are proved and rendered more painfully impressive by photographic evidence. Two particularly sobering illustrations are those of the head of the murdered Professor Theodor Lessing and of the celebrated publicist and poet Erich Mühsam, later murdered in camp Oranienburg.

The book should not be used as a judgment against the German people; it is an indictment of fascism and nationalist intoxication. The German people have been left only less hapless than their victims. Germany, seeking to degrade the Jew, has brutalized herself and has gone far to deprive herself of her own culture.

In Canada there exists something of the same intolerant spirit that reached such fantastic proportions in Germany. Such a book as *The Yellow Spot* should be widely distributed and read to serve as an antidote for all the ideas spread by types whose instinct is to maim or obliterate all that they cannot understand or sympathize with.

R. S. KENNY.

The Time of Scorn

Le Temps du Mepris. By André Malraux. Gallimard, Paris.

TO those admirers of Malraux who remember the work which made him famous, *La Condition Humaine* (Man's Fate) this latest book will perhaps seem a little under-proof. It is hardly a full-length novel, having only 170 pages; it is what is called a "nouvelle". As far as the outline of the story goes, the parallel with that of *Fatherland* is too obvious to be ignored. Like Karl Billinger, the author of *Fatherland*, Malraux' hero is arrested by the Nazis for his connection with Communists, "examined" (a euphemism for brutal torture), sent to a concentration camp, and, after an unstated term, released. Returning to his home in Czecho-Slovakia, Kassner resumes his revolutionary work.

There ends the resemblance of this book to Billinger's. In technique, emphasis and detail, the two have little in common. After reading *Fatherland*, with all its appalling tale of bloody sadism and incredible degradation, one is nevertheless left with an indelible impression of the almost superhuman courage, unity and invincibility of the revolutionary working-class. Malraux, on the other hand, is concerned far more with the impact of this Time of Scorn upon the individual. The prison atrocities are there, it is true; they are not attentuated; one imagines much that Malraux leaves unsaid.

Two scenes in this story are etched with particular vividness: one, that in which the prisoner turns from thoughts of suicide to listen to the persistent knockings made by a fellow-victim. These knocks are of a systematic pattern, and after long brain-racking effort, he discovers the code. Thereafter he can communicate with the other sufferer. Characteristically, Malraux tells what follows in the shape of a monologue delivered by his hero, who relates his memories of childhood, of Russia, of the death of his father in a mine-explosion. Where, with Billinger, we find realistic accounts of the disputes and various points of view of the prisoners, their passionate recriminations, their slow painful learning of the lesson of unity under the lash of the enemy—with Malraux the spotlight is turned exclusively upon the psychological process in one mind. Reality comes to us filtered, so to speak, through this medium.

The other scene which lives by its poignancy is that in which Kassner comes unheard into the room where his wife Anna is telling a tale to their child, thinking her husband still in the clutches of the Nazi torturers. Malraux, though his political consciousness is acute (he took active part in the Shanghai insurrection of 1927) is essentially an artist, at his best when recording the solemn, high and solitary movements of the soul. He is interested above all in the progress by which the individual seeks his footing, finds his equilibrium and his integrity of mind, at moments of strong emotional tension, such as occur during a revolution, or, as in this book, during an orgy of sadistic reaction. His style has a crystalline austerity, an effect due partly to his almost fanatical avoidance of any shadow of over-statement.

The novel suffers here and there from a certain discursiveness. In such a short work, on such a grave theme, to devote nearly twenty pages to a description of the air-flight to Prague is surely to weaken its force an unity. In comparison with *La Condition Humaine*, *Le Temps du Mepris* shows a less intimate realization of the theme on the part of the author. And yet this subject is at least as compelling as that of the former. Is it because Malraux actually lived through some of the scenes described in the Chinese setting, whereas the events in Germany probably came to him indirectly, through book or by word of mouth?

Le Temps du Mepris has not yet appeared in English, so far as I know. No doubt it is in process of translation.

MADGE PORTSMOUTH.

Brief Reviews

Slums and Re-Housing. Canadian Youth Council. 5c.

THE interest which was aroused by the publication in 1934 of Dr. Bruce's excellent Report on Housing Conditions in Toronto was so widespread that it is difficult to understand the continued apathy of the civic authorities towards this problem.

To combat this apathy, to stimulate thought and discussion among a wider circle, has been the aim of the Canadian Youth Council in publishing this attractive pamphlet. While addressed primarily to young people, it is to be hoped that it will achieve a wide distribution among the general public, and succeed, perhaps better than the more lengthy Report on which it is based, in shaking the complacency of those who still believe " we have no real slums in Toronto." The brochure is a condensation of the Bruce Report, presenting in compelling form the findings of the various organizations who made the investigation. It gives a vivid picture of the intolerable housing conditions under which so many citizens of Toronto are forced to live.

The front cover is striking and effective; on one side is a picture of a particularly squalid slum, and on the other a photograph of one of the models made for the Bruce Report, a model of a great clean housing block, with its trees and playgrounds. The contrast conveys more eloquently than could any written description an idea of the work that has to be done, an inkling of the success that can be achieved only through the pressure of an informed and active public opinion.

R. A. FISHER.

Capital. By Karl Marx. Modern Library. $1.25.

THE publication of Marx's fundamental work in the Modern Library edition is an important event, indicative of the changing intellectual currents of our times. It goes without saying that the book is required reading for everyone interested in what is going on in the world today.

This cheap edition contains the unabridged text of Volume 1, in the Moore and Aveling translation, which while not so readable as that by Eden and Cedar Paul, is much more accurate. The book is 869 pages in length, set in large type, and is altogether a fine printing job. It is to be hoped that some of our Canadian critics of Marxism will take this opportunity to find out, not "what Marx really meant", but what he actually said.

Behind the Swastika. By Josephine Herbst. Anti-Nazi Federation. 5c.

This well-written little pamphlet gives a vivid picture of the outward manifestations of the anti-fascist movement in Hitler Germany. Miss Herbst saw and heard many things which don't find their way into the newspapers either in Germany or abroad. Recommended for those who despair over the "acquiescence" of the German people to the rule of Nazi gangsterism.

Between Ourselves

In our next issue we will print the first of a series of critical articles by Felix Walter on contemporary French writers.

The article on Father Coughlin which was to be included in this issue has been held over for lack of space.

S. J. Perelman is one of the best known American humorists. He is at present in Hollywood writing for the films.

Genevieve Taggard is a prominent left wing writer in the United States. She has published several volumes of poetry and prose, including *Travelling Standing Still, Words for the Chisel,* and *The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson.* The poem appearing in this issue will be included in her next book, *Calling Western Union,* to be published in the Fall by Harper and Brothers.

Jack Parr writes from Winnipeg about his story, *East Nine.* "It's not just an 'idea'. It didn't 'come to me'. I lived it." We believe that this will be self-evident to our readers. He continues: "In a way, it avoids the all too evident sufferings of the unemployed, which can, if carried to the extreme, become a drug on the literary market. That's not only my own opinion, but that of the numerous critics of your first issue".

In Our July Issue

Women, Bound or Free

By Margaret Gould

Miss Margaret Gould is the secretary of the Child Welfare Council of Toronto, and one of the best known social workers in Canada. We are proud to announce the publication of this article, which we believe to be the best statement of the position of women in contemporary society ever to appear in a Canadian magazine.

Other features in our next issue will include an article on the Moose River disaster, now being prepared by someone who is on the scene and who has the courage to go deeper than the newspaper headlines for material; a documented exposure of the activities of agents of the German National Socialist Party in Montreal; and the first of a series of critical articles on contemporary French writers.

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