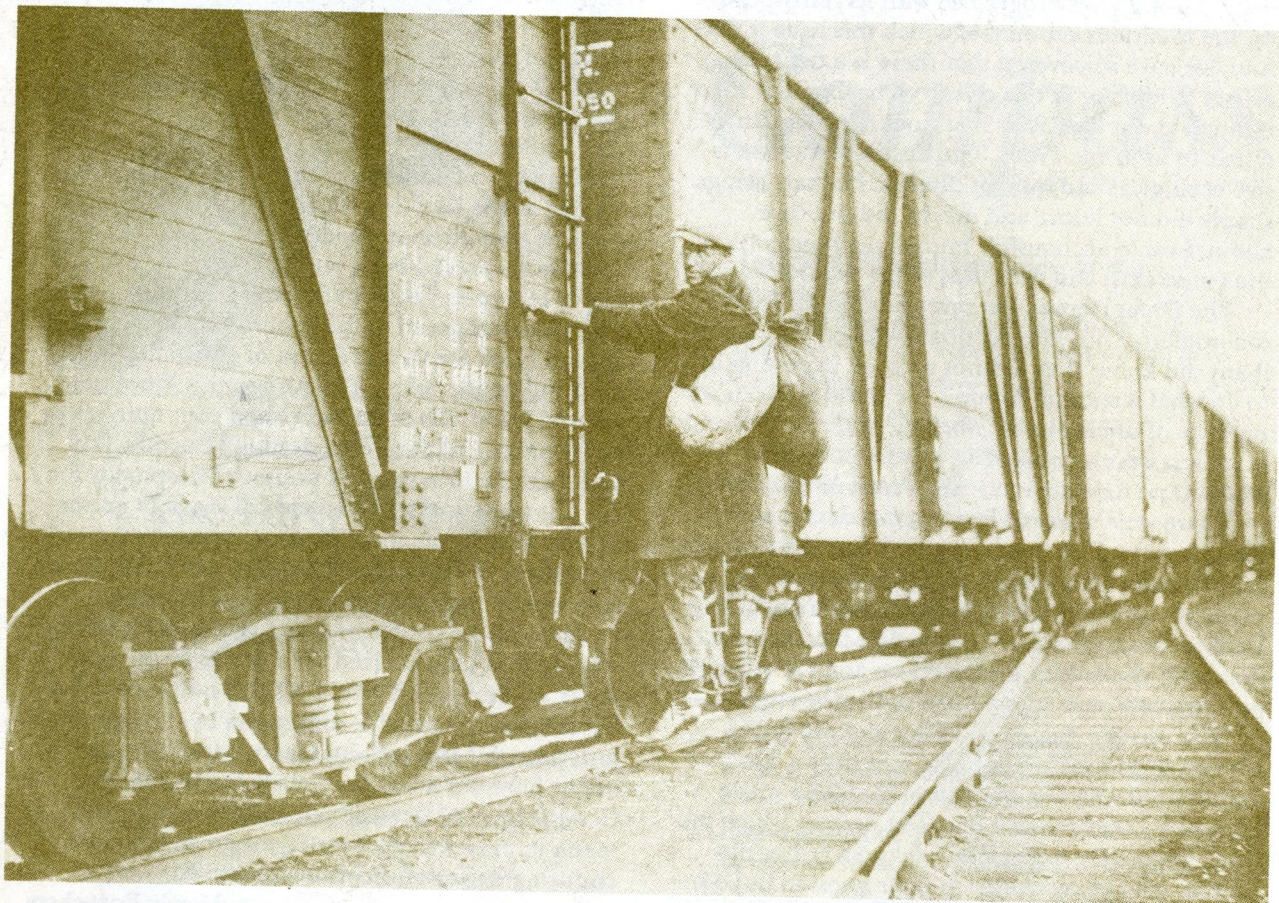


JOHN COLEMAN
Recovering Vatican II's Vision

March/April 1993 \$3.50

Compass

A JESUIT JOURNAL



The Dirty Thirties

The Twentieth Century: Part 4

Lukin Robinson Wall Street Crash to Phony War

Duncan Cameron Back to the Depression?

Daniel Berrigan SJ Dorothy Day's Legacy

Personalism, Political Messiahs,
Gangster Heroes and much more

Why Do the 1930s Seem So Familiar?

We know the pictures, and some of us still have the memories. The dilapidated wooden house and barn on the prairie, a family standing in front in workworn clothes and careworn faces, watching the soil blow away. Welcome to the 1930s.

As *Compass* has progressed with its retrospective on the twentieth century, of which this issue is part four, we have discovered that there is a depressing aspect to looking at this century's history. For there is much about the 1930s that does not seem unfamiliar to us in the 1990s. The dustbowl was a massive ecological and human disaster. Human beings simply did not know, and maybe did not care about, how to accomplish human purposes within the constraints and demands of the natural world.

The Great Depression revealed that we really did not know how the economy worked either—or if any did know, they did not succeed in getting it to do what it should. Around the world millions on millions of unemployed, working poor, hoboes and homeless were victims of an economic system whose taste for human sacrifice seemed insatiable.

There were wars, revolutions, massacres and the like going on all over the world, but they did not really lie heavy on Canadian minds. The only exception, perhaps, was Spain, where young idealists (including Dr. Norman Bethune with his mobile blood transfusion unit) challenged the American and Canadian governments' tacit support of a right-wing regime.

This was the decade of Hitler and Mussolini, who gained immense popularity in their countries and beyond with the conviction that their states and their peoples had a manifest destiny, which justified militarism, expansionism and a rather distasteful self-righteousness in their quest to impose their version of a "New World Order."

The familiarity of all these aspects of the thirties is a bit discouraging. And even facing the stark lack of real change and progress in our world over the past sixty years, our society's structures and rhetoric seem to presume that our living standards are going to get better and better, that our economy can continue to expand, that we have within our reach a new world order of peace and harmony, and that our relentless pursuit of technology, control and power will allow us to solve our problems. Perhaps as we look at a rather unhappy decade in our past, we might recognize these illusions that we still carry for what they are.

Moments of progress in the 1930s were not writ as large as the decade's catastrophes, but they were genuine nonetheless. *Compass* looks at these too, possible sources of hope and guidance for the pursuit of real progress today. Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins proposed to the fishers and farmers of eastern Nova Scotia a program of education, self-help and cooperation. The Antigonish Movement allowed hundreds of impoverished communities to take "mastery of their own destiny." Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin opened houses of hospitality for the homeless and started a radical Catholic paper in New York. Emmanuel Mounier assembled a movement that developed a progressive Catholic alternative to both capitalism and communism.

Many of the problems faced in the 1930s were solved, or at least shelved for a while, by the outbreak of the Second World War. In our decade, facing similarly intractable difficulties in creating a just, peaceful and sustainable human world, we might hope for a less drastic resolution. Moses Coady, Dorothy Day and other figures of commitment, faith and integrity may yet prove the more enduring legacy of the dirty thirties. ♦

—Martin Royackers

Compass



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Compass is published six times a year by Jesuits of the Upper Canada Province, Society of Jesus, 69 Marmaduke Street, Toronto, Ont. M6R 1T3. Ecumenical in spirit, it provides a forum for lively debate and an ethical perspective on social and religious questions. Opinions express-

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NC-6-12955(b)
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ed in *Compass* are those of the editors or contributors. *Compass* is a member of the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association, the Catholic Press Association, and Canadian Church Press. Printed by Del Charters Litho, Brampton, Ont. Publications Mail Registration No. 0560. Post-

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age paid at Toronto. Return postage guaranteed. ISSN 0715-8777. Issued February 1993. Subscriptions \$19.00 per year, plus \$1.33 GST. Address submissions and subscription orders to *Compass*, 10 Saint Mary St., Suite 300; Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1P9 Tel. 416 • 921-0653.

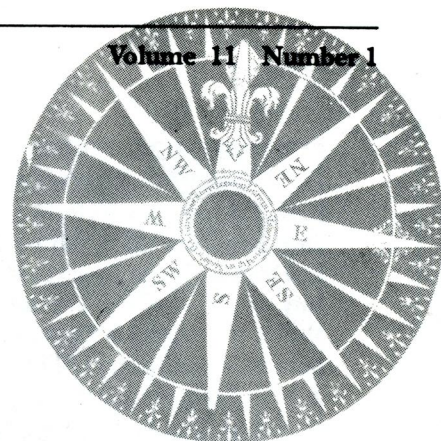


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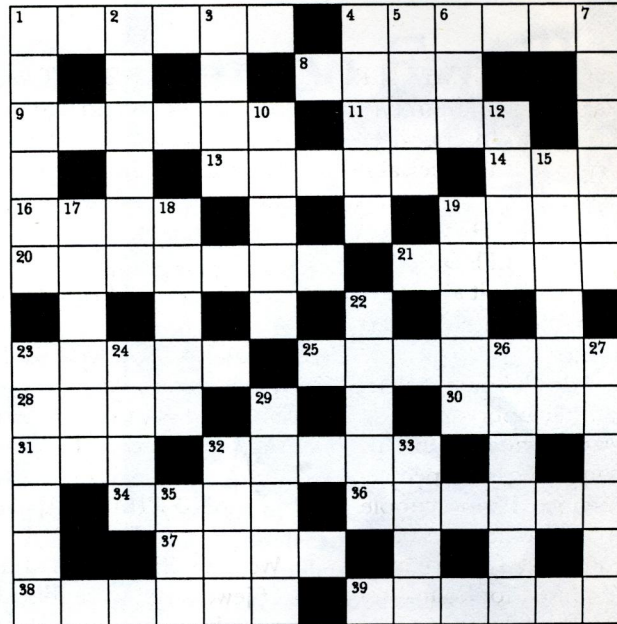
OF MOUNTAINS AND TELESCOPES

I echo a heading in Points (*Compass*, November/December 1992) and think, "Yes indeed, *Lord*, that I may see what really are the facts about the Vatican Observatory's new telescope project." For it is not a "huge" but a moderate 1.8-metre telescope that is in question; it is placed not on "top" but down from a subsidiary peak of Big Seated Mountain (and the nearby White Mountain Apaches have ski runs down from subsidiary peaks of *their* Sacred Mountain); and for some time there have been radio towers on another subsidiary peak, with no objection from the neighbouring Apaches.

While the misapprehensions of the quoted novelist, Tony Hillerman, may be excused, it is a wonder the editors of "A Jesuit Journal" did not take the trouble to consult their fellow Jesuits who are on the spot as to the veracity of the accusations. Since the editors would seem to prefer the Big Seat of Judgement to the professional reporting of facts, other readers might also join me in welcoming some indication that this is not so.

Christopher J. Corbally SJ

Vatican Advanced Technology
Telescope Project Scientist
Tucson, Ariz.



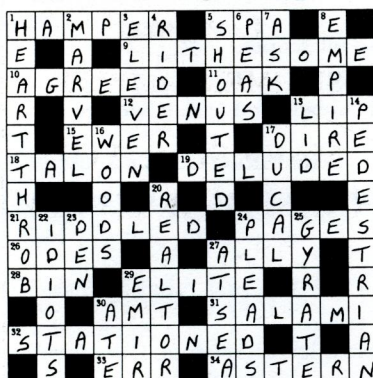
Across

1. Masseur hides in the shrubbery. (6)
4. Demanding like a tyrant. (6)
8. *Iter* is declined to form the Roman way, in church for example. (4)
9. Teetotaler in the middle of breaking free of the restraint. (6)
11. Fast spring days temporarily given. (4)
13. Bird that's "poetic". (5)
14. Spring forward; fall back as an afterthought. (3)
16. Wind up the silver train. (4)
19. Two Nazi organizations together give defiant childish response. (4)
20. Three letters in a row, sent to Alberta postal code, by air for example. (7)
21. Wild trip gets publicity in the diocese. (5)
23. I hear that they skip a meal because it's foggy. (5)
25. The person who is underhanded in case of a fall. (7)
28. Previously over the Anglican church. (4)
30. Love's pain required. (4)
31. What's left from the duck could make a meal. (3)
32. An eco-disaster at sea. (5)
34. Following the sexton, going on in the opposite direction. (4)
36. Lie about the tree. (6)
37. Gets free from a great barrier. (4)
38. Energy times ten over time is the formula for the distance. (6)
39. Pour me port for the time being. (3,3)

Down

1. Small official with an almost gigantic safety zone. (6)
2. Swings a belt at the rumble. (6)
3. Always right the night before. (4)
4. Was sick at seeing the advertisement around Orleans, for example. (5)
5. Stem the decreasing print with a gun. (4)
6. Know a hundred that drop out from a twisted neck. (3)
7. Brief Hellenic relaxation could oil the wheels. (6)
10. A tropical season is spent in lying in the sunbeam. (5)
12. The only Russian not subject to the surreal arts. (4)
15. Somehow does up the bogus beginning. (6)
17. Plain going out east? Just the opposite. (6)
18. Love to mete out ham. (5)
19. Stud poker first to the card room. (5)
22. The miserable wretch is buried on his back amid lavender azaleas. (5)
23. A good reason to transfer it back to the centre. (6)
24. The view of the hospitalized cat? (4)
26. The dire strait of Van Gogh for example. (6)
27. High regard for Triple E Senate taking majority, initially with confusion. (6)
29. Eight people receive the Order of Canada in the east on a holiday. (5)
32. Steers out of the centre of the air. (4)
33. The French-born open all right, then close. (4)
35. It sounded like a human activity before. (3)

Solution to Compass Cryptic 32



The prize for Compass Cryptic #32 was *Negotiating with a Sovereign Quebec*, edited by Daniel Drache and Roberto Perin. It was won by Bruce Henry of Guelph, Ontario.

The prize for the first correct solution drawn of Compass Cryptic #33 will be *Preston Manning and the Reform Party* by Murray Dobbin, compliments of Goodread Biographies. Answers must be received by March 25.

Points

ROMANCING THE MYSTERY

Elliott MacGuigan SJ in theology class: "It is not my intention here to try to 'eff' the ineffable."

THERE YOU HAVE IT

—ALL EFF'D

Newsweek: What is it about bondage and S&M that's interesting to you?

Madonna: I don't know, maybe it's my Catholic upbringing. When I was growing up, there were certain things that people did for penance; I know people that slept on coat hangers or knelt on uncooked rice on the floor, and prayed for hours. And for me as a child, I think somehow things got really mixed up. There was some ecstasy involved in that.

And the whole thing of crucifixion—a lot of that, the idea of being tied up. It's surrendering yourself to someone. I'm fascinated by it. I mean, there's a lot of pain-equals-pleasure in the Catholic Church. And that is also associated with bondage and S&M.

CULTURAL POLICY

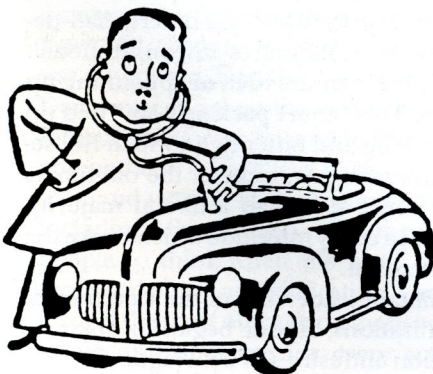
When I hear anyone talk of Culture, I reach for my revolver.

—Hermann Göring, 1934

RELIGIOUS POLICY

The pope! How many divisions has he got?

—Joseph Stalin, 1935

**WALK THE TALK**

Modern men and women listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.

—Pope Paul VI,

Evangelii Nuntiandi

SOCRATES SAYS "INDEED!"

Neil Postman: "Ignorance is correctable, but what shall we do if we take ignorance to be knowledge?"

**AND THAT MAN WAS
A DOCTOR**

We are selling bread at the price of jewels. Let us redefine medical ethics: not as a code of professional etiquette between doctors, but as a code of fundamental morality and justice between people and medicine.

—Norman Bethune

Z,Y,X,W...

Brian Gore, Irish Columban priest in the Philippines: "Jesus taught the adults and patted the children on the head. We teach the children and pat the adults on the head."

**TIGHTROPES FOR
ELEPHANTS?**

A.W. Richard Sipe: "I am going to say it again and again: The church demands celibacy, but does not train for it."

IN THE DEPTHS

In the real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald,

The Crack-Up, 1936



"Points" welcomes small, interesting items from readers. If we use yours, you will get a one-year subscription to *Compass* for yourself or a friend.

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by Colin McAdam

Western Governments'
New Approach
by James Hathaway

Refugees and the Bible
by Gunther Plaut

Why We Work with Refugees
by Mary Jo Leddy NDS

History of Canadian
Refugee Policy
by Harold Troper

International Refugee Flows
by Mark Raper SJ

World Refugee Map

An Interview with Gordon
Fairweather

Refugees in Canada
Tell Their Stories

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THE THIRTIES

From Stock Market Crash to Phony War

For millions of people, the 1930s were mainly years of pain, suffering and turmoil. They were bitter years not only because of the misery of the Great Depression but also because of what they led to: the unprecedented scale of death and destruction in the Second World War. Six developments dominated the decade, at least in the northern half of the world:

- the Great Depression;
- Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States;
- the rise of Nazi Germany;
- the accelerated industrialization of the Soviet Union and the consolidation of Stalin's tyranny, culminating in the massive purges;
- Japanese economic penetration and military expansion in Asia;
- the march to World War II.

The Great Depression and the New Deal

The Great Depression began with the stock market crash of 1929. It got worse in Europe when several big banks failed. Production and prices in all countries fell, and unemployment soared. Factory gates closed. There were bread lines, soup kitchens and widespread hunger while at the same time, for want of markets, farmers burned their crops or ploughed them under. The United States and Germany were hit the worst. Most families had only one breadwinner, and neither the U.S. nor Canada had any unemployment insurance. Municipalities, with some help from the provinces and states (which soon ran out of money), were responsible for such welfare as there was. People were ashamed of needing welfare, and the means test the welfare administrators required them to undergo was intrusive and humiliating. Unemployment at 15 to 20 per cent or more and lasting for year after year meant something quite different in terms of poverty and despair from anything we have known since.

The outcome in the U.S. was the New Deal. Franklin Roosevelt became president of a stricken nation in March 1933, just when hundreds of banks had failed and, to save the rest, all were closed. It had been a terrible winter. President Hoover kept repeating that prosperity was just around the corner and that the way to recovery was to restore confidence by cutting government spending (then only 6 per cent of GNP compared to 23 per cent today) and balanc-

ing the budget. When nominated in July 1932, Roosevelt had said, "I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a New Deal for the American people." At his inauguration, his voice rang out, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Once the banking system had been saved, recovery and reform got under way. First of all came relief—not generous, but less stingy than before. Then came the National Recovery Act for industry and the Agricultural Adjustment Act to rescue farmers. The Civilian Conservation Corps gave young unemployed men fresh country air, plenty to eat and useful work in conservation, reforestation and other projects. A public works program was begun, under which bridges, tunnels and dams that became American landmarks were built. The Tennessee Valley Authority was established and began its work of reclamation, building dams and supplying cheap electricity under public ownership.

The National Youth Administration helped thousands of students continue their education. Later came public housing, a first in North America although by then commonplace in Europe, and the Works Progress Administration, which built schools, libraries and health clinics and gave work and opportunity to artists, writers, actors and teachers. The

Homeowners Loan Corporation gave mortgage relief to more than a million homeowners, the Securities and Exchange Commis-

sion reformed and regulated the stock market, and the Social Security Act brought unemployment insurance and old age pensions.

By 1936, production was up by one third, employment by 30 per cent and payrolls by 45 per cent, and Roosevelt was triumphantly reelected. But the next four years were more difficult. The Supreme Court, with a majority of conservative old-timers, had declared many New Deal measures unconstitutional. Roosevelt responded with the idea of appointing up to six new judges. This "court packing plan" tied up the Congress in a long and bitter fight, which Roosevelt eventually lost. However, some of the old-timers retired and the court soon had a liberal majority. Nevertheless, it was a costly interlude which broke the New Deal's momentum.

Under the militant leadership of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, labour began to organize in mass-production industries. The Wagner Act re-

Lukin Robinson

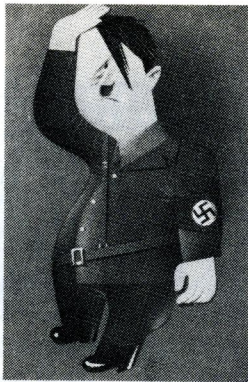
quired employers to bargain collectively with unions of the workers' choice. But industry ignored the Act. In 1937, sit-down strikes forced Ford, General Motors and U.S. Steel to give in, but others continued to resist with arms and goons. Labour organized in Canada also, but it was several years into the war before we had an equivalent of the Wagner Act.

Also in 1937, recovery unexpectedly came to a halt. There was a sharp recession, from which recovery was slow and fitful. Unemployment at the end of the decade was still around 15 per cent and GNP no larger than in 1929. Only the war lifted the economy out of the Depression. Nevertheless, the New Deal's achievements were immense. It changed the face and spirit of the country, laid the basis for the welfare state, and gave Roosevelt the popular support that enabled him to run for an unprecedented third term and lead the country in the struggle against Nazi Germany.

Hitler vs. Stalin

Hitler rode to power on the Depression. In May 1928, the Nazis got 2.6 per cent of the vote; in September 1930, they got 18.3 per cent; and in July 1932, 37.1 per cent. They never won a majority in a free election. Hitler was appointed chancellor because the leaders of the political establishment were stupid, pig-headed and incompetent. They quarrelled over the sharing of power, were utterly unable to cope with the Depression and needed the Nazis to smash the left. On the evening of his appointment, January 30, 1933, Nazi storm troopers, their jackboots resounding on the pavement, paraded by torchlight beneath the Chancellery where Hitler stood at a window to celebrate the occasion. Thus began the "midnight of the century." It ended twelve years later in utter defeat and infinite shame.

Elections to the Reichstag, the German parliament, were immediately called. A few days before the election, the Nazis set fire to the Reichstag building. They then used the fire as an excuse for a nationwide crackdown. All freedom of expression and later of worship was suppressed. First the Communists, then the Social Democrats and then the trade unions were outlawed. Piles of books were burned in the streets; persecution and outrages against Jews became government policy; men and women of the highest culture and renown, including Albert Einstein, fled the country. What were people to think when the head of the government screamed abuse and vilification, and the official press carried the most obscene cartoons and columns of lies, insults and applause for every act of brutality and



lawlessness, all this in a country hitherto considered among the most civilized?

At the same time, vigorous measures of economic recovery were undertaken. All notions of orthodox finance were swept aside. The drilled work brigades, the famous autobahns and the Olympic Games of 1936 became symbols of Nazi success. Rearmament was at first hidden; later it was publicly celebrated. Hitler was said to have restored German pride after the humiliation

of defeat and the trauma of inflation that had wiped out middle-class savings. He certainly appealed to racism, chauvinism and the thirst for revenge.

Facing Germany was Soviet Russia. Throughout the Cold War and since, Hitler and Stalin have been branded as two of a kind, with both their regimes defined as totalitarian. No doubt they were in many dreadful ways the same. But in the 1930s there were heated debates and differences of view. Conservatives considered Stalin and the example of socialism in Russia the main danger, and consequently favoured Nazi Germany. Liberals and the left increasingly saw Hitler as the enemy, and overlooked the facts of Stalin's tyranny. Hitler eventually settled the issue by one act of aggression after another, while the Soviet government called unceasingly for collective resistance.

Soviet industrialization went forward at an extraordinary pace, as one five-year plan followed another. With enormous effort, untold sacrifice, constant trial and error and a great deal of waste, the Soviet Union achieved in years what in other industrial countries had taken decades. Millions moved from the country to bursting towns and cities, where they came under the discipline of factory labour. A new managerial elite was formed, which ruthlessly enforced its orders. There was compulsory military service, and a powerful defence industry was built up. It would be tested to the limit.

Agriculture was collectivized. It was a disaster. Farm output fell, millions of animals were slaughtered and there was widespread famine. The facts were officially denied, and few observers dared to tell the truth. No help was offered from the West, and it might have been refused if it had been. Instead, grain exports were continued, at fire-sale prices, in order to buy machinery and equipment and hire foreign experts. Collectivization imposed without mercy permanently hardened the regime; it became more repressive and relied increasingly on fear, coercion and the secret police.

The show trials and purges of 1936-38 were the culmination of this process. Paranoia gripped the country, and Stalin most of all. Everyone was under suspicion; no one felt secure. Since the government refused to acknowledge mistakes and failures, they had

to be blamed on "enemies of the people." There was also growing fear of war, and—not without cause—of spies and hostile agents from abroad.

The trials and purges liquidated the remaining revolutionaries from Lenin's day who did not agree with Stalin's policies and methods, as well as hundreds of thousands of others who for one reason or another or no reason at all were thought to have allowed even a flicker of doubt to cross their minds. By sacrificing countless energetic and dedicated people, many of whom were beginning at last to master their jobs, they set back the country's progress and weakened the army. And they did grave damage to the country's reputation abroad. Hitler and his supporters made the most of this, and appeasement gained ground.

The March to War

The 1930s began with Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931. The League of Nations expressed disapproval but did nothing, thereby showing its impotence. In 1935 Germany decreed conscription, in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles. A few months later, the British government signed a naval agreement with Germany, foolishly believing that Hitler, having just broken one treaty, would respect another. That summer, Italy invaded Abyssinia. The League imposed economic sanctions but stopped short of including oil, which might have made the sanctions effective. In 1936, Hitler sent his army into the Rhineland, again in defiance of Versailles. France and Britain did nothing.

The Spanish Civil War broke out in August. Britain refused to sell arms to the democratically elected Republican government; France, with a Popular Front government and a socialist as prime minister, did likewise. Hitler and Mussolini sent troops and weapons in abundance to the rebel armies under Franco, including pilots and planes. The bombing of Guernica, made famous by Picasso, was a milestone in terror from the air. But Madrid held out. The international brigades, including 1,400 Canadians in the Mackenzie-Papineau battalion, fought for the Republic and suffered terrible casualties. Dr. Norman Bethune broke new ground and saved many lives by taking his mobile blood transfusion units to the wounded at the front. Soviet Russia gave what help it could.

In 1937, Japan invaded China. Shanghai was bombed. The printed picture of a crying child with shredded clothes sitting in the street was seen by millions. Roosevelt made his famous Quarantine speech, but public opinion overwhelmingly favoured American neutrality.



Only later did people in the outside world learn of another event that was to have great consequences: the Long March of the Communists under Mao to the northwest of China in 1934–36.

In March 1938, Hitler occupied Austria and threatened Czechoslovakia. The capitulation of Munich followed in September. Neville Chamberlain, who with his umbrella was the symbol of appeasement, proclaimed "peace in our time." Winston Churchill said, "We have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat." Five weeks later, the Nazis celebrated their triumph with the *Kristallnacht*, in which ninety-one Jews were killed, more than 30,000 were sent to concentration camps where many died, Jewish shops were smashed and almost 200 synagogues were destroyed. It did not, as has so often been said, initiate the persecution of the Jews; there had been outrages from the beginning. But it was a clear warning of what was to come.

In 1939, Hitler took what was left of Czechoslovakia and turned his attention to Poland. After three years of civil war, republican Spain was finally defeated.

The German-Soviet nonaggression pact was the final blow. All its proposals for collective resistance having been rejected, the Soviet government switched sides. Hitler invaded Poland; Britain and France declared war; and Stalin became the great appeaser.

Thus began the Second World War. However, there was little fighting in the west; the first six months were known as the phony war. For the western allies, the real war began in the spring of 1940 with the occupation of Denmark and Norway, the invasion of Belgium and Holland and the collapse of France. England held out, the Battle of Britain was won, and the United States slowly became "the arsenal of democracy" on the allied side.

At each of these steps in the march to war, Hitler could have been stopped. We now know that he could not have held the Rhineland in 1936 if the French, as was their right and duty, had sent in troops. Hitler knew it too. We know that the German army could not have vanquished Czechoslovakia in 1938; again Hitler knew it, as did the German generals, who were prepared to overthrow him if he ordered an attack. Only the surrender of Munich saved him, and indeed consolidated his power.

A French journalist summed it up: nothing, she wrote, gives one a better idea of infinity than human

Lukin Robinson grew up in Switzerland during the 1930s. He is now an economist with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union in Toronto.

stupidity. In spite of the accumulating evidence, most people in North America and what remained of civilized Europe preferred not to believe what was happening. Politicians, including Canada's prime minister, fawned on Hitler and praised his government as a bulwark against communism. It was only after Munich that appeasement became a dirty word.

Why was Nazi Germany not stopped before it was too late? This is a question that haunts the memory and conscience of every liberal and thoughtful person who grew up in the 1930s and before. It is a question that George Bush and his advisers should have asked themselves instead of giving aid and comfort to Saddam Hussein.

The Shape of the Decade

The Great Depression affected everything in the 1930s. There had been depressions before, but none had been so deep or caused so much desolation. Unemployment had never been so high, business had never been so discredited and the established order had never been so widely questioned and assailed. Thus, the Great Depression explains the upsurge of militancy among working people in Canada and the United States, the demonstrations and hunger marches, the union organizing drives. It explains the crushing defeat in 1935 of the Conservative government under R.B. Bennett (known as Richard Bughouse Bennett because of the bug-infested bunkhouses in the forests where unemployed men were sent to work). It explains the founding of the CCF and the flowering of left-wing literature and art.

It explains the New Deal and why it repudiated orthodox finance, balanced budgets, "sound" money and the overriding need to restore business confidence as the means of recovery—ideas and policies that are now again in high favour, as if we had learned nothing in the meantime. It explains the Keynesian revolution in economics, which overturned the ruling dogma that mass unemployment and depression were theoretically impossible. It explains the rise to power of Hitler, not only because he appealed directly to the prevailing misery and fear but also because the Depression showed how utterly incapable the governing parties were of doing anything about it.

It explains the comparison made between capitalist failure and socialist promise, illustrated as many people believed by the Soviet example. In one case, the anarchy of private enterprise and production for profit and all the suffering of depression. In the other, social ownership of farm and factory, planning for the common good, giant strides in industrialization, and impressive progress in education, culture

and living standards. This was the idealized picture. One-sided and distorted though it was, it nevertheless inspired millions to immense exertions and gave hope to millions more. However difficult it may be to give retrospective credit to this picture today, its power and influence on public opinion at the time is a fact that history cannot gainsay.

Thus, on the one hand the 1930s produced the menace of Hitler and a resurgent Germany. On the other hand, the 1930s also produced Roosevelt and the New Deal, Stalin and the buildup of the Soviet Union, and finally, in Churchill, the leading opponent of appeasement and, as of 1940, British prime minister. In this way, the conflicts arising out of the Great Depression gave shape to the principal warring states and their leaders in the great collision of the first half of the 1940s, at the end of which nations and peoples were determined that depression and world war must not be allowed to happen again.✠

We've Come Back to the Issues of the 1930s

The Canadian economy was hard hit by the Depression of the 1930s. By 1933, one in five Canadians were on relief, unemployment affected 30 per cent of the labour force, and gross national expenditure was down by 42 per cent from 1929. The plight of Saskatchewan was dramatic: provincial income fell by 90 per cent in just two years. The western provinces were technically bankrupt by 1933.

The world economic Depression of the 1930s never really ended. As John Kenneth Galbraith observed, it

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was superseded by the Second World War. Real GNP expanded by 67 per cent, consumption by 30 per cent, and exports by 80 per cent. Still, during the war Joseph Schumpeter observed in his classic work *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* that capitalism was unlikely to survive. During the Depression it had lost the support of the intellectual class, and without the favour of those who shaped opinion, it was doomed.

Schumpeter was wrong, of course. A reformed capitalism recovered from the 1930s. A generation of

economists and business school graduates came forward to champion the ethic of the entrepreneur (identified by Schumpeter) and reduce the impact of the anticapitalist stance of the great twentieth-century intellectuals such as Sartre, Einstein, Russell and Shaw. Meanwhile, reforms undertaken in the 1930s to deal with the Depression became increasingly significant in the postwar period. These reforms stabilized the western industrial economies in the 1950s and 1960s and reduced the widespread misery of the "dirty thirties" to a distant memory.

It was not until the world inflationary crisis of the late 1970s, and the medicine of tight money that followed, that the spectre of economic hardship loomed again. In the spreading world recession of the 1990s, critical discussion of capitalism as an economic system is about to become as relevant as it was in the 1930s.

Institutional Change

When the Depression struck in 1929, Canada had no central bank to stabilize markets for credit and money, and the Department of Finance was largely an accounting operation that had not envisaged a role for itself in stabilizing the economy and promoting growth in employment. Such information as Canadian officialdom received about conditions and policies abroad was secondhand, given the fledgling status of the Department of External Affairs.

Measures taken by successive governments, based on classical liberalism, proved ineffective. In 1935, influenced by Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States, the Conservative government of R.B. Bennett changed course, bringing in unemployment insurance, a minimum wage and other reforms. But the "Bennett New Deal" was never implemented—the British Privy Council declared it unconstitutional and the Bennett government went down to defeat. It was not until the war years that the Liberal government of Mackenzie King was persuaded of the merits of vigorous government intervention in the economy.

Though the Depression was very much a world event, a world response awaited the postwar era. Canada was represented at the World Monetary and Economic Conference of 1933 in London by R.B. Bennett, who met with President Roosevelt. The Canadian delegation, though, was not looking at playing a leading role of any sort. This was, after all, just two years after the Statute of Westminster confirmed that Canada was to have control over its own foreign relations. Canada did negotiate trade agreements with the U.S. and Britain in the 1930s, and in the process, established the importance of freer trade as a Canadian objective for the future.

The Bank of Canada opened its doors on March 11, 1935—ten days later than planned because the British American Bank Note Company didn't have the required notes ready on time. Institutions move slowly and lateness characterized the inability of official Ottawa to meet the demand of the Depression for new economic policies.

For most of the 1930s, the Department of Finance believed in balancing the government's books through expenditure restraint and tax increases. But according to a history of the department by Robert Bryce, the report of the National Employment Commission in 1938 served to convert thinking so that the 1939 budget "must have been one of the first clearly Keynesian budgets in any country." At the Bank of Canada, however, change was still some way off; it remained on the side of restrictive monetary policy rather than credit expansion and deficit spending.

In the 1930s the Department of Finance, the Bank of Canada and External Affairs began to focus their attention on the widespread economic problems—they could hardly do otherwise. But it was only in the period following the war that they accepted responsibilities for managing the economy. In the long run, the Depression and the experience of running the war economy were what prepared officials in Ottawa for urging governments to have a say in how the capitalist economy would work at home and abroad.

A generation of postwar Canadians believed that the problems identified in the 1930s could be resolved because the lessons learned would serve to prevent a repeat of economic chaos. It was generally accepted that governments had to influence employment creation, provide for basic social services and, most importantly, work together internationally through multilateral institutions to ensure the growth of world trade and the stability of financial markets. Now we have less reason to be sanguine. Postwar society has come to an end and a new generation is arguing the issues of the 1930s again.

The Depression Revisited

By the 1960s, the generation of postwar civil servants could survey their accomplishments with some satisfaction. With the arrival of medicare in 1968, the building of the welfare state was complete. Keynesian orthodoxy ruled the Department of Finance, where Robert Bryce was deputy minister, and the Bank of Canada under Louis Rasminsky. It was well understood that promoting economic growth was a fair objective of government and that government spending was the auxiliary motor of capitalism. Officials in External Affairs, Finance and the Bank of Canada promoted a multilat-

eral system of international trade and payments around GATT and the IMF and development finance through the World Bank. While Canada was still subject to the American view of the world, there was also a growing realization that it should and could have an independent foreign policy.

In the 1970s, however, the second generation of postwar senior mandarins began sowing the seeds for the changes that were to come. Bryce's successor at Finance, Simon Reisman, made it known that creating some unemployment was a necessary result of fighting inflation. The international monetary system based on stable exchange rates against the U.S. dollar gave way to a generalized floating of currencies by 1975. This put more influence over economic policy in the hands of central bankers. To meet the inflationary crisis that emerged in the late 1970s, Bank of Canada Governor Gerald Bouey eventually pushed Canadian interest rates beyond the 20 per cent mark. This tight money policy, initiated by U.S. central banker Paul Volcker and followed by other central bankers, led directly to the world recession of 1981-82.

In the 1980s, neoconservative policies dominated Britain under Margaret Thatcher, the U.S. with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and George Bush in 1988, and Brian Mulroney's Canada. The centrepiece of Canadian neoconservatism was the bilateral free trade deal with the U.S., which established free-market principles in an international treaty limiting the ability of Canadian governments to introduce industrial policies. It followed from a recommendation made in 1985 by the Macdonald Royal Commission, established by the Trudeau government to rethink postwar economic and social policies in the light of inflation and recession. The commission marked a turning away from the use of Keynesian policies. Full employment was redefined as the "natural" rate of unemployment—perhaps as high as 7 per cent. Government spending was singled out as the culprit for inflation. By opening Canadian borders to U.S. competition, Canada could supposedly increase its industrial competitiveness while reducing the need for government intervention in the economy. The myth of free trade was born. The reality has been, if anything, worse than the critics had predicted.

The recession of the early 1990s began, officially, in April 1990. The Conference Board of Canada described it as self-inflicted. Tight money plus free trade did it to us. Almost three years later, with no end in sight, it has put one in ten Canadians on welfare, seen the real rate

of unemployment (including part-time workers seeking full-time jobs and those who dropped out of the labour force, as well as the officially unemployed) exceed 18 per cent, and left one in six Canadian children living in poverty. From 1989 to mid-1992, real Gross Domestic Product declined by \$1,200 per Canadian.

In official Ottawa, those who fought the return of depression have been replaced by those who brought

Since we have come back to the discredited idea that the market economy is self-regulating without recognizing the consequences of doing so, neoconservatives have a lot to answer for.

it on. Derek Burney of External Affairs pushed for Canada-U.S. free trade, which amounted to economic integration and could only reduce Canada's political independence. Canada turned its back on an international agenda to promote growth and autonomous development in the Third World and instead lined up with the U.S. in turning the IMF into a debt collection agency. The Bank of Canada under John Crow surrendered its legislative mandate to promote employment and growth in pursuit of the ludicrous goal of zero inflation. The assault on inflation has produced real interest rates of 7 and 8 per cent that transfer income to the rentier class that Keynes argued needed to be extinguished. The Department of Finance under Stanley Hartt initiated cutbacks in social spending and engineered regressive tax changes that put less money into the hands of people who spend all their income, and more into the hands of the wealthy, thus promoting deflation. Canada was the first major industrialized country to enter the world recession of the 1990s and the policy response was to continue on the same course and hope for a U.S. recovery to carry Canada forward.

The Return of the Sphinx

The idea that the market economy is self-regulating is at the heart of neoconservatism. It is the same idea that incapacitated policymakers in the 1930s. Since we have come back to this discredited notion seemingly without recognizing the consequences of doing so, the champions of neoconservatism have much to answer for. In reality the large business organizations never lost their faith in the free market. Though business was the beneficiary of interventionist state policies, as Alvin Finkel has shown in his history of the 1930s, the rhetoric never really changed. From the 1930s until today, business lobbyists have fought social spending initiatives, arguing for less govern-

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ment in every area except defence spending.

The political power of business is directly related to its ability to influence public opinion and set the agenda for public debate. With the creation of the Business Council on National Issues in 1976, the chief executive officers on Canada's 150 largest corporations were brought together with the heads of business lobby groups in a formidable instrument for developing consensus positions on public policy issues. Business leaders continued to lobby government directly for their favoured policies of deficit reduction, inflation fighting and improving Canada's international competitive position. And they continued to provide the bulk of funding for both the Liberal and Conservative parties, further cementing the alliance between big business and the state. But they were also able to use media control and ownership to "manufacture consent," in Noam Chomsky's phrase, through domination of public opinion.

Political theorist C.B. Macpherson argued that our notion of political democracy is limited to a model derived from free market thinking. Citizens become electoral consumers limited in their choices by the partisan concerns of political parties. What the parties have to offer is constricted by the need to appeal to the lowest common denominator of public opinion: leadership and image. Full participation of citizens in wide-ranging debate and discussion of issues simply cannot be fit into the format of electoral politics. In addition, free market economics produces so many inequalities of wealth, power and influence that it is incompatible with true democracy in the sense of sustained discussion and debate over public matters among equals.

What the capitalist recovery failed to produce after the Depression was a flourishing civil society in which people enjoyed the full freedom, equality and community solidarity promised by democracy. Rising levels of material consumption were not a satisfactory substitute. At best, the Keynesian welfare state allowed for linking the management of capitalism with a sophisticated state bureaucracy, but in the process, people's needs and concerns got squeezed and the space for life in civil society was constrained and limited.

In the 1930s, popular resistance to government policy was considerable. The preachers of the "social gospel," the Canadian "Fabian" intellectuals of the League for Social Reconstruction, and the leaders of grassroots organizations combined to form the CCF, the precursor of today's New Democratic Party. Workers united in trade unions and waged strikes. Despite a campaign of oppression against it, a vigorous Canadian Communist Party agitated for a new social order. This resistance was largely responsible for whatever

reforms were implemented in the 1930s, and it laid the basis for the further changes that would follow during and after the war.

In the 1990s, as we face once again the ugliness of recession, it's time to renew debate around Schumpeter's topics of capitalism, socialism and democracy. In fact, this debate has already started, invigorated by a movement that is today's counterpart of the popular resistance of the 1930s. The democratic debate within and among women's organizations, environmental groups, trade unions, church social justice groups, and other social organizations—a debate that brings together seniors, students, farmers, fishers, artists, visible minority groups and many others—gives us a basis for hope and for action. ♦

Latin America's Response to the Depression

The 1930s opened with a burst of political violence and ruthless repression over great parts of Latin America. The decade ended on a note of hope, as reform movements arose to challenge the rule of tightly knit oligarchies and even gained the political initiative in a few countries. The immediate cause of the political explosion was, of course, the Great Depression. The reason why its impact was nothing short of catastrophic, however, cannot be fully grasped without looking at Latin America's pre-Depression development pattern.

Several decades of rapid economic growth preceded the Depression, but that growth was almost entirely based on the export of primary products.

Liisa North

Since domestic markets remained underdeveloped as dependence on international trade increased, the region was particularly vulnerable to the economic crisis that originated in the great centres of capitalist production. Most Latin Americans, moreover, never benefited from the export expansion, which took place under the aegis of landlord oligarchies that usurped the remaining lands of the peasantry. The most fertile areas were converted to the production of coffee, cotton, meat and sugar for foreign markets.

Meanwhile, U.S.-based corporations took charge of mineral production and repatriated their profits instead of investing them locally.

As Latin America's export proceeds plummeted with the onset of the Depression—their value in 1930–34 was only about half the 1925–29 average—the great estate owners and mining corporations tried to cut their losses by reducing wages and dismissing workers. Governments, almost entirely dependent on export and import taxes, lost their income and cut back public-sector jobs and services.

All over Latin America, labourers turned to agitation and strikes, the unemployed to mass demonstrations, and dispossessed peasants to rebellion. The response of the elites was brutal. In El Salvador, up to 30,000 peasants may have been killed in the *matanza* of 1932; sugar workers were mowed down by the military in the "Trujillo Rebellion" of the same year in Peru. In short, the privileged classes, including most of the middle class, which had prospered during the previous export boom years, dug in to defend their interests. They united in support of despotic regimes—some headed by military figures, others by civilians—which resorted to systematic repression to maintain "public order" in the face of popular protest.

As the first shock waves of the Depression receded, middle-class reformers, backed by fledgling working-class organizations, managed to gain the political initiative in a few of the larger and more economically developed countries. In the small Central American and Caribbean nations, however, reactionary dictatorships consolidated their hold with military force, while in the continent's giant, Brazil, a militant radical coalition was ruthlessly suppressed.

Whether or not the reform movements achieved national power in the 1930s, they did become major players on the Latin American political stage and had a profound impact on public policy well into the 1960s and beyond. These movements included the Socialist Party of Chile (Salvador Allende was among its founding members), the party that still rules Mexico, and the Apra party of Peru whose head occupied the presidency of that country from 1985 to 1990.

These parties traced the causes of the region's crisis to oligarchic rule and excessive dependence on world markets and foreign investors. They advocated state-promoted industrialization to diversify the economy and expand work opportunities; nationalization and regulation of foreign investment to keep a greater share of export profits at home; expansion

of educational opportunities to improve skills and promote social mobility; and political freedoms to guarantee movement towards democracy. Some of them even favoured thoroughgoing agrarian reform.

In the second half of the 1930s, Chile and Mexico began to pursue these policies. Under a Popular Front government that included the Radical, Socialist and Communist parties, Chile increased taxation of foreign-owned copper enterprises and established a state development corporation to direct investment towards industrial diversification. In Mexico, during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas, foreign-owned oil companies were nationalized and agrarian reform benefited a large segment of the peasantry.

During the following decades, similar policies were adopted in most Latin American countries, but their emphasis was the modernization of urban society and the diversification of industry behind protectionist barriers. Agrarian reform, when attempted, remained truncated as a consequence of elite opposition. Meanwhile, the so-called "Indian problem" was left to assimilation—that is, cultural genocide.

The development model that emerged from the 1930s came to be known as Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). Its basic flaw lay in its reliance on increasing the size of the economic pie to improve mass welfare. Counting on the trickle-down effects of growth, most Latin American governments avoided redistributive reforms. Even in Mexico, large estates kept much of the best land and, worse yet, it was those estates rather than peasant agriculture that secured most public credit and infrastructure such as irrigation works. Only in democratic Costa Rica was the power of the large landlord class effectively curbed.

Today, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, together with Washington, spearhead the critique of the ISI model. They inveigh against inflation, inefficient industries and wasteful public bureaucracies that inhibit private initiative. But their recipe for renewed growth does not hold much promise.

The policy package sponsored by the international financial institutions demands export promotion, foreign investment, the dismantling of protectionist barriers and the withdrawal of the state from economic management. Ignoring the continent's historic maldistribution of land and income, it bears a strong resemblance to the oligarchically sponsored export economy model that led Latin America to the catastrophic economic crisis and political repression of the 1930s. Indeed, it seems that the region is being forced to come full circle to repeat the errors of its tragic past instead of advancing towards a democratic future based on social justice. ☐

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Education and Economic Democracy

During the 1930s, a remarkable movement for social and economic reform took hold in Atlantic Canada. Today, more than ever, the basic insights of the Antigonish Movement, as it was called, are applicable and deeply needed.

Fundamentally, the Antigonish Movement was a program to gain control of a percentage of the economy so as to transform it. Through kitchen meetings and public assemblies, groups were organized to form cooperative fish plants, grocery stores and credit unions. Especially in the coal-mining towns, the accent was on the education of labour leaders. It was a "people's school," educating people to own and manage their own businesses.

Most of the organization took place during the Depression years and the benefits were easily understood. Fishermen could sell to the cooperative instead of to the local fish baron. Workers could borrow from the credit union instead of paying usurious interest rates. Housewives could avoid the oppressive "company store" by joining the cooperative store. The Catholic priests who led the movement, Dr. Jimmy Tompkins and Dr. Moses Coady, thought that these examples of a just economic approach would spread to the whole economy as people "learned a lesson." Their new approaches to education were recognized when Harvard University granted Tompkins an honorary doctorate.

This was not an exclusively Catholic movement, nor a clerical movement, nor simply a product of the Antigonish diocese or St. Francis Xavier University. Despite its name, most of the activity took place in Cape Breton and was led by Cape Breton natives. It encompassed Acadian priests such as Fr. G.A. Belcourt of Prince Edward Island, who in the nineteenth century had formed the Farmer's Bank of Rustico for the good of farmers and fishermen. There were United Church leaders such as J.D.N. MacDonald of credit union fame, who only recently died. It involved country pastors throughout the region and many laypeople who led in both the labour movement and the cooperative movement out of a sense of religious commitment. All of them would have agreed with the words of the leader of another cooperative movement, Don José María of Mondragon, Spain: "If the Gospel does not apply to the economy, to what does it apply?"

The most fascinating part of this tradition in the Atlantic is not the institutions it spawned but the thinking behind those institutions. As Dr. Alex Laidlaw, onetime assistant to Dr. Coady and one of the best thinkers to come out of the movement, said much later,

"Behind it is the power of a universal truth." Laidlaw was referring to some shared insights about human reality that have inspired and guided the movement. The Antigonish Movement was summarized in six principles outlined by Harry Johnston in 1944:

- primacy of the person;
- social and economic reform through education;
- change through group action;
- education begins with the economic;
- personal change requires institutional change;
- a full and abundant life for all.

It was Dr. Jimmy Tompkins who crystallized the new ideas on reform that kindled the Antigonish Movement in the 1930s. Tompkins's first interest was education for all people, and he closely followed the growth of the contemporary movement for universal and comprehensive education in Europe and America. He brought these forces together with the movement for economic democracy expressed in the growth of coop-

eratives. Tompkins taught regular university courses at St. Francis Xavier from 1902 on, but in 1922 he was fired as vice-presi-

dent of St. FX. It was then, at the age of fifty-two, that he started working on cooperatives in Canso.

In the booklet *Knowledge for the People* (1921), Tompkins expressed his admiration for the Workers' Educational Association set up in Oxford in 1903, with its great emphasis on economic education: "Educational Extension is one of the terms used to describe numerous ventures to meet the growing demand among the multitudes for knowledge and training." He was inspired by the University of Wisconsin, which devoted one fifth of its budget to extension education, and admired the University of Saskatchewan, where out of 1,481 students in 1920, 999 were in extension programs.

What Tompkins and Coady added to the traditional notion of workers' control over the economy is the broader notion of education. Education begins with the economic, but the goal is development of the total person. Furthermore, since one becomes a person only through the sharing relationship, a person cannot be educated as an individual unit but only as part of the group. The modern American notion of individualistic empowerment as the lever of economic change is something quite different. Today's educational movements of empowerment are designed to enable an individual to compete; the Tompkins strategy was designed to enable persons to cooperate.

At meetings Dr. Tompkins would take a match and break it; then he would take a stack of matches and try to break them but could not. The message was

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always: alone you are weak and can be broken; together you are strong. Authentic education involves group action in the economic institutions of society and this action should have as its result not only the personal growth of the organizers but also the good of the whole community. Leaders in the movement saw both cooperatives and labour unions as institutional frameworks through which education and economic change could be achieved.

The original concept of the Extension movement was that the university was the centre for scientific and general intellectual leadership. Tompkins said that we should be using our best brains to solve our worst problems. He believed the role of the university was essential for any serious social and economic reform and was appalled at the proliferation of small sectarian universities competing with one another in one of the poorest regions of the country. Tompkins eventually obtained the collaboration of the Carnegie Foundation in an attempt to federate the universities in the area. Coady also attacked the educational system as a trap-door that allowed the brightest of the children of poor communities to escape to a richer life while forgetting the people left behind.

Since social and personal values were the driving force behind the reforming organizations of the 1930s, it is not surprising that church people played a leading role. However, the involvement of religion had some negative effects. The clergy's penchant for dogmatism and demand for blind fidelity made it difficult for people to offer constructive criticism. Also, the clergy tended to place great value on moral qualities while undervaluing competence. Perhaps because of their liberal and classical education, many of the clergy regarded business as an inferior activity, something of a necessary evil. Some of the cooperatives' business failures may have been the result of undue clerical influence.

The positive side, however, is that the institutions are still here and they are commercially viable. The potential for new future roles is still strong. Indeed, current discussions at meetings of the major cooperative institutions indicate that there is a growing interest in a restoration of the original motivation.

Originally, institutions were not seen as ends in themselves; rather, they were very much subject to change and evolution. The end purpose was consid-

ered to be development of people and the community. However, these distinctions were frequently forgotten. In his book *Search for Community*, George Melnyk points out that cooperatives go through stages: from movement to institutionalization. The cooperative movement in the Atlantic has followed that pattern. The failure of the cooperative movement to respond to the needs of more recent decades is related to rigid institutionalization and a tendency to downplay the importance of vision and values.

Some of the strongest criticisms have come from within the movement itself. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the St. FX Extension Department in 1978, Alex Laidlaw suggested that the movement was becoming sterile and institutionalized. He advised that there should be less rhetoric and more attention paid to empirical reality. Dr. Laidlaw pointed out that it is a popular misconception that people in the Atlantic flocked to the cooperatives. Even though it has roots going back to the turn of the last century, the Atlantic cooperative movement controls very little of the local economy. Economically, the movement failed—unemployment in Cape Breton in 1978 was about 20 per cent; in 1992 it ranged around 25 or 30 per cent.

Leaders such as Laidlaw have been open in chiding traditional reformers for distortions of the original vision. These distortions include:

- the belief that "everyone can do everything." This kind of populism is a hindrance in a modern tech-

Today's education movements of empowerment are designed to enable an individual to compete; the Tompkins strategy was designed to enable persons to cooperate.

nocratic system and downplays the importance of management.

- the belief that "right spirit can move mountains." It is dangerous to rely on enthusiasm instead of technical organization and strategy.
- the idea that "each group should maintain its autonomy." Hyperautonomy has encouraged limitation of the movement to single-function cooperative entities that have little economic weight. The result is a lot of isolated and independent groups in many communities. They miss out on opportunities for development and growth because they do not want to work together with other community groups out of fear of losing some autonomy.
- antagonism towards business and labour unions.

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Many cooperative organizations began in rural areas and incorporated some of the traditional antipathy of rural people to industrial systems. Frequently leaders offered a blanket criticism of business with inadequate distinctions.

Laidlaw's insights prefigure some of the developments that are currently arising. At a meeting of community activists in Wolfville, N.S., in 1975 he said, "If credit unions and cooperatives are not a distinctly different kind of business, if they are not a reform movement, a social movement oriented to change, then perhaps the poor and those who are left outside the mainstream of our society will have to build a separate movement of their own, maybe with community development corporations, to serve their needs and exert leverage on the power structures."

The question today is whether anything can be salvaged from the impressive reform movements of the thirties or whether they will remain simply occasions for nostalgic speeches. Most of the institutions that flowered in the thirties have cast aside the old visions

and values. As Kropotkin warned, "Cooperatives are fast becoming exercises in collective egotism." But it is not the original ideas that are at fault. It is something like the truths of the Judeo-Christian tradition—the ideas were right but they were never really tried.

Nevertheless, as someone who is attempting to marry the old inspirations with the hard realities of the postindustrial world, I believe that much of value remains. I see three very important lessons from the thirties, incorporated in challenges for renewed leadership by three sectors. The first challenge is to the church, to recognize that change comes only through the promotion of values and moral commitment rather than institutional loyalty and ideologies. The second is to social activists, to realize that moral commitment can be tested only through setting up new value-based commercial institutions that are flexible and adaptable—conferences and seminars are not enough. And finally, universities must take their proper role, for without the best of science and technology, social and economic reform is ephemeral. †

Corporatism and Its Fascist Friends

"Frighteningly irresponsible." This was how the German Jesuit Oswald von Nell-Breuning described the social encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* years after its proclamation by Pope Pius XI on May 15, 1931. These words are remarkable not only for their intensity but also because Nell-Breuning himself wrote the encyclical (or at least most of it) on a secret mission from the pope.

The tragedy of *Quadragesimo Anno*, as Nell-Breuning and other commentators sympathetic to Catholic social thought have observed, lies in its endorsement of corporatism. Corporatism is the political idea that society should be organized into "corporations" or vocational groups of all those associated with a particular field, whether in agriculture, finance or industry. The encyclical thus implicitly endorsed fascism, which relies on a corporative social order. Many Catholic fascist states saw themselves as inspired by *Quadragesimo Anno*. Pius XI even proclaimed, to Nell-Breuning's dismay, that the fascist Austria of Engelbert Dolfuss was a *Quadragesimo Anno* state.

The economic collapse of 1929 and the subsequent hardships of the Depression—including massive unemployment and huge drops in real wages—signalled a crisis in capitalism and led Pius XI to ask Jesuit

Superior General Vladimir Ledochowski to have a social encyclical written by the "German fathers"—the German Jesuit social thinkers, who were known for their moderate corporatism, also called solidarism. Ledochowski confidentially approached Nell-Breuning about the job. Only the pope, the Vatican secretary of state and the Jesuit superior general knew that Nell-Breuning was writing *Quadragesimo Anno*.

Its publication in 1931 marked the fortieth anniversary of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*; hence the title. *Quadragesimo Anno*'s corporatism is aimed at ending class warfare and ensuring that society cares for the poor through corporations. Indeed, *Quadragesimo Anno* introduced the term "social justice" into the official

lexicon of Catholic social teaching. (Nell-Breuning borrowed the term from a nineteenth century neo-Thomist and brother Jesuit,

Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio.) Corporations are meant to solve social ills by pulling together workers and capitalists into associations organized by trade. Control over wages, prices and production would lie with the corporation. All those involved in, say, shipbuilding would have a common interest and support one another instead of engaging in exploitation or violent protest. Such corporations would, it was hoped, nourish sympathy across class lines and thus bring about peace, end poverty and generally promote social justice.

Charles Fernandes

Although feudalism is never mentioned in *Quadragesimo Anno*, the encyclical's corporatism harks back to the guild structure of medieval society—corporations were to be nothing other than contemporary guilds. The idea of a peaceful, ordered, just medieval Catholic society stands as the unacknowledged benchmark by which the modern age is judged. Indeed, corporatism was born with the nineteenth-century attempt to turn back the clock on liberalism and the Enlightenment and return to the traditions of a Catholic Europe.

Catholic theorists disputed the encyclical's meaning. Nell-Breuning, who could not publicly indicate his authorship, proposed a moderate interpretation of *Quadragesimo Anno* in a commentary that was translated into English in 1932. Opposing interpretations came from romantic authoritarian social thinkers, such as the Austrian Othmar Spann, who was influential in many Catholic countries. Thus, *Quadragesimo Anno*'s approval of corporatism was interpreted by numerous Catholic fascist states—Franco's Spain, Pétain's Vichy France, Dollfuss's Austria, Vargas's Brazil, Salazar's Portugal, Tiso's Slovakia—as a practically unqualified blessing of their authoritarian regimes.

Pius XI's endorsement of corporatism was complicated by his ambivalent relationship with Mussolini's Italy. The Lateran Treaty, signed by Pius XI with Mussolini in 1929, represented a significant thaw in what had long been an icy relationship between the papacy and its host country. Possibly as a result of Pius XI's ambiguity about Mussolini, *Quadragesimo Anno* does give some support to Il Duce's reorganization of the Italian social order into corporations. *Quadragesimo Anno*'s desire to see social and economic power restored to a quasi-medieval order based on "corporations" translated into a distrust of political parties, which was a fine justification for a dictatorial regime. Further, *Quadragesimo Anno*'s desire for a Catholic "third way" between capitalism and socialism left it open to being exploited in the rhetoric of those who were neither: the fascists.

In Quebec, corporatism tied neatly into a rising tide of Catholic nationalism. For example, the 1933 "Programme de Restauration Sociale," a document published by the Jesuit-run École Sociale Populaire, aimed at the recovery of tradition, Christian virtue and patriotism. Such nationalists proposed an ideal, ordered society with a homogeneous French Catholic population. This ideal was often expressed in the cult of the *chef* (or leader), and many awaited a Quebec Mussolini or Dollfuss. *Quadragesimo Anno* spurred on the tradi-

tionalist nationalists of the Quebec Catholic Church and middle class.

In Austria, when the Catholic political movement headed by Dollfuss seized power by force of arms in 1933, the new fascist state's constitution was ostensibly based on *Quadragesimo Anno*. In fact, only the sections of *Quadragesimo Anno* dealing with corporatism were publicized in Austria, and the new regime had no compunction in essentially turning control of the economy over to the very capitalist elites that *Quadragesimo Anno* criticized. Thus, the Austrian example validated an extreme, fascist version of corporatism, especially after Pius XI's endorsement.

But Nell-Breuning had no intention of promoting fascist corporatism. While his German social Catholicism saw laissez-faire capitalism as the creator of classes, and thus of class warfare, it had evolved a conciliatory approach to capitalism and democracy. At the same time, it condemned socialism for seeking to exacerbate class warfare instead of ameliorating it. Anti-Catholic persecutions in socialist Mexico, Spain and Russia could only have confirmed the concerns of Nell-Breuning, and of Rome, regarding socialism.

In the late 1960s Nell-Breuning wrote about his responsibility for *Quadragesimo Anno*. Most interestingly, he noted that the only papal insertions made to his final draft came in paragraphs 91–96, those dealing with corporatism. In retrospect, the author regretted that he had simply accepted the changes. The key sections give qualified assent to "a special syndical and corporative organization" which is said to have the advantages of "peaceful collaboration of the classes, repression of socialist organizations and efforts, [and] the moderating influence of a special ministry" (nn. 91, 95). It may be that Pius XI added these sections with particular attention to Italian fascism.

Quadragesimo Anno does note the possible danger of the state coopting corporations "in the place of private initiative" (n. 95). This concern with limiting statism is a reflection of Nell-Breuning's moderate corporatism and is best reflected in *Quadragesimo Anno*'s endorsement of the principle of subsidiarity, which states that larger organizations ought not to take on functions that smaller bodies can perform. But despite the principle of subsidiarity and Pius XI's condemnation of fascism in later encyclicals, the Vatican was not averse to the corporative order *Quadragesimo Anno* proclaimed. Nell-Breuning was later "firmly convinced that he [Pius XI] did not understand it [fascism]." Thus, the papacy did not reject the claims of Catholic fascist states that they were implementing the reconstructed social order called for by *Quadragesimo Anno*.

The writing of *Quadragesimo Anno* raises questions

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for current Christian social criticism. It points to the danger of uncritical acceptance of a regime simply because it is not hostile to the church. It also suggests that the Vatican has, in the past, proposed simplistic

political solutions even when its heart may have appeared to be in the right place. Finally, the authority vested in an encyclical and its authors is shown to be open to abuse of the most pernicious kind. †

Mounier: Catalyst for a Generation

Like his hero, the pre-First World War left-Catholic writer Charles Péguy, Emmanuel Mounier abandoned a French academic career to direct a politically radical review. With the help of a galaxy of talented, rebellious young intellectuals—and the support of a few well-known elders such as Jacques Maritain, Nicholas Berdyaev and Gabriel Marcel—he founded *Esprit* in 1932. The Russian exile Berdyaev's startling essay on the common ideals of Christianity and communism quickly established the review's notoriety and originality. Under Mounier, the review attacked what it called the "established disorder" of western capitalism in the name of humanistic values and, while opposing Stalinism, insisted that humanity needed some of the values defended by socialism to live.

While Mounier and several of his closest comrades were serious Catholics, his review soon attracted brilliant young Protestants, Jews and even nonbelievers who wanted to explore the place of the spiritual dimension in the debates of the 1930s. Mounier led the *Esprit* group in establishing a new philosophical and political stance of its own, personalism—an approach to thinking and living that would fight for the human person against the wounding forces of both capitalism and communism. The personalists described, and lived, a new style of Christian (or humanist) experience, which involved radically transcending materialism and embracing a spirit of poverty, fraternity, simplicity and solidarity with the poor and oppressed.

Personalism was quickly denounced as a "red-Christian" phenomenon by the anti-communist right and as a cryptofascist initiative by Communist intellectuals. But after Mounier led *Esprit* in supporting the radical social reforms proposed by the French Popular Front, in denouncing Franco's Christian crusader stance in the Spanish Civil War, and in opposing the Munich agreements, he became known as one of France's, and the world's, most prominent progressive Catholic intellectuals.

Since the militantly reactionary Action Française had great influence over the French Catholic hierarchy and intelligentsia, even after its condemnation by Rome in the late 1920s, his high-profile role as a young Cath-

olic of the left was courageous, innovative and controversial. Young writers, artists, teachers and priests who were sympathetic to religion or the spiritual dimension of life but had progressive political instincts became committed readers of *Esprit* and members of the various *Esprit* groups established in major European cities, several Latin American countries, and Quebec. Mounier, who set the highest literary and intellectual standards, also showed great personal openness, generosity and warmth at the various *Esprit* lectures, congresses, discussion groups and summer camps.

The personalist movement provided inspiration and ties of friendship for philosophers, historians, theologians, poets and playwrights. The *Esprit* inspiration would strongly mark Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day of the *Catholic Worker* in the United States, and in Canada Gérard Pelletier and Pierre Trudeau, the founders of *Cité Libre*, and the philosopher Charles Taylor. *Esprit* was able to express the spirit of the times in a remarkable way and to precipitate a common effort that effected an important change in the intellectual generation that came into its own in the 1930s.

Mounier's relatively small-circulation review, although erudite and difficult to read, became the most influential French review of the decade. Its personalist language spread and became popularized in a host of other publications, and it would be the only new intellectual review of the interwar period to survive the war. Mounier's personal influence was due less to the power and originality of his writings than to his role as assembler and leader of a movement decisive for an intellectual generation. Although he did author an important philosophical description of the communitarian dimension of personalism, the *Personalist Manifesto* (1936), this tract was in fact a communal effort.

With the rise of Hitler and the Munich crisis, and the mobilization of many of *Esprit's* regulars, Mounier declared that France could survive confrontation with the fascist powers only by submitting to a vigorous, total, internal revolution. *Esprit* held to this line until the defeat and occupation of 1940. After the collapse of the Third Republic and the advent of the Pétain regime, Mounier would play a decisive role in establishing the famous École Nationale des Cadres d'Uriage, in the alpine Château Bayard above Grenoble, to train new young leaders for his country.

—John Hellman

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Dorothy Day Is Finally Being Heard

Dorothy Day (1897–1980), a writer and radical during the 1910s and 1920s, was converted to Catholicism in 1927. With Peter Maurin, she published the first issue of the Catholic Worker newspaper on May 1, 1933, in New York. The Catholic Worker movement they founded now consists of newspapers and houses of hospitality spread throughout the United States and Canada.

We are not fighting against human beings, but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities and cosmic powers of this dark age.... So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace.

—Ephesians 6:12–14

President Bush and the U.S. military that carried out his orders to bomb Iraq made civilians the direct object of their attack in tens of thousands of aerial sorties and missile launchings. From taxis and public buses on highways to farms, markets, offices, hotels, mosques and private homes, civilians were attacked.

—Ramsey Clark,
The Fire This Time:

U.S. War Crimes in the Gulf

The just war theory has a serious flaw; its conditions are unattainable. A war cannot be conducted according to the criteria required for a just war. Consequently, the theory of the "just war" is untenable and needs to be abandoned. Modern warfare with its destructive forces of conventional and nuclear weapons, besides being immoral, is useless and harmful. Regarding the Iraqi war, do we not have to say that the wrongs that wars produce are so grave and dreadful that they can never be justified in the light of conscience?

—*La Civiltà Cattolica*,
July 5, 1991

I think the above citations offer clues to the widening influence of Dorothy Day. One could easily miss the essential point of the phenomenon. It would be a bad beginning merely to compile a list of the many houses of hospitality that have arisen throughout the U.S. and the world. She would be the first to dismiss such a numbers game. There are other signs, events, developments that I think offer a far more significant clue to the source of her impact on the church.

I think of Mr. Bush and his considerable wars, Mr. Reagan and his, Messrs. Ford, Nixon, Carter, John-

son, Kennedy and theirs, Messrs. Truman and Roosevelt and theirs. I speak only of our lifetime, and of foreign adventuring. Native Americans, African Americans, following a longer trail of blood, have a far more terrible story to tell.

My submission is that our warrior presidents have performed a bizarre but nonetheless signal service to the church. They, their weaponry, their duplicity and racism, their waste, their insult to creation, their contempt for the "enemy"—these have nudged awake the comatose chauvinistic church of my youth.

They and their wars also made imperative the choices that governed Dorothy's life, especially after her conversion. In a truly brilliant stroke of insight, she linked the domestic misery of the poor with the war-making and profiteering of the "rotten filthy system," in her salty phrase. And today, if a peacemaking Catholic community persists in raising its voice, we invoke her as our guardian spirit. Dorothy's work goes on.

Her clarity and example have not affected North Americans alone. Close on the heels of the Iraqi slaughter, the Roman magazine of the Jesuits published a recantation of the just war theory (quoted in part above). The authors of the editorial were in effect echoing her long-held convictions.

Late? Better late, one thinks, than never.

The judgement is now on the record. But it will undoubtedly require much expenditure of sweat and tears, many jailings, long years of struggle without apparent issue, before the clear summons of the Gospel gains a hearing in our tormented, demented political life.

And the church? We are still only half or so awake. In the course of Bush's vile triumph in the Iraqi desert, we saw once more the duration and depth of a sleep that much resembles death. Pulpits resounded with calls to rally round the flag. Against all presumption of huge crimes in progress, the just war theory was yet again trotted out. Yellow ribbons encircled sanctuaries and even altars.

And in New York, the chief architects of the crime, General Powell and Defense Secretary Cheney, were

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welcomed to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, to pray for the dead. The spectacle beggared imagining. Serial murderers, and neither change of heart nor accountability exacted of them, stood in the pulpit once honoured by the presence of Dr. Martin Luther King.

In spite of these bizarre divagations, I remain convinced that the spirit of Dorothy Day, the purest, clearest, least equivocal echo of the Gospel in my lifetime, remains alive and well. Ever so slowly and painfully, the church is abandoning its condoning and justifying of war.

Our plight, and our opportunity, remind me of an unfinished statue by Michelangelo. The crude and powerful outline is there; a slave casting off his chains. With Herculean labour and marmoreal slowness, spasm and regress, fear and hope colliding, numbness and self-interest in contention with valiance, we are ridding ourselves of some fifteen centuries of—what shall we name it? Perhaps moral indenture to the warmaking state, alienation from the plain intent of our icon Christ.

Dorothy freed herself, early on, one thinks. Or better: a grace was given her; she was freed.

Many years ago an eminent Jesuit, cognizant of my friendship with Dorothy, declared in effect (and with considerable heat) that "that woman is just fine as long as she works among the poor. But when she starts getting into such complicated questions as war and peace, she's simply out of her depth!"

In my rambunctious soul, I sensed several items below the surface of the sentiments uttered.

Was the Jesuit offended because someone's turf was being invaded? Could it be possible that the turf was his own? (He was a political scientist, and as far as could be discovered held no passionate views with regard to such realities as, say, mass slaughter.)

Was a signal being hoisted, warning of the danger implicit in a mere woman speaking up? (War after all was immemorably a macho enterprise.)

For a lifetime she stood with the victims of war and its domestic fallout, the misery of our mean streets. She spoke up, she went to jail, she held to her vision. She was unassimilable, beyond inducting into the latest spasm of frenzy.

This or that war was declared (or simply initiated, the law of the land going up in smoke); horrid weapons were launched, east and west, on civilian populations. Her lifetime (and ours) became a perpetual wartime;

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hot, cold, smoldering; but always the killing, the intent to kill, the permanent mobilizing of community and creation for killing. Anything, literally any crime, was permissible, any was "just." Cardinals said so; bishops were mum and numb.

She grieved and raged and often wept. And she said her "no."

Was she heard? Did the church respond?

A bishops' letter on the immorality of nuclear weapons? In her lifetime such an event was so far from reality as to seem a mirage.

Priests and nuns on trial, going to jail for acts against the warmaking state and its lawless law? Such things could be accounted only a pipedream.

A decade is past since Dorothy's death. Her legacy is our responsibility. We take to heart those words that were her own—and not her own: "Love your enemies, do good to those who do ill to you."

The reality named resurrection has never seemed clearer. ♦



SOMEWHERE I HAVE NEVER TRAVELLED, GLADLY BEYOND

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclothe me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

—e.e. cummings

Desperate Canadians Turned to Political Messiahs

For eight terrible years, from 1930 to 1938, Canadians were anxious, scared, despondent and desperate. It was only natural that they turned for salvation to their politicians, the leaders who had guided them through the Great War and offered them hope and prosperity in the years that followed. But like many in Canada, the country's political leaders were not only surprised by the economic upheaval that gripped the world after 1929 but also unprepared to adapt their age-old policies and seek new and unconventional solutions. In Ottawa, practical politics then meant balancing the budget and paying off the huge debt incurred by the Canadian National Railways. It did not mean assuming more responsibility for the unemployed, which under the British North America Act fell into the jurisdiction of the provinces and municipalities.

Curiously, Canadians first turned to R.B. Bennett, an arrogant and dour wealthy corporate lawyer, who had become leader of the Conservative Party in 1927. During the federal election campaign of 1930, which he ultimately won, Bennett told voters that he could save them from the imminent economic disaster. Singlehandedly R.B. Bennett was going to end the Depression. He intended to solve the crisis with protective tariffs and "blast" his way into world markets. Such traditional policies, however, did not work and Bennett grew frustrated, bitter and very unpopular. His futile attempt in 1934 to implement his "New Deal" reforms—including minimum wage laws and unemployment insurance—was too late. William Lyon Mackenzie King and the Liberals were returned to power in the election of 1935, which marked the start of twenty-two years of Liberal rule.

It was the same story across the country. The despair of the Depression demanded change, and provincial governments, the majority of which were Conservative, were deemed expendable. The only provincial administration to survive from 1930 to the end of the decade was John Bracken's Progressive government in Manitoba, and Bracken was forced to form a coalition with the Liberals. Psychologically defeated, people wanted a saviour, not only to provide new economic answers but more significantly to reassure them that they were not to blame for their hardships and troubles. In short, Canadians were searching for political messiahs who could give them hope for the future.

Around the world, the response was similar. The

1930s witnessed the rise of leaders as different as Hitler and Mussolini in Europe, Franklin Roosevelt in the United States, and Duff Pattullo, Mitchell Hepburn, William Aberhart and Maurice Duplessis in Canada. Their ideologies and policies may have spanned the political spectrum, but they possessed in common that special and difficult-to-define trait called charisma, first identified by the German sociologist Max Weber: the perception that some "higher power" had bestowed on them a unique and "inimitable quality." Politicians of extraordinary personality and ego, they offered their

followers deliverance and scapegoats, dazzling crowds with oratory and promises for a better future. Using powerful words and

religious images, they appealed for, and demanded, a new moral order.

As "men of the people," they railed against the enemies, real and imagined, of their downtrodden flock: business establishments, elites, "special interests," bankers, Jews and Communists. They promised redistribution of wealth and alleviation of debt. Salvation, however, had a heavy price. With few exceptions, once in power these populists showed their true colours as authoritarian demagogues who were determined to do whatever it took, including trampling civil liberties, to achieve their personal destinies.

Socialism was one viable solution in Canada, yet the birth of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in Regina in 1933 with its stated intention "to eradicate capitalism" proved too much for the vast majority of middle-class Canadians fearful of anything resembling Communism. Despite the credibility of its soft-spoken leader, Rev. J.S. Woodsworth, the CCF was initially generally regarded with disdain and perceived as no less subversive than the "Red Menace." One Catholic journal in Saskatchewan, where the CCF was later to have its greatest electoral success, described the party's platform as "inspired by the old Jew Karl Marx, the father and author of the Communist Manifesto."

Nevertheless, the CCF's demands for reform and social justice could not be entirely ignored. In British Columbia, the stylish sixty-year old leader of the provincial Liberal Party, Duff Pattullo, rode to power in November 1933 with a promise of "Work and Wages." Pattullo's vision of "socialized capitalism," in which the state would deal more effectively with social and economic development, was inspired by the example of President Roosevelt's New Deal. Unlike

Allan Levine

FDR, however, Pattullo did not have the money or resources to implement innovative unemployment relief and social programs, and neither R.B. Bennett nor Mackenzie King was anxious to surrender control of tax revenues for such schemes. His grand reforms



William Aberhart

were put on hold. Impatient, Pattullo pushed through a "Special Powers Act" in 1934 that effectively made the premier a dictator. Though the act was never invoked, Pattullo's reputation as an authoritarian leader, perhaps not entirely deserved, was confirmed.

Another Liberal with a mind of his own was the brash and erratic Mitchell Hepburn. Only the desperation of the Depression could have enabled such an inconsistent and impulsive personality (not to mention, an alcoholic and a notorious womanizer) to gain power in Ontario. Hepburn talked like a left-wing liberal reformer and attracted wide support. A brilliant campaigner, he was never too specific about how he planned to solve the Depression; he just said he could do it. And in 1934, the vast majority of Ontarians believed and trusted him. As even Mackenzie King (the two Liberal leaders detested each other) was later forced to concede, "People believe [Hepburn] is honest; know he is fearless and regard him as efficient in Administration. His manner, evidently, as well, catches the man on the street. It is the 'fellows' that count & he is one of them in language and spirit."

Hepburn managed to institute a few reforms, but the real economic problems of the day were beyond his capacity and control. In the end, he was not the radical or the social reformer he had pretended to be. Indeed, when it counted, as it did in 1937 during the General Motors strike in Oshawa, the man who had identified himself with the "little fellow," the unemployed workman and the struggling farmer, turned out to be nothing but an advocate for big business.

Across the country in Alberta, politics was being transformed with equal drama by William Aberhart, whom popular historian Pierre Berton has described as "the most electrifying political figure the country has ever produced." On August 22, 1935, Aberhart and his newly formed Social Credit Party defeated the reigning United Farmers of Alberta and assumed control of the province, the beginning of thirty-six straight years of Social Credit rule. A teacher by training, Aberhart was the prime example of the 1930s political prophet and his victory was nothing less than sensational. Revered by his loyal followers as a "Man of God," he mesmerized an entire province with his promises for a glorious and prosperous future.

Struggling with debt and unemployment, dejected Albertans needed to be rescued. They needed to be reassured that the harsh economic times were not of their making but the fault of those who had victimized them in the past, eastern Canadian bankers and international financiers—the "Fifty Big Shots" as Aberhart labelled them. Using radio like no other Canadian politician before or since to spread his peculiar Social Credit gospel, Aberhart convinced Albertans that his unorthodox plan for restructuring the economy (developed by the British engineer Major C.H. Douglas in the 1920s) was their only answer. He explained to them why there was "poverty in the midst of plenty," to quote a popular Social Credit slogan, and dangled before them dividends of \$25 a month and "just" prices.

Psychologically, this mixture of economics, religious fervour and political passion was irresistible. But the federal government prevented Aberhart from implementing his Social Credit platform by disallowing every piece of financial legislation he passed. By the end of the decade, the Social Credit government's economic policies were not much different from those of any Conservative administration.

In office, Aberhart initially proved to be a tyrant. When journalists criticized him, he tried to censor them; when a former cabinet minister threatened to bring out a book exposing him as a fraud, he blackmailed the publisher to halt publication; and when he tired of debates in the Legislature he stopped answering the opposition's questions, choosing instead to speak to the people directly on the radio. None of this made a difference to his army of supporters. Social Credit, observes historian Blair Neatby, "remained an ideal, a faith, an abstraction," and William Aberhart was still "the champion" who defended Alberta's interests against eastern domination.

Finally, in Quebec there was the political phenomenon of Maurice Duplessis, as much a product of the Depression as Hepburn and Aberhart but even more dishonest about his intentions. During the 1935 Quebec election campaign, Duplessis, the leader of the provincial Conservatives, who had been out of office since 1897, united with a group of dissident left-leaning nationalist Liberals led by Paul Gouin to form a new party called the Union Nationale. Promising to end the corruption practised by a generation of Liberal administrations, reform capitalism and regulate the "trusts" and English bankers who controlled the province, Duplessis came close to defeating the Liberals. In a second election held in August 1936, the

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Union Nationale won a major victory.

Gouin had left the coalition over a disagreement with the outspoken Duplessis, but his Liberal supporters believed that the new premier would indeed institute the economic reforms he had pledged himself to. They were wrong. Duplessis was as partisan as the Liberals he replaced and had no intention of bothering capitalists with state regulations. Instead, using his infamous "Padlock law," he turned the full force of the government and the police on any individual, group or movement he suspected of having socialist sympathies. In a province where a fascist leader like Adrien Arcand was attracting a considerable following, where support in the Spanish Civil War was on the side of the right and General Franco, and where antisemitism was regarded as an acceptable credo, Duplessis's dictatorial actions met with little opposition. Except for a defeat in the election of 1939, mainly due to the intervention of federal

Liberals, Duplessis's hold on Quebec remained firm until his death in 1959.

Today, as the country struggles with economic problems similar to those faced by Canadians in the thirties, resentment and cynicism against elected politicians have never been higher. (A recent poll showed that the public regard politicians with less respect than car dealers and rock musicians.) Canadians are demanding change and the times are ripe again for the coming of a new political prophet. The popularity of such self-declared saviours as the nationalist Bloc Québécois leader Lucien Bouchard and the Reform Party's Preston Manning is all too familiar. But before voters flock in large numbers to these and other political messiahs, a word of caution. If there is one lesson to be learned from the political history of the 1930s, it is that those who proclaim themselves to be the tribunes of the people may turn out to be something very different indeed. ♦

On the Prairies, You Had to Learn to Peel a Nickel

The word my parents used to describe the task of rearing a family during the 1930s was *tough*. "Things were really tough"; "you had to learn to peel a nickel"; "you had to make your own fun"; "you had to help one another." There was a sense of everyone being in the same boat struggling against unknown hostile forces. Some endured more hardship than others but no one got through the thirties unscathed.

We grew up hearing Depression survival stories and like all war stories they contained sadness, gratitude, pride, relief and humour. Now the ranks of those who were building careers and starting families in the thirties are thinning. My mother, Deane Doody, just turned eighty-five. Soon her great-grandchildren will be old enough to enjoy the story of how in November 1929 she married a well-to-do up-and-comer whose very next paycheque was cut in half without notice. "And that was just the start of it!"

After a few more cuts, my father's company consolidated its western division and transferred him, but not his pregnant wife, to Vancouver. My mother moved back to her parents' home. "Lots of people did that in those days," she claims. Indeed, my grandparents' spacious house soon sheltered two returned daughters with families as well as a bachelor son. Everyone moved over a little more and my grandmother began to take in roomers. Lots of people did

that too. Grandma's workload was eased when Sophie knocked on the door one day and stayed for fifteen years. She had come in from the farm with no job and no money and went from door to door offering to work for room and board. Yes, lots of people did that too.

C. Rhodes Smith, who went on to a distinguished career as a cabinet minister and judge in Manitoba, had already been practising law in Winnipeg for eight years when the stock market crashed in October 1929. "Thousands of people were out of work immediately and everyone who had investments was adversely affected," he remembers. "A number of our [Winnipeg's] businesses suffered—a number of people lost jobs. Banks and real estate businesses collapsed. Real estate was the biggest business in Winnipeg then except for the

railroads—and they laid off a lot of people too. Enrollment at universities was way down. The first year I taught law in 1925 there were twenty-five first-year students. By the mid-thirties it was down to twelve. One year it was eight."

In 1935, Smith was elected to Winnipeg city council: "That year there were 8,300 families on relief and 5,000 single men. And that was after a lot had gone east or west." The population of Winnipeg at the time was 221,242. Smith was made chair of a special commission to examine the problems of single men on relief because many complaints had been received

Gail Burns

about their poor living conditions: "You should have seen the places they lived in. Conditions were awful. I saw bedbugs crawling up the walls. Hotel owners divided the rooms—maybe three out of one, just room for a single bed and a washstand. Single men ate in soup kitchens. They fed 4,000 every day. One

day there was a disturbance. A man in the line broke open a loaf of bread and the interior of the loaves was green. They were being fed moldy food."

Many people converted their homes to rooming houses and predictably some became rundown and overcrowded: "I met one fellow living in a basement

The Depression Drove Norman Bethune

Heroes make us uneasy. Twentieth-century cults of personality have cured us of the exaltation of individuals. Yet what is one to do when the personality of an individual stands out from the surrounding dreariness of life, when one person rises above the crowd and leaves his or her mark on the times? What circumstances turn a strong personality into a hero and a myth? What, in the case of Norman Bethune, constituted the transition from the rebel doctor to the committed revolutionary?

Bethune's role in setting up a blood transfusion unit during the Spanish Civil War and his participation in Mao Zedong's Eighth Army have been well documented; his Montreal years and the events that led to his political commitment remain less well known. Yet these eight years, 1928 to 1936, witnessed his personal transformation just as the country was turning from the roaring twenties to the grumbling thirties.

Bethune arrived in Montreal at thirty-eight, having just released himself from the Trudeau Sanatorium in Saranac Lake, N.Y., where he was treated for tuberculosis for two years. Eager to specialize in thoracic surgery, he joined Dr. Edward Archibald at the Royal Victoria Hospital from 1928 to 1932. During these years, he earned himself a reputation for nonconformity, devotion to his patients, and the speed with which he operated. His bold surgical practice was con-

troversial and earned him accusations of recklessness, which led to his departure. In early 1933 he was appointed chief of pulmonary surgery and bronchoscopy at the Hôpital du Sacré-Coeur, in a Montreal suburb, and he held this position until his resignation in 1936.

By then Montreal was in the depths of the Depression. Bethune's ethnic background, affiliation with the Royal Victoria and residence in the western part of the city identified him as a member of the Anglo-Saxon elite, but at Sacré-Coeur, a Catholic Francophone hospital, he was in daily contact with people who were experiencing serious physical and economic hardship. Even before the crash, the Montreal working class was plagued with irregular work, employment in labour-intensive low-wage sectors, and a high rate of unemployment. Soon, close to a third of the labour force was unemployed. By 1934, 125,000 people out of a population of 819,000 were on welfare.

Montreal was one of the unhealthiest cities for workers to live in. Infant mortality was above 100 per thousand live births, and much higher in working-class districts in the eastern part of the city and along the Lachine Canal. The incidence of tuberculosis in Montreal was three times as high as in Toronto. Although the rate had been dropping, it rose again in the mid-thirties. Late diagnosis and a shortage of beds, partly due to budgetary restraints, worsened the sit-

uation. In a city where one quarter of households had less than one room per person and where 18,000 people lived in what the authorities defined as slums, the risk of contagion was always high. One would have had to be totally insensitive to ignore this reality.

Until 1935, the picture we have of Bethune is that of a compassionate, gifted doctor, impatient, creative (could he not paint frescos and invent surgical instruments?), endowed with a very large ego. An iconoclast who fancied shocking people; an epicurean who liked to eat and drink well; in short, a "bohemian" closer to the world of artists and poets than to that of the medical profession. A rebel, surely, but not a revolutionary. But all that would soon change.

In August 1935, Bethune attended the International Physiological Congress in Leningrad and Moscow. This trip proved a turning point in his life. Back in Canada, he joined a Marxist study group, started reading the great Marxist texts, and made new friends among militants, especially artists on the left. At the time, when the Depression seemed to herald the collapse of capitalism, communism was proposing an alternative to a society based on profit and competition. The appeal of the Marxist analysis for anyone seriously concerned

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on a cot with springs but no mattress—no bedclothes. There were lots like that.” In the early years of the Depression, “The Salvation Army was the closest thing to relief. But very soon, the Salvation Army couldn’t handle it, the city couldn’t and the province couldn’t.” People drifted—from farms into the cities,

from east to west or west to east: “People came to the cities to get jobs. If they stayed for a year they got unemployment relief. Most wanted to work—a great many gave up in despair.”

If conditions were bad in Manitoba, they were worse in Saskatchewan, with its farm-based economy

to Become an Actor on the World Stage

with social justice and economic democracy cannot be underestimated. Bethune chose the most radical trend and joined the Communist Party of Canada in November 1935. The party was then embarking on its United Front period, calling on a broad coalition to oppose fascism. It was a most propitious time to join.

Bethune was not sectarian, and at the urging of a CCF member from the Verdun YMCA he opened a clinic for the unemployed in Pointe-St-Charles. He became increasingly interested in health care and soon presented to his friends a model city for tuberculosis patients, complete with clinics, therapy, recreation and rehabilitation centres. In a period of financial restraint, such a utopian project did not gather much support.

Starting in the fall of 1935, Bethune lived in a state of high effervescence. He presented papers at professional conferences, particularly on health care in the Soviet Union; attended party meetings; set up art classes for children with his artist friends Fritz Brandtner and Marion Scott; painted and wrote poetry; kept up his clinic for the unemployed; and started meeting with other health professionals to study health care systems in various countries. What began as a study group composed of doctors, nurses, social workers and a dentist soon turned to a concrete project: to develop a blueprint for socialized medicine in Quebec and present it to doctors, politicians and



candidates in the upcoming provincial election of August 1936.

What was known until then as the Bethune Group had to find a name. Not to frighten people, the title avoided the word socialized or socialist and settled for “the Montreal Group for the Security of the People’s Health,” with Norman Bethune as secretary. State responsibility in social welfare was then very limited. Institutions could get government subsidies for their destitute patients; state-supported public health units took care of vaccination, contagious diseases and sanitation; and just two months before the election the city of Montreal set up a medical relief committee for the unemployed.

The Montreal Group proposed a variety of medical plans. One was municipal medicine accessible to everyone, with an expansion of the public health units to include doctors, nurses and dentists on salary working on preventing and curing diseases. Compulsory health insurance constituted a second plan,

and voluntary health and hospital insurance was a third. A fourth plan was to cover only the unemployed for the whole province. Although the press commented favourably, the plans were ignored by politicians, and after the election of Maurice Duplessis’s Union Nationale government, an increasingly disillusioned Bethune became more concerned with the march of fascism in Spain.

The chaos of the Depression, the ideal of collective care and the rise of fascism galvanized Norman Bethune and propelled him onto the world stage, from the Canadian Blood Transfusion Unit in Spain with Hazen Sise in 1936–37 to the International Peace Hospital on the Shansi border behind the Japanese lines in 1938–39 where, having cut himself with his scalpel, he died of blood poisoning for lack of proper medication.

While the Depression left many bewildered, it drove Bethune to action. As the flamboyant Montreal surgeon, the ambulance driver on the Guadalajara Front, or the emaciated doctor with his makeshift operating table in the midst of a guerrilla army, Bethune was always characterized by a passionate temper, a sense of justice, and the capacity to engage in action for a collective cause. Unlike W.H. Auden’s disillusioned drinker, “uncertain and afraid,” Bethune was assured and unafraid, and did not see “the clever hopes expire of a low dishonest decade.” ♦

—Andrée Lévesque

faced with sagging world wheat prices and prolonged drought. "My wife and I took our boys west one summer—twenty-five miles into Saskatchewan we saw empty fields, miles and miles of nothing," Smith recalls. "Finally we saw a green field in the distance. It was a solid mass of Russian thistle. That's what happens when a farm's deserted. There was no sign of crops until we got to northern Alberta."

Mildred Hetlelid, who taught in Saskatchewan then, remembers her grade 11 and 12 boys riding the rails for the summer: "There was a rush east to get work, because there were no crops and so there was no work. Some of them had terrible experiences. These young kids had never been away from home before." She remembers Saskatchewan farmers abandoning their homes and walking north or east with just the baby buggy and the clothes on their backs.



THE CANADIAN AUTHORS MEET

Expansive puppets percolate self-unction
Beneath a portrait of the Prince of Wales.
Miss Crotchet's muse has somehow failed to function,
Yet she's a poetess. Beaming, she sails

From group to chattering group, with such a dear
Victorian saintliness, as is her fashion,
Greeting the other unknowns with a cheer—
Virgins of sixty who still write of passion.

The air is heavy with Canadian topics,
And Carman, Lampman, Roberts, Campbell, Scott,
Are measured for their faith and philanthropics,
Their zeal for God and King, their earnest thought.

The cakes are sweet, but sweeter is the feeling
That one is mixing with the *literati*;
It warms the old, and melts the most congealing.
Really, it is a most delightful party.

Shall we go round the mulberry bush, or shall
We gather at the river, or shall we
Appoint a poet laureate this Fall,
Or shall we have another cup of tea?

O Canada, O Canada, Oh, can
A day go by without new authors springing
To paint the native lily, and to plan
More ways to set the selfsame welkin ringing?

—F.R. Scott

From *The Collected Poems of F.R. Scott*. Used by permission of the Canadian Publishers, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto.

Hetlelid recalls that wells dried up and cattle died. When she began her teaching career at Lafleche, Saskatchewan, in 1926, her starting salary was \$1,200, "pretty good money then." However, "In 1929, I was getting \$1,000. And at that time I was principal of a two-room school and had three teachers under me." To keep her expenses down, Hetlelid lived with farm families who boarded teachers as a way of working their taxes. "If the farmer's taxes were paid up at the end of six weeks, I moved on," she says. "I did that for three years. It helped them, they got their taxes paid, and it helped me."

When she later married another teacher, their combined annual salary, as principal and vice-principal, was \$1,700. "But we never got paid," she laughs. "We might get \$25 a month. We'd get a note saying they owed it to us." The *they* in this instance was the local school board. The province and municipalities had no money because the tax base was depleted. No one had money—not farmers, not teachers, not shopkeepers, not municipalities. "Nobody knew how to deal with a depression," Hetlelid says.

Maybe, but Hetlelid and her ilk devised some very clever ways of dealing with a cashless economy. The Hetlelids moved to Congress, Saskatchewan, and Mildred stopped teaching. A niece who was also a teacher lived with them. "We didn't get any money and there were three of us," Hetlelid says. "So the storekeeper was a bachelor and he boarded with us for dinner and supper. And I did his washing and ironing. Then I took the money he paid us back to him to buy more groceries. And I don't know what we'd have done if we hadn't had this extra money." By paying her father's property taxes, Hetlelid found another way to generate cash: "Because the municipality owed me money, I paid his taxes with my notes, and he gave me the cash. You had to do these things." This work for promissory notes continued until the end of the decade—after Saskatchewan produced a couple of successful crops and after Gordon Hetlelid had given up teaching. "They wrote and asked us, 'Will you take 25 per cent off?' By that time we'd had ten no-crop years and so we took it. No, it wasn't fair, but there was no money around."

But Hetlelid insists that "we had a lot of fun in those years too." Some of that fun was found in community relief projects: "I was on the committee distributing a carload of clothes that had come from eastern Canada. And one lady had sent a sample-size box of Lux soapflakes and a note explaining how to use it. We also got high-heeled slippers and a long

Gail Burns is a Winnipeg writer and former associate editor of *Compass*.

dress with leg-of-mutton sleeves. We kept them for our home talent plays." Carloads of fruit and vegetables were put to good use, but prairie people didn't know quite what to do with a boxcar full of salt cod: "One fellow took his slab of salted codfish, printed his name on it and put it on his gate."

She says, "The only thing I couldn't live through again was the dust." Hetlelid describes waking up each morning to clear weather. Then it would cloud over as though it might rain. But it was always another dust storm: "And your house would just be littered with the finest dust—through closed windows and doors. If you had food out it would be covered. It was in your hair, in your skin, your eyes and mouth. I just couldn't go through it again. It's a nightmare to me."

For Mildred Hetlelid it was the sweet smell of rain and two good crop years that signalled the end of bad times. Rhodes Smith points out that misery was much alleviated once relief systems were in place. Inevitably, however, the end of the Depression is connected with the launching of the Second World War. "By 1941, there was work and good money for everyone," says Smith. "I don't think it takes a war, but that's what happened then."

The comparison of the present sluggish economy with the dirty thirties just doesn't wash with those who survived these years. Smith is categorical: "It's nothing like as bad. The unemployed are not walking the streets. No marches—like the freight train from the west. People climbed on at every stop intent on marching on Ottawa. When they reached Regina they were stopped by the Mounted Police. There were 2,000. How many thousands more would have joined before they reached Ottawa?" He maintains that social programs have made a difference: "Unemployment Insurance has helped a great deal. The vast majority use it well. They've earned it. There shouldn't be resentment."

While most would not want Canada to abandon its social safety net, there is a nagging worry that society is perhaps getting softer. As Hetlelid puts it, "There's something very fine about surmounting these difficulties. You get a feeling of accomplishment that some people never get." But she believes that if today's young people had to make the sacrifices and adjustments that were required of people during the Depression, they would rise to the challenge. ♦

Many Women Had No Choice but Domestic Work

Most accounts of the Depression emphasize unemployment, the dole and relief programs, citing such figures as the 1932–33 unemployment rate of 30 per cent. What they rarely note is that in the same decade employment in one sector, the domestic servant economy, was 72 per cent larger than in 1921 and kept rising until 1941.¹ The statistics may actually understate the number of women serving as cooks, maids, laundresses and kitchen help, since women who worked in the homes of others often went undocumented in official figures.

A west-coast resident who moved to Montreal in 1933, amazed at the cheap rate for domestic staff, likened it to slavery: "Perfectly ridiculous, isn't it? Buying a human being, an excellent chef, for \$10 a week, or a small maid for 50 cents a day."² The history of domestic service in Canada in the 1930s reveals both the desperate situation of the hired women and the concurrent affluence of a comfortable few.

Depression conditions in fact benefited groups that were secure, such as government officials, civil servants and some business owners. As one observer noted,

"Ironically, for those who managed to keep their jobs in the face of the Depression, life was better relatively than it had been before the crash. Many families had a 'girl'—'maid' was too elegant a term—to assist the housewife in her chores. Those single girls were prepared to perform household labour in exchange for little more than room and board." Elegant or not, having a maid enhanced one's social status, for "a lady did not do all her own work." Technological innovation in the form of home appliances did not replace servants in such a lifestyle; instead, expectations of a bigger, better and cleaner home actually increased the demand for domestic help.

Tracy Wynne

Middle-class periodicals ran articles and ads that appealed to this consumer class. In 1932, for example, *Chatelaine* ran a four-part series calling for "the professionalization of domestic service." Articles discussed how to run domestic servants as if you were running a business and how to establish good relations between servant and mistress. A new car ad in a 1932 *Maclean's* carried the headline "As simple as summoning your maid."³ Buying a car and hiring a domestic servant were both effective ways of demon-

strating your consuming power.

Whether the "help" lived in or just around the corner, plenty of it was available. A woman in southwestern Ontario wrote, "We lived in a nice district in London and our city wasn't hit all that hard. In fact it was quite a good time for us because everything was

so low in price, food, things for the house and help, yes, you could get a good maid for \$5.00 a month, some girl from Saskatchewan or the Maritimes where they were hit hard."⁴

The view from the other side was expressed by one "daughter of Martha," Florence Worthington, in a

Grey Owl's Masquerade for Conservation

The tall, hawk-faced man stood proudly before his audience of nearly 3,000 in Toronto's Massey Hall on March 26, 1938, the final stop in a six-month lecture tour of Britain, Canada and the United States. Since October 1937 he had addressed more than a quarter of a million people, including the Royal Family in a command performance at Buckingham Palace. Grey Owl, the "Modern Hiawatha," spoke of the north, of its forests and animals, and of his people, the North American Indians.

Through his four books, his lectures and his half-dozen films with the beaver, Grey Owl had become one of the best known Canadians of the day. When he spoke in Toronto in 1936, the event's organizers estimated that 800 people would attend his talk in the King Edward Hotel's Crystal Ballroom. Instead 1,700 crowded in, and another 500 had to be turned away.

Grey Owl published his first book, *Men of the Last Frontier*, a



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collection of tales in honour of the life of the "wilderness man," in 1931. *Pilgrims of the Wild*, which appeared three years later, became a runaway bestseller. In *Pilgrims* he told of his transformation from trapper to conservationist. He completed it and his subsequent two books, *The Adventures of Sajo and Her Beaver People* (1935) and *Tales of an Empty Cabin* (1936) at Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan, where he looked after a beaver conservation program. He lived at Beaver Lodge, a small cabin at best six by seven metres in extent. The beaver had built their lodge outside, and partially inside, his home, appropriating a quarter of his living space.

Who was Grey Owl? In *The Canadian Who's Who* of 1936-37, Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, one of Canada's most distinguished literary figures, obtained and printed Grey Owl's full story. The entry reads: "Born encampment, State of Sonora, Mexico; son of George, a native of Scotland, and Kathrine (Cochise) Belaney; a half-breed Apache Indian...adopted as blood-brother by Ojibway tribe, 1920...speaks Ojibway but has forgotten Apache."

Grey Owl gave one of the best talks of his career that evening at Massey Hall. The overriding theme throughout his lectures was simple: "Remember you belong to Nature, not it to you." For more than six months he had devoted all of his physical and emo-

tional strength to his crusade for conservation. He returned to Beaver Lodge in early April 1938, totally exhausted and run down. Only three days later he had to be rushed to hospital, and he died in Prince Albert on April 13. Then came the bombshell.

Swift detective work on both sides of the Atlantic in the week after his death allowed reporters to discover Grey Owl's real identity. Canada's most popular Indian was really one Archie Belaney, born and raised in Hastings, England, who had left home in 1906 at the age of seventeen to live in northern Canada. Belaney had so admired the Indians for their ability to live in the wilderness that he created a new identity for himself in Canada as a North American Indian. Although taken by surprise, few Canadian newspapers condemned him for his masquerade. They recognized his attainments as a writer and a spokesperson for conservation.

A new generation of readers discovered his books in the 1960s and 1970s when the environment became a popular concern. In 1988 Edwin and Margery Wilder, an American couple, became so influenced by Grey Owl's conservationist philosophy that they donated \$750,000 to ensure the preservation of Beaver Lodge and the wilderness canoe routes in Prince Albert National Park. ♦

—Donald B. Smith

letter to the *Toronto Mail and Empire*. "My day's work begins at six in the morning and ends at any time before twelve at night. All day long I serve and scrub and bake and then wash dishes, polish silver, press clothes until well into the night. I wear a frilly head band that seems like a lead weight on my throbbing temples. My shoes are felt soled and light as gossamer but at times they feel like cast iron. I say 'Yes sir,' and 'Yes madame' with a pleasant smile, when I feel like screaming and telling the whole shooting match to go to hades."⁵

Domestic service has always been a socially acceptable type of paid employment for women. Around the turn of the century, however, Canadian women became less willing to take up the call for service, regarding it as modern-day slavery to be endured only in dire circumstances. Thus a recruitment campaign was mounted in the British Isles and then in Continental Europe. The selling points in the immigrant market for a career in domestic service in Canada included steady employment, room and board, and the privilege of adopting Canadian customs and the English language.

Federal and provincial governments undertook the challenge of luring women into domestic service in Canada with reduced ocean passage rates, personal recruiting in Britain and Europe, and an escort service into Canada for all unaccompanied women. Both levels of government also increased funding for recruitment and Ottawa developed a women's division of the Department of Immigration. One of the impediments for women who might want to come to Canada was the cost of travel. The Department of Immigration and the Colonization Board of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways negotiated a railway agreement to open the door to European domestics—so much so that by 1931, 25 per cent of all immigrant domestics were from continental Europe.

However, the immigrant domestic experiment almost ended in the 1930s when the governments announced that the local supply more than equalled the demand. Thousands of Canadian women, laid off from industrial or clerical jobs, had returned to dominate the domestic service economy. Given the lack of employment opportunities in factories or shops, even higher-level women workers turned to domestic service, distasteful as it might be, as their only means of survival. An unemployed woman executive signing herself only as "One of Them" was advised at the local YWCA employment office to take a domestic posi-

tion, and she did.⁶ For women with unemployed husbands, the meagre pay from domestic service made an important difference in many a family's life and material wellbeing.

Living conditions and treatment by employers varied, but there was generally cause for complaint. Since the majority of domestics worked in one-servant households, they felt extremely isolated both within the household and in the community at large. They acutely felt the injustices of ghettoization: low wages, long hours, lack of privacy, and demeaning social status.

These women had no vocational or political organization to speak for them. As a class without power, they had no political influence and posed no political threat; to this extent they were expendable, invisible and unheard. Domestic service actually propped up the economy, Veronica Strong-Boag argues, because it "operated as the unemployment insurance for the poor in the 1930s."⁷ The writings of those few domestics who recorded their hardships and injustices represented a challenge to governments' response to the Depression, but society didn't take any notice. ♦



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¹Canadian census figures for the female labour force quoted in John H. Thompson and Allen Seager, eds., *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), Table XIb, give the following numbers for the Personal Service occupational group: 1921: 132,000; 1931: 227,000 (72 per cent more than in 1921); 1941: 288,000 (27 per cent more than in 1931).

²Barry Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years: 1929-1939* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1973), p. 6.

³Constance Templeton, *Chatelaine*, December 1932, pp. 17, 54; January 1933, pp. 12, 49; March 1933, pp. 12, 13, 68; and July 1933, pp. 17, 49; *Maclean's*, April 15, 1932, p. 2.

⁴Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 146.

⁵The letter, dated January 14, 1934, appears in J. Acton, P. Goldsmith and B. Shepard, *Women at Work: Ontario 1850-1930* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), p. 87. Martha, in Lk 11:38, did the serving when Christ came to visit.

⁶"The Jobless White-Collar Woman," *Maclean's*, May 1932, pp. 16, 45-46.

⁷Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1936* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1988), p. 55.

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Movies Rarely Saw the Dark Side

From a Canadian standpoint, movies in the thirties meant Hollywood, already and uncontestedly the dominant film power, flooding the world with its incarnations of American culture. Never in the history of the world had there been such a concentration of creative artistic talent. Money, creative opportunity, threat of persecution or war at home—whatever the motivation, European film talent of every sort flowed into this welcoming world mecca, at the service of mammoth studios run mostly by Jewish immigrants who themselves had fled pogroms. Often rising from extreme poverty, they had managed to create, thanks to their energy, nerve and foresight, a system of film empires unmatched before or since. What guided them was something close to genius, an instinctive knowledge of and feel for what moved the common people: strong, clear, uncomplicated stories, upbeat, larger-than-life sentiments and characters, action right up front, and stars.

So popular entertainment triumphed, unfettered by any concern for the "intellectual" or "high culture." But it was served by awesome reserves of artistic talent, and some of the creative geniuses managed to flourish under the system, fashioning a whole series of popular masterpieces. They scrupulously obeyed the rules: never upset the audience, offer satisfaction for constantly reinforced expectations and responses, reflect the American Way of Life and all that it implies. Since, in spite of everything (and especially when compared to what was happening elsewhere), the U.S. was young and developing, what was stressed was a buoyant belief in the democratic system, as experienced in that strange and contradictory self-justifying American mix of capitalistic exploitation and Christian morality.

But of course the world was an arena containing other kinds of realities, sad and pernicious ones. In the American context, that was translated into such things as the Depression, unemployment, labour versus management (with attendant strikes and lockouts), racism, the reckless accumulation of power and wealth by ruthless exponents of an almost laissez-faire brand of capitalism, and corruption in government, the courts and law-enforcement agencies.

By and large, these aspects of reality were not treated directly and analytically on the silver screen. Hollywood

was very uncomfortable when a great artist like Charlie Chaplin went against the rules by exposing the plight of the "little man," in sociopolitical terms anyone could recognize, in his two masterpieces of the thirties, *City Lights* and especially *Modern Times*. Such films were decidedly rarities, and it would not be until the early 1940s that John Ford and Orson Welles, to cite two of the very best, would match his social insight with *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Citizen Kane*.

However, one popular Hollywood genre did manage to explore the seamy side of American life without alienating too many people: the gangster-cop thriller film. Thanks particularly to Warner Brothers, screens of the early thirties were filled with violent, dark poems of city life centring on Prohibition and

the gangster phenomenon of the previous decade. The mammoth studios recreated big-city streets at night in a kind of real-

istic, souped-down version of the German expressionism of the twenties. The dynamic, mesmerizing gang leaders were, to be sure, recognizably "ethnic" (Italians, Irish, Jews), finding *their* way of making it to the top, aping the social habits of their betters (the WASP establishment rich) in the only way they could—through crime and bloodshed. In shadowy choreographed rituals of explosive violence, these movies deepened Hollywood's fetishistic addiction to the central American icon, the gun.

The American penchant for solving all manner of problems through violent means goes far back in the cinema. The western, fired by the spirit of Manifest Destiny and America's God-given mandate to conquer all that lay to the west, had already symbolized its understanding of early American history through the sign of the gun. It is a tragic irony that the west was indeed conquered, and "civilization" did indeed triumph—giving birth to cities and slums, crime, violence, and once again the gun. And so, James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, Paul Muni and company became icons of the new city reality, and with it of a new film genre with its own myths and tragic overtones, a kind of obscene antithesis to the apple-pie Horatio Alger ideal of success through pluck, luck, virtue and hard work.

As the thirties evolved, the gangster genre would be coopted into glorifying law and order, switching the bad-guy icons into positive roles as staunch police officers, G-men, detec-

Marc Gervais



tives. But Hollywood had found its way, a safe and oblique one, of portraying the dark side of the American Dream, and beyond that, perhaps, of the human condition itself. At the end of *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, a down-and-out Paul Muni, who has been consistently victimized by the criminal justice system, is hiding in the shadows of the garage of a swank Fifth Avenue apartment block. When the nice rich girl he would have married asks him, grief-stricken, "But how will you survive? How do you eat?", he answers, in a rasping, desperate whisper, "I steal!" End of story—and it is all there.

So there was Chaplin, and the crime film (to an extent), and Frank Capra with his populist *Mr. Deeds* and *Mr. Smith*. Paradoxically, the only other popular

film genre that dared at all to address the dark side of American reality was one that was considered sheer escapism for the struggling masses: the musical.

Warner Brothers' early Busby Berkeley musicals can be seen as blatant and vulgar exploitation of women, glorified girlie shows. And yet, the incredible energy and drive and talent that went into them transformed these products of bad taste into baroque, surrealistic explosions of movement and form, and into a celebration of creativity. In a way, their plots were structured on reaffirmations of basic human values, played out against a background of sassy, brassy, all-knowing showgirls willing to Do Almost Anything to survive the Depression. *Forty-Second Street* (1933) does not spare us the reality of those times, and another superb comedy musical from the same year, *Gold Diggers of 1933*, goes even further, opening with a tough Ginger Rogers belting out a

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cynical "We're in the Money," complete with blow-ups of U.S. coins, emblazoned with the "In God We Trust" motto strategically covering the chorines. Ginger, in huge close-up, brazenly challenges the landlord with a "We can look that guy/Right in the eye" lyric. The film closes with a remarkably choreographed lamentation on the destitute postwar "forgotten men."

This is light years removed from what Rogers was doing with Fred Astaire over at RKO studios, at pretty well the same time, in what was probably the most beautiful dancing ever seen in the cinema: musicals as a popular dance spectacle in the classic mode, played out in sophisticated comedies. Here Hollywood was relating to another genre it exploited supremely well: "screwball comedies," those mad, loving spoofs of the upper classes, essentially the age-old classical comedy of manners transformed into Hollywood movies. In this genre social preoccupations were carefully excluded. *My Man Godfrey* (1936) trans-

gresses the rule, actually confronting the soul-destraining dimensions of the Depression and showing some of its realities, but it is the exception. When another masterpiece of the genre, *Dinner at Eight* (1933), dares to cross the line, it does so by only referring vaguely to the harsh truth. John Barrymore may go to the window of the opulent Manhattan apartment salon to look at some of the unemployed sitting on the benches below in a city park, but *we* are never permitted to see. On with the show.

And that is really as far as Hollywood would go. The spirit of the times may well have found, in the movies, the expression of its positive, decent, hope-filled aspects, but not of its painful, dehumanized manifestations—not even of what was happening "here at home" in America. American audiences—and that meant Canadian audiences as well—were to be spared that, and reassured that "our" system, whatever its shortcomings, was basically beyond reproach. ♦

Public Radio in a Private Market

When the 1930s began, Canadian radio was in a precarious condition. The system of private ownership and advertiser financing, under which it had developed since the early 1920s, was severely strained by high costs, unreliable financing and faulty regulatory decisions. Popular American programming was proving increasingly attractive to advertisers, audiences and broadcasters. Canadian network programs were very costly per capita—prohibitively so once the Depression began. Already four Canadian stations had become affiliates of the two American networks, NBC and CBS.

Recognizing the fundamental problems of Canadian broadcasting, the Mackenzie King government set up the Aird Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting in 1928. The Aird Report, which recommended that all broadcasting be carried out by a chain of high-powered stations owned by a government company, was not implemented before King's defeat in 1930. Two years later, the government of R.B. Bennett passed a radio broadcasting act, but its provisions were significantly different from those recommended by Aird.

The act passed in 1932 created the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC), a three-person body with a dual responsibility: to provide a national public broadcasting service and to regulate all Canadian broadcasters. Although the act provided for eventual federal government ownership of all

Canadian stations, its emphasis lay on better regulation of the existing private stations and the use of their facilities to broadcast CRBC-developed programming on a national network. While the CRBC was weaker than what Aird had proposed, its formation nevertheless signalled the government's intent to ensure that national broadcasting remained in Canadian hands.

The CRBC would not have been created without the effective lobbying of the Canadian Radio League, a small group of young cultural nationalists (most notably Graham Spry, Alan Plaunt and Brooke Claxton) who made use of their extensive connections in Canada's intellectual and cultural circles to convince the Bennett government to initiate public broadcasting. But the young idealists were soon disillusioned by the CRBC—as were other Canadians, including many members of the Conservative government.

The CRBC's failings were many. The structure of a three-person commission proved awkward, inefficient and divisive. The very necessary tasks of bringing private stations up to acceptable technical standards and reassigning transmission frequencies for more effective use of scarce wavelengths antagonized both broadcasters and listeners. The amount of money the government was willing to allocate to the commission in the midst of the Depression was inadequate to meet its responsibilities. Most seriously in

Mary Vipond

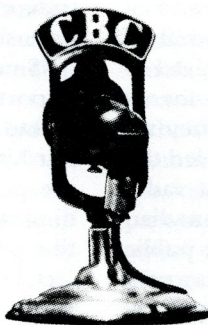
terms of political repercussions, the commission became the centre of several controversies over its programming policies.

The CRBC was in a unique position on the North American continent. As a public broadcaster in an environment in which expectations of radio had been formed almost entirely from commercially-oriented private stations and in which liberal principles of freedom of the press were sacred, it faced the near-impossible task of providing programs that were simultaneously popular, noncontroversial, uplifting and apolitical. That it ran into trouble is not surprising.

The first significant furor concerned the Canada-wide broadcasting of programs with announcements in both French and English. While welcomed by Francophones outside Quebec and promoted by Francophone officials within the commission, these programs spawned a wave of denunciation from Orange Lodges and other "English rights" groups. The commission hastily beat a retreat. By 1934 it was in effect operating two networks: a French one in Quebec and English elsewhere.

The second, and more famous, controversy concerned CRBC involvement in the broadcast of the "Mr. Sage" advertisements for the Conservative Party in the 1935 federal election. These dramatized ads were controversial for several reasons: their sponsor was not initially identified, two of them were prepared in the CRBC's Toronto studios, and their comments about Mackenzie King were, at best, unkind. Although no great wrongdoing was ever proved, one of the most effective arguments against the creation of a public broadcasting body had always been the claim that it would become an agent of government propaganda. The "Mr. Sage" fuss indicated, if nothing else, that the CRBC was unsuccessful in avoiding this charge.

Despite many other pressing concerns, R.B. Bennett was generally a friend of the CRBC and defended it against attacks. But the "Mr. Sage" incident, in conjunction with the return of the Liberals to power, put the future of public broadcasting in Canada in doubt. In response, the Canadian Radio League revived itself; in an intense campaign lasting several months, Plaunt and Claxton (Spry was no longer involved) managed to persuade the new government that the commission should be disbanded and replaced by a new and better public broadcaster, the



Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

The CBC came into existence on November 2, 1936. One significant change from the previous regime was the creation of a Board of Governors, which provided guidance in broad policy issues and acted as a buffer between the government and CBC staff. Alan Plaunt was among the first appointees. Internally, the CBC was now headed by a single general manager; Gladstone Murray, a Canadian who had been working as an executive in the BBC, was the first appointed to this post. The years between 1936 and 1939 were occupied primarily with setting Canadian public broadcasting on a secure footing. A bureaucratic organization was developed, with some provision for regional input but largely centring authority in the head office in Ottawa and the two main programming centres in Toronto and Montreal. By 1938 the de facto separation into French and English networks practised by the CRBC was fully enshrined in CBC structures.

Most of the network programming in this period was music and other entertainment; more than 20 per cent was imported from the United States and 12 per cent from Britain. Brief news broadcasts were provided through an arrangement with Canadian Press. The CBC continued to function as regulator of the private stations, and also used some of them as affiliates to broadcast CBC programming in areas where it owned no stations. Like the CRBC, it was funded primarily by licence fees paid by all who owned receivers, as well as by advertising. By the end of the 1930s the CBC had set in place the structures and personnel that poised it for "takeoff." Finally, during the Second World War, the CBC demonstrated effectively and for the first time what public broadcasting could mean in Canada, as it began to provide an extensive patriotic wartime information service along with more serious music and drama.

The CRBC and the CBC arose largely from nationalist motives. While the concept of "public service" broadcasting was vague and ill-formed in the early 1930s, the political and other elites readily rallied to meet the perceived threat of American domination of Canadian airwaves. Where the state had avoided intervention in other media similarly threatened with American ownership, it stepped into radio broadcasting because radio was seen to be a uniquely powerful medium, reaching into the homes of all Canadians regardless of class or region. In the context of tight financial times, the creation of a public broadcasting company provided a means for channelling receiver-licence fees into the creation of national program-

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ming and the expansion of national audiences.

But the CRBC and CBC always operated within an environment of expectations created by a predominantly private and commercial marketplace for all mass media throughout North America. They accepted advertising not only because they needed the money but also because they believed that radio should legitimately serve as a medium for Canadian commerce. Not only politicians but also the public broadcasters themselves perceived the CBC as a very

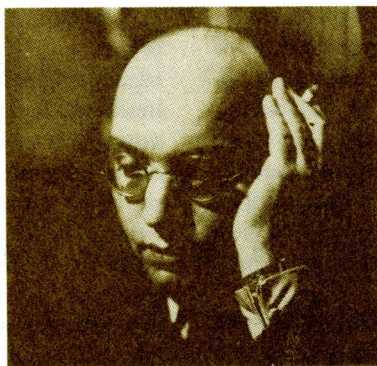
different and much more "mixed" institution than its ostensible model, the BBC.

Since the 1930s the CBC has continued to hold an important but somewhat ambivalent place in the Canadian broadcasting system. Some view the post-war history of the corporation as a sad tale in which the public broadcaster's central status has steadily diminished as a result of the constant sieges of philistine politicians and private broadcasting interests. In fact, however, the circumstances of its creation meant

Weill's Great Song Outlived The Nazis

When the Nazis gained power in Germany in 1933, one of their initial gestures was to prohibit performances of the music of Kurt Weill. They placed specific emphasis on *The Threepenny Opera*, which Weill had written five years earlier with Bertolt Brecht, and demanded that copies of the musical score in countries outside Germany be returned for eventual destruction. Both Weill and Brecht were forced to leave the Fatherland, and Weill went on to a successful career as a composer for the American stage until his death in 1950.

The premiere of *The Threepenny Opera* at Berlin's Theater am Schiffbauerdam in 1928 was overwhelmingly successful, and it was performed more than 10,000 times throughout central Europe over the next four years. Weill's street-wise score and Brecht's mordant libretto and lyrics brilliantly reflected the decadence of prewar Berlin. The libretto was an updating of John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, produced in London 200 years earlier. The characters by and large had the same names, and Weill and Brecht, like Gay, had a dual purpose in their creation: to attack traditional opera and to protest



contemporary social conditions, in this case those of the grim and restless Germany of the twenties.

The most enduring and celebrated song from *The Threepenny Opera* is undeniably "*Die Moritat von Mackie Messer*"—"Mack the Knife." (The word *moritat* is formed from *mord*, murder, and *tat*, deed.) The melody is based on a traditional medieval ballad that was sung at street fairs, telling of legendary criminals and their heinous crimes. It was written by Weill and Brecht as a last-minute inspiration, the night before the opening, to be sung by the streetsinger by way of a prologue, a song that was not part of the original concept. Yet from this point on in the score, and for all posterity, it is the song that defines the work. Today the melody seems to evoke the very atmosphere of Berlin at that time.

Needless to say, the Nazis were unable to destroy *The Threepenny Opera*. Nine years after the collapse of the Thousand-Year Reich, it was

given a sensational revival in New York, with English lyrics by Marc Blitzstein and featuring Weill's widow Lotte Lenya. An observer from the New York *Herald Tribune* wrote, "During the second act Lotte Lenya stepped forward to sing—at that moment the miniature confines of the theatre stretched and were replaced by a broad and sweeping arena of genuine sentiment. For that's what art can do, and that's what an artist does."

In the spring of 1955 Lenya returned to Berlin for the first time since the war and discovered that she and her late husband's music had not been forgotten. She wrote to a friend, "*The Threepenny Opera* is selling out ever since I got back. 'Mack the Knife' has been recorded by 17 different companies. You hear it coming out of bars, juke boxes, taxis, wherever you go. Kurt would have loved that. A taxi driver whistling his tunes would have pleased him more than winning the Pulitzer Prize."

Weill allegedly told an American colleague years after the event that the inspiration for "Mack the Knife" came to him while he was riding home on the streetcar, as if out of the pulsating rhythms of the Berlin traffic. Johnny Mercer, the great American lyricist, once said, "Good songs are like streetcars, there'll be another one along any minute." I guess he was right. ☐

—Tom Kneebone

Tom Kneebone is artistic director of the Smile Theatre Company in Toronto and plays Christopher Plummer's butler in the television series *Counterstrike*.

that the CBC's *raison d'être* was always equivocally defined.

Far from being the centrepiece of Canadian broadcasting, the CBC now captures only 15 per cent of the English-language television audience in prime time and about 10 per cent of the radio audience. In the context of continued channel proliferation by cable and satellite and the consequent weakening of national regulatory authority, the CBC's position will likely be further whittled away as the 1990s progress. The political will to continue funding the organization to the tune of \$800 million per year seems likely to fade in tandem with audience share.

But despite the many criticisms that may be of-

fered of the CBC, including its failure to capture audiences for entertainment programs, its inability to bridge regional and language chasms and its bureaucratic nationalism, it is hard to imagine Canada without it. The CBC has never really developed as a "community" or "public" broadcaster, but rather as a "national" one. It was created in the 1930s in large part as a means of maintaining national unity in an era of economic and political turmoil. In these days of continued national uncertainty and fundamental transformation in the broadcasting market, the CBC is of necessity attempting to "reposition" itself to respond to the new commercial, cultural and national realities. ♦

Soviet Union's Literary Underground

Intellectuals in the USSR lived out the thirties by a series of stratagems. "Every day I find it harder to breathe," wrote the Leningrad-born Jewish poet Osip Mandelshtam in 1930. He had been denied living quarters in Leningrad by a literary party functionary who declared that "Mandelshtam shall not live in Leningrad because we won't give him a room." His transition to Moscow ("stagnant, sterile, Stalinized") and thence to Voronezh in south-central Russia marked the beginning of Soviet *Samizdat* or underground publishing, though in Mandelshtam's case the poetry was spoken aloud and transmitted from memory by his wife Nadezhda and other friends.

Mandelshtam's poem on Stalin ("He rolls the executions on his tongue like berries") and his parables based on Egyptian motifs ("Thinks with bone, feels with forehead/Strives to recall its human image") conditioned his final sentence to a concentration camp in 1938, and hence his death. Thanks to the Writers' Union, which the Stalinist bureaucracy had established in 1932 as both a home for compliant writers and a monitor of deviance, Mandelshtam's reputation was henceforth entirely in *samizdat*.

Anna Akhmatova, another poet who was harassed by the bureaucracy ("One Lesson we shall not forget/Blood smells of blood alone") had no poetry published officially in Russia between 1923 and 1940, though the first poem of her cycle on Soviet terror, *Requiem*, was distributed in *samizdat* in 1934. (The complete poems were published in Munich in 1963.) Isaak Babel, whose major stories, written as a cavalry officer in the 1920s, were hailed by Maxim Gorky (novelist, Stalin's literary adviser and apologist for the gulags) and others as the very stuff of the new

Soviet literature, silenced himself after 1930 when he was denounced as a renegade, and wrote virtually nothing until his death in a gulag in 1940. Even after his "rehabilitation" in the 1950s, his work appeared only in *samizdat*.

Boris Pasternak, who in 1958 would win the Nobel Prize for literature and be obliged to turn it down, and Mikhail Bakhtin, the most important Russian literary critic of this century, present, in many ways, the ultimate symbols of the 1930s. Though they both survived into the post-Stalin era, they did so at great cost. Both struggled to make sense of the period through camouflage. Throughout the 1930s Pasternak turned his talents to translation (Goethe, Shelley, Byron, Keats and especially Shakespeare) and spreading rumors about conversations with Stalin that never took place. Only later did the *Hamlet Poems* and *Doctor Zhivago* appear, but both in *samizdat* and in editions published abroad.

Bakhtin, writing on Dostoevski, Rabelais, Freud and Goethe, and also probably under the names of some of his students, produced a corpus of work that created something of an underground university in Russia, where *samizdat* and books that were officially issued and then instantly withdrawn from circulation created a carnivalesque theoretical alternative to the bludgeoning of Stalinist imperial ideology. Only after the 1960s has his work been available in the West.

But where are they now? This should be their finest hour! Alas, apart from a few brief months in the late eighties and early nineties, none of these authors is available in the Russia of today. The idea that the Russian intelligentsia should be seen as the hidden voice of God, the invisible government, is shown as

Ioan Davies

something of a fraud. The Bakhtin Centre in Moscow, having been denied any government support, is appealing for money to finally publish Bakhtin's complete works. The works of Mandelshtam, Babel and Pasternak have not been around for months. According to many Russians, the 1990s are the 1930s all over again. The twin terrors of the 1930s—an economic blind alley coupled with Slavic revanchism—are with us again. This time, however, the blind alley is an unbridled market economy, while Slavic fascism waits in the wings. The only *samizdat* is pornography.

The real problem is that Stalin effectively put his boot into any sense of cultural continuity. The ongoing discourse among the different segments of Russian society was frozen by a few, decisive chops. As the institutions (the theatres, the museums, the Academies of Science, the publishing houses, the film industry) that struggled to maintain continuity, in how-

ever constricted a form, are dismantled or strapped for funds, it is difficult for Russians to know what constituted a tradition. Nor can a new *samizdat* emerge, because it is unclear what tradition it would draw on, or indeed what is the opposition.

One of the most literate societies in the world (at least Stalin achieved that!) should, at worst, have access to my library, where many Russians sit alphabetically beside one another, displaying a richness of Russian culture that is available in Russia itself only in decaying memories. Akhmatova sits next to Akhmadula; Bakhtin next to Babel, Blok, Biely and Berda'ev; Gorky next to Gumilev, Gogol and Gellman; Marx next to Mandelshtam and Malevich; Pushkin next to Paustovsky and Pasternak, Trotsky next to Tolstoy, Tolstaya and Turgenev. Either in *samizdat* or in the sanctioned press they should all now be available. The tragedy is that the debate that might take place among all these divergent views of Russian society and culture happens not in Russia but in North American universities. In Russia, simply listing those names reads like a litany of the dead. ☐

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Cocteau: Vast Talent in the Service of

The output of the French poet-playwright-cinéaste-artist-performer Jean Cocteau during the 1930s covered a wide range. There were dramatic works in several genres, including *The Infernal Machine* (1934), perhaps the most successful of his returns to the Oedipus story and considered by some his best play. He also produced *Opium* (1930), a "detoxification diary" (by no means the last time Cocteau was to submit himself to such a program); the inventive film *The Blood of a Poet* (1932), still a favourite of college film societies; and various memoirs, journalism and fiction.

He also rehabilitated a boxer and managed him to a world championship, went on and off (mostly on) hard drugs, and pursued a succession of erotic partners (usually though not exclusively male) until in 1937 he discovered the actor Jean Marais, whose collaboration became an

essential component of his art from then on. If this was a "lesser decade" for Cocteau, as his biographer Francis Steegmuller claims, it was not for want of varied productivity.

Yet as Neal Oxenhandler notes, "The apparent range of Cocteau's art is illusory. He is a writer with only a few themes and a few manners." He always commanded a spare and controlled language, even when his subject matter was outrageous. In his plots, he could be surrealistically playful, as in the multimedia entertainments *Parade* (1917) and *The Wedding Party* (1921) and even the tragedy *The Infernal Machine*; and he could exploit the conventions of the well-made "realistic" play as in *Intimate Relations* (1938). Above all, he recognized that poetry is not the exclusive province of words. Possibly his most lasting contribution to the arts is his distinction between poetry merely in the theatre and poetry of the the-

atre, that is, produced by a combination of all the arts, particularly the visual.

Cocteau's protagonists are "angels," sensitive outsiders who struggle to maintain their purity or integrity in the face of persecution by either a conservative, rational, antipoetic society or (as in *The Infernal Machine*) by an implacable law-bound universe. His vision is a triumphant defeatism, in which the poet-hero's victimization ultimately vindicates him. This strongly egocentric tendency in his work is reinforced by Cocteau's own appearances in his plays and films.

The image of a publicity-seeking charlatan haunted Cocteau from at least as early as 1912, when André Gide publicly warned the twenty-four-year-old *enfant terrible* not to confuse talent with true

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THIS AGE

My age, my beast! Who now can try
To look you in the eye,
And with his blood together glue
The backbones of two centuries?
Blood-the-builder gushes from
The throat of all terrestrial things;
What has no backbone merely trembles
On the threshold of new days.

The creature must, while there's still life,
Give all support to the spine he bears,
And on that invisible backbone
The wave will play for all it can.
As if a child's tender cartilage
Were the earth's own age of infancy,
They've brought the very crown of life,
As lamb, in sacrifice again.

To wrench life from its captive state,
And to begin a world that's new,
We must bind together with a flute
The generations of nodal days.
It is the age that stirs the waves
With all the anguish of human life,
And a viper in the grass will hiss
The golden rule of our present age.

The buds will swell with sap again,
And shoots of green will sprout,
But that spine of yours is cracked,
O age of beauty and of anguish.
A fatuous grin upon your face,
You glare behind you, weak and rapacious,
Like a beast that once was lithe,
At the tracks your paws have made.

—Osip Mandelstam

a Narrow View of Human Capabilities

genius. That year a more positive challenge was issued him by Serge Diaghilev, the great impresario of Les Ballets Russes, a challenge that, Cocteau often said, saved him from a career of flashy mediocrity. "*Étonne-moi*," said Diaghilev. It was not enough to be clever in conventional genres and predictable methods: to surprise, to astonish, one had to make something really new. Cocteau raised "astonishment" to an esthetic, and to an extent a metaphysical, principle. His works are filled with *trucs*, special effects interrupting that sustained flow or argument which had been a basic assumption in theatrical scenarios for centuries.

And here it is salutary to compare Cocteau with Bertolt Brecht, who spent a very different, though even more productive, decade while on the run from the Nazis (*Galileo Galilei* and *Mother Courage* are only two of the masterpieces he produced in the late

1930s). Brecht, too, argued for and practised disjunctiveness on the stage. But while his planned distractions (like visible surtitles and action-stopping songs) were aimed at activating the audience's mind and will, Cocteau's theatrical *coups* were, at best, reminders of the "mystery," the utterly fathomless unpredictability, of life and death. Like Cocteau, Brecht was a poet as well as a playwright, and also like Cocteau, he created a poetry that included all the theatrical arts. But while the purpose of Brecht's theatricality was to remind the viewer that nothing in life is inevitable and human beings have the power to change their destinies, Cocteau's vast virtuosity was in the service of a far narrower view of human capabilities.

For a short while, when in the 1920s he was attracted by the ideas and personality of Jacques Maritain, Jean Cocteau seemed to seek out a wider intellectual and spiri-



tual context for his creativity, but he quickly retreated. His activities during the 1930s are perhaps indicative of the value of his career as a whole: they are *in* the 1930s but not really *of* the 1930s. It was perhaps an opportunity missed. His work will continue to amuse, to stimulate, to provoke; and fairly or unfairly, the ultimate depth and value of his talent will continue to be questioned. ♦

—David Blostein

Guernica: Icon of the Century

The thirties were a troubled, darkening decade, lurching towards explosion. Each year created new horrors, new attacks on commonly held feelings for human life, and hinted at worse. But no event before the opening of the Second World War so outraged and dismayed the world as the deliberate bombing and strafing of the civilian population of the small Spanish Basque town of Guernica on April 26, 1937. The agents were Hitler's war planes; their commander and strategist was General Francisco Franco, leader of the fascist Falangist party of Spain.

Pablo Picasso, by 1937 already an internationally famous artist, belonged to Franco's Republican opponents, who for a while governed Spain. In 1936 this government had appointed Picasso the director of Madrid's Prado Museum, and in January 1937 it asked him to paint

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a mural for the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair, scheduled to open in June. With the bombing of Guernica, Picasso had the subject of his mural.

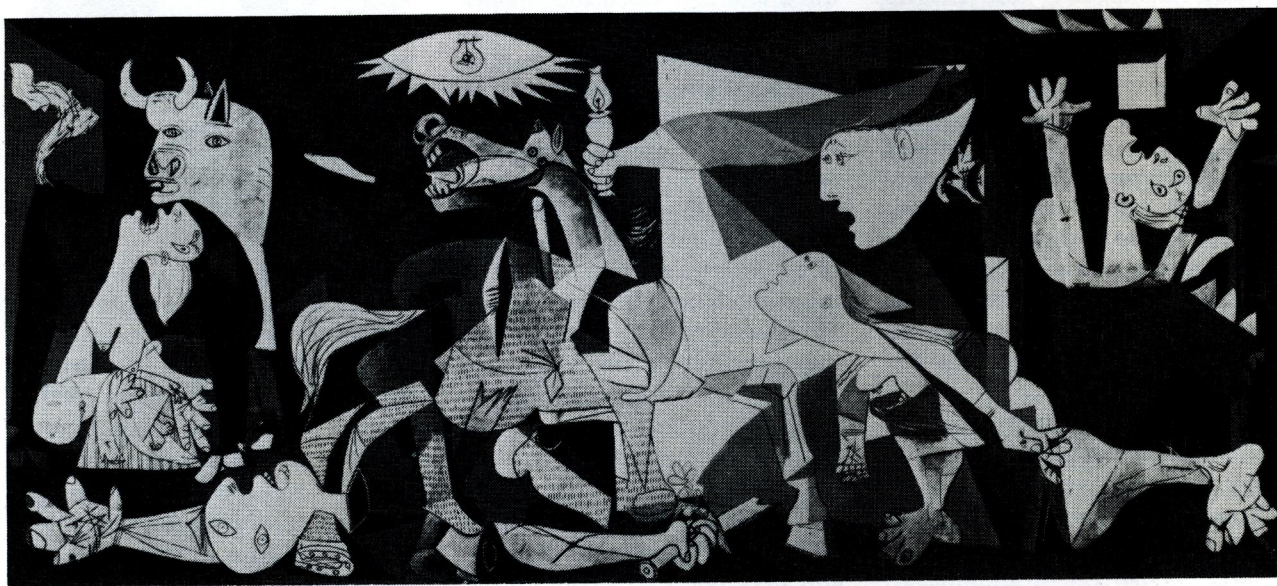
Guernica is perhaps the best known painting of our century, transcending the event it commemorates and its decade. But it does not transcend human suffering. Picasso's capacity for deep feeling, his stylistic innovations, his contemplative renditions of violence in bullfights, his sensual depictions of lovemaking—all these contributed to the power of this vast, near-colourless painting. To interpret the destruction of morality in his *Guernica*, Picasso had to destroy painting as well. Gone are colours, even of blood. Gone are beauty of form, realism of space, pride in subtle techniques. What is left is a subjective and perhaps universal image that embodies the horror and chaos of the experience of extreme suffering.

Amid all the distortions of shapes, we see highly sensitive parts of bodies articulated: palms of hands and soles of feet; open, screaming

mouths with their daggerlike, misshapen tongues; the erect nipples of two of the women. The figures also suffer from claustrophobia in this all but spaceless world. The twisting body of the horse, collapsing from a spear through its body, is about to crush the dying man sprawled on the ground; under the impassive head of the bull, the screaming woman experiences the limpness of her dead infant.

The emotional power of the distortions and the reminders of sensual pain help us to experience these sufferings. Perhaps the impact of *Guernica* has something to do with the prolonged grieving we experience as we count off the subsequent deliberate military targetings of civilians: London and Coventry; Stalingrad and Dresden; Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the villages of Vietnam and Cambodia; and now the wreckage of what was Yugoslavia. *Guernica* was only the first. Through Picasso's outrage and pain, we are linked to the horrors of the darkness we struggle against. ☐

—Peter Larisey



Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), *Guernica*, 1937
Oil on canvas, 3.5 x 7.8 m. Madrid, Museo Reina Sofía

Fresh Spirit in a Dark and Tense Time

John became Patriarch of Alexandria in the sixth century, and he found the church in Egypt in disarray. His episcopacy coincided with the Persian invasion and the collapse of Byzantine rule, the only world most Alexandrians had ever known. All over the Byzantine Empire refugees were fleeing, and many headed for Alexandria. Poverty there was already endemic, and the refugees pouring through the streets gave the city an apocalyptic air.

John must have been chosen as patriarch in the hope that he would be pious but politically harmless. As the nephew of the emperor in Constantinople, he was to affirm the emperor's faith and uphold his politics in Alexandria. At the time there were two tendencies, orthodox and Monophysite, differing in their views of the divinity of Jesus. The current emperor was orthodox, and the orthodox creed was so enmeshed in Byzantine politics that few Alexandrians could profess it without feeling that they were submitting to imperial Constantinople. When John arrived there were only seven imperial churches in Alexandria.

On his arrival, the emperor's "safe choice" called all the city's big wheels to a meeting. In his usual kind manner he spoke of the need to choose Christ above all else. So far so good. Then he asked them how many masters he now had. Thinking he was referring to them, the city fathers were perplexed when John said, "Those whom you call beggars...that you despise, these I proclaim my masters...for they, and only they, can teach us and bestow upon us the Kingdom of Heaven." The very next day he set out to standardize all the measuring scales so that merchants could no longer cheat the poor.

Before becoming a bishop John was married and had seven children. He had lost his whole family, and perhaps as a result, he set up the first maternity clinics in Alexandria, where women could have their babies, rest and then leave with what we would call "maternity benefits." His family tragedy may also explain John's desire, in time of plague, to go to people's homes and be with the dying. Signs of his generosity to the sick are still with us in the form of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, which is named after him.

When he was fifteen, John had a dream of a woman who introduced herself as the "first of the



King's daughters," and as the one who alone could lead him into the presence of God. She had moved God to become incarnate, suffer and die, and her name was Compassion. In the same way that tradition has personified Wisdom, Compassion now had a face for John. It was she who would lead him to walk the streets of Alexandria and be in touch with the sufferings of his people. He combined an immediate and personal love with a passion for justice: he sought out the sources of poverty and never hesitated to tell people directly what they owed to the poor.

John's attitude to material goods was not prudent stewardship but foolish liberality. He gave indiscriminately even to people he knew were taking advantage of him. His was the foolishness of someone in love, a quality that gives his life a freshness resembling the freshness of Jesus' life in Galilee. Once a rich man gave him a beautiful blanket, and John sold it and bought 144 cheap blankets to give to the poor. But the buyer, the same rich man who had given him the blanket in the first place, gave it to him once again. John promptly sold it again for cheap blankets. The buyer was again the same rich man, who gave it to him a third time, begging him to keep it for himself at last. John's reply was, "Let's see who gives up first."

In contrast to the ascetics of the period, John appeared terribly normal. No miracles are attributed to him that you or I could not do. He practised asceticism only by sharing the life of the poor—the simplest of food, the scantiest of bed covers. He tired himself out not by hanging from spikes on the roof, a popular ascetic pastime, but by being constantly available to the people. Every Friday he sat alone in the town square, and anyone could approach him with their needs, complaints or legal problems. He would then assign to each person the appropriate church deacon, who would not be allowed to eat until the matter was resolved. A sobering thought for civil servants of today!

During his life the orthodox churches in Alexandria flourished and multiplied, but in the end all was destroyed, and most of the new faithful were massacred. John's success was short-lived, but through the ages his life continues to take flesh. Bishops best serve the church in times of crisis, for they should be the first to remind people of the foolishness of the Gospel, breathe a freshness into life, and model a death that leads to resurrection.✠

—Roberto Ubertino

PHILIP STREET

Roberto Ubertino is priest at St. John the Compassionate, a mission of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Riverdale, a poor Toronto neighbourhood.

The Someone You Love Is Eternal

I have just come from a seminar on Christian grief counselling. It was to have run the whole day, but it is now early afternoon and I have left the seminar. I am sitting by a river in the sunlight.

The seminar began with a short prayer which I do not recall. We heard about caskets, losses, ashes. And about the process of grief-work: from the acceptance of reality to the reinvestment of emotional energy. All useful information. We heard about a process that sounded quite workable, fairly predictable, maybe even controllable. But I began to wonder why nobody was mentioning God.

My own personal struggle with grief had begun long before this seminar. Bereavement once brought with it a pall so heavy, and a dark so seemingly unredeemable, that I thought God not a Saviour but a Sadist. Only a sadist, I thought, could create a race of beings who would yearn irresistibly for love and, inevitably, suffer grief when death came to take that love away.

It took me a long time to learn that the grave is not the enemy, death not unconquerable. Instead, I learned that a heart closed off from loving is the deadliest of all foes. I discovered that even in the face of death at its most brutal, God still stands strong, glorious, irresistible and utterly trustworthy. Even when wracked by a grief so savage that mere consciousness seems insanity, there is something beautiful, something new, something wholly unimaginable afoot. There is love: that strangest of all mysteries, that utterly transcendent and transcending force, that redeeming glory. Even amidst grief there is an overwhelmingly loving and lovely God; and then there is the human person: radically, though painfully, open to a new inbreaking.

But we still cling to *I can reinvest emotional energy* as our best answer to the ravages of grief. Ours is a culture not much in touch with the Christ who loved most passionately at the grave; the Christ who stood outside his dead friend's tomb, the tears probably still wet on his face, and cried, "Lazarus, come out!"; the Christ who, himself draining into death, expended his last strength in a surge of love. With a God this wild, a God this unflinchingly steadfast in the promise

of life unending, how can we settle for just *getting over the loss*?

Don't misunderstand me. We need a grief-work process and we need to adjust and to form new relationships. But there is something awesome and wonderful here as well, like a bright rare jewel on a long beach.

A young friend of mine was once castigated for feeling better when he thought he saw his dead mother's face the week after her funeral. He was told to give up dreams and face the facts: dead is dead. But I thought it quite wonderful that we seem to have an inborn tendency to transcend the grave. Although intellect may tell us to cut the ties and *forget, forget, forget*, our innate rhythms seem to say, *The someone you love is eternal; stay in love with the someone you love.*



Jesus spoke of unconditional love. He said to love no matter what and to keep on loving, especially when there appears to be no return, no reward, nothing to come back to us. And isn't it most difficult to love the one who has stopped loving us? The one who no longer meets our needs? The one over whom we have lost control? Surely to love the one who has gone into the grave is to love without condition. This love-in-the-dark, this love in the face of apparent nothingness, is powerful and transfiguring.

Jesus taught not a codependent, clingy kind of love but a love fierce in its loyalty, unbending in its will. To remain in love with one who has died is neither a dysfunction nor an attempt to escape reality. Self-emptying, decidedly risk-taking love sets free both the lover and the beloved, makes both radically open to what is possible from both sides of the grave. Truly loving the one who has died helps us love those who are still here; and it is the best foundation for an increasing openness to new relationships in our lives. Even in death, lover and beloved remain bonded. Lover and beloved move in a new kind of intimacy towards a richer, fuller and finally indestructible joy.

It is little wonder that the grief counselling seminar left me feeling empty. Without surrender into the passionate mystery of Christ, without trust in his radical, usually startling, approach to things, death would pretty much have its victory. As it is, the victory belongs to Jesus Christ and to all who travel the ways of his victory. ☩

—Nancy Marrocco

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Philosophy offers insights into our ecological crisis



PHILIP STREET

Why didn't they interview philosophers at the Earth Summit? asks Duane Falconer

Mary Jo Leddy, Remi de Roo and Douglas Roche, *In the Eye of the Catholic Storm: The Church since Vatican II*, edited by Michael Creal. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1992. 195 pp. \$14.95.

One of my Jesuit housemates sports a T-shirt bearing the taunting imperative, "Join the Resistance! Support Vatican II." Like many of a certain generation in the church, he worries about what has happened to the initiating and guiding spirit of the Second Vatican Council. This council brought him and others of his generation alive in new ways and provided them with a new and compelling vision for the church and society. It represented for them an emerging identity as mature Christians. Threats to it represent threats to a deep commitment. The church of Vatican II was the church they came to believe in and give their energies to. A younger generation of Catholics has never experienced the heady *élan* of the council years.

People have been mumbling ominously for more than a decade about a restoration of the *sta-*

tus quo ante in world Catholicism, mirrored in appointments of cautious and mousy bishops and in official documents from various Vatican curial offices. The New Code of Canon Law in 1983 raised deep suspicions, which were confirmed by the more recent decision to write a universal catechism—or is it a Eurocentric catechism that pretends to be universal? Others have noted that under the slogan of "a new evangelization," they are seeing instead the return of an old triumphalism: less ecumenically open to Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Judaism and other world religions; less collegial and more top-down in management style; less affirming of the world as a privileged trysting place for the encounter with God; more defensive and given to condemnation, admonition and fear.

Vatican II: Keeping Alive the Hope and Possibilities

Strong doses of contemplative listening are needed to bring unity and direction to the church

In the Eye of the Catholic Storm represents a remarkable and engaging conversation among three prayerful and reflective Canadian church leaders: a bishop, a nun and a layman. Bishop Remi de Roo of Victoria, B.C., was a prominent Canadian spokesperson at Vatican II; Mary Jo Leddy, a Sister of Sion, was a founding editor of *Catholic New Times*; Douglas Roche is a former member of Par-

John Coleman

liament and ambassador for disarmament. All three enthusiastically, but not uncritically, affirm the fundamental vision of Vatican II as an enduring orientation for our present struggles to build the church and forge links between it and society.

Several code phrases sum up the achievement of Vatican II, and the task still before us. Roche singles out the foundational and primary definition of the church as "the people of God," affirming the call to all Catholics to discipleship, holiness and an embrace of their ministries flowing from Baptism. He cites the liberating effect on his own religious development of the emphasis on the Eucharist as central to the understanding of the Church: "It placed the Eucharist rather than the papacy at the centre of Christian unity."

Vatican II broke the old clerical caste system. A renewed emphasis on Scripture opened up new communication with Protestants and made the ecumenical advances of Vatican II possible. It fed new patterns of lived spirituality. A new stress on pluralism made Catholicism, in German theologian Karl Rahner's terms, for the first time a truly world church instead of a Eurocentric fortress. Pluralism stresses diversity and a unity that respects and nurtures pluriformity in the faith rather than uniformity. Vatican II's insistence on a hierarchy of truths (e.g. Christology and the Eucharist are more central than indulgences) helped to establish correct priorities in Catholic religious life while opening up spaces for a more fruitful ecumenical dialogue.

De Roo adds to this list the stress on collegiality: the pope is understood as within and not outside and against the world episcopacy; bishops are seen as presiding over a collegial structure with their priests in a *presbyterate* of service; bishops and clergy work with the laity as a witness to the world. In de Roo's summary, "The vision that gradually emerged from the Council was that of a renewed humanity in which the church would play a reconciling

role expressing the love of Christ to the world, with faith in the ongoing presence of the Spirit working through many different forms of human experience." For her part Leddy lifts up the Catholic notion of subsidiarity, a stress on grassroots authority as the root of all true creative action. As early as the 1931 social encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, subsidiarity was put forth as an ideal for secular society and authority. Vatican II applied it to the church.

A sizable group of bishops, priests, theologians, lay ministers and laity espouse the vocabulary and vision of Vatican II, but ecclesial structures often stand out as a countersign to collegiality, ecumenism, subsidiarity, pluralism and a sense of priorities in a hierarchy of truths. Elements in the Vatican have assailed the exercise in collegiality represented by the new stress on episcopal conferences. Synods of bishops have become rubber stamps, where genuine discussion is foreclosed. Resistance to forms of liturgy and spirituality adapted to the host culture undermines subsidiarity.

Much of the conversation in the book deals with three questions. What went wrong with the vision and vocabulary of Vatican II, leading to the current threat to its vision? Where should we look and hope for a renewal of the vision of Vatican II? And where should the church now be moving, reading the signs of our times as Vatican II did thirty years ago?

Leddy puts her finger on the deepest issue: "Vatican II is in trouble because it wasn't complete enough. There are too many voices left out of it. Like women. Like the poor. I also think that Vatican II is threatened because all of us underestimated the fact that what it called for was really a change of heart, a profound conversion. It isn't

enough just to have new theologies. It isn't enough just to have new structural forms, or institutional change. There remains for each one of us—and for all of us together—a call to profound conversion."

Echoing the writings of the American Capuchin Michael Crosby, Leddy suggests that the church is often like a dysfunctional family where dirty little secrets such as pedophilia among the clergy or authoritarian abuse of power must remain unspoken and unaddressed: "There is something about the system that disempowers everyone in some way." She thinks the key may lie in an overemphasis on a *communion* model for the church that cannot deal creatively with conflict: "Communion mitigates against group conflict, but conflict can in the end lead to change and empowerment. It's very disempowering when people say, 'I object', and are then marginalized for disturbing the harmony, for disrupting the community."

De Roo earns his right to be one of my heroes in the world church when he responds: "Yes—unless you push the notion of communion to its ultimate meaning. Because I am in relationship to God as a creature made in the image of the Trinity, I have certain rights, powers and privileges that no one can take away from me. So, yes, we have to open the communion model and acknowledge that it has to include conflict."

On the issue of women in the church, the conversants are uncomfortable with the lack of parity between a woman's role in society as increasingly equal and her

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subservient status in a church infected by patriarchy. Leddy reminds us that anger among women is both understandable and perhaps indicative of a way forward. We may need to tolerate, for a time, some messiness in our church. But I suppose the doctrine of the incarnation always leads us to expect some messiness in the church and in life.

All three lament the lack of credibility of official Catholic teaching on sexuality due to the impasse created by the non-credible arguments of *Humanae Vitae* on contraception. De Roo, the bishop, is the most illuminating when he reminds us, with Jean Vanier, that "the core woundedness of many people...is situated in their sexuality—the abuse of it, a lack of integration, a hurt that needs healing." De Roo's voice seems to quiver somewhat in indignation as he states:

"We have a responsibility to provide the kind of human support structures and community that allow people to live 'moral lives'. Many people who are accused of breaking one moral law or another feel they have no choice. And the irony is that the very people who are most insistent on 'morality'—I'm referring to the letters on the editorial pages in the 'right-wing' press—are least interested in providing the conditions of social justice.... How dare we blame the individual for a situation created by a society which is not prepared to provide the social matrix of support: the affirmation, comfort and human conditions of living that make morality possible?" De Roo issues a weighty challenge to all of us who hold a consistent pro-life position to follow through with a social praxis of structural enablement.

In my own research work, I am studying the way Christians put together their notions of converted

discipleship with wider concepts of shared citizenship. I applaud the three conversants' emphasis on the need for massive ecumenical programs to help us hear the cry of the poor, refugees and people affected by environmental deterioration. Leddy puts a strong emphasis on a discipleship that does not flee the common task of working together for a more humane world: "We need to recover a sense of the importance of practices and discipline, not in order to deny the world but for the sake of the world." We have come to see that the West no less than the old eastern Europe needs to take to heart Vaclav Havel's remark: "The greatest lie of the materialistic culture is that there is nothing worth living for or dying for." What does our consumerist western culture tell us is worth dying for?

The most engaging tensions in the conversation arise over the question of where we should look for renewed signs of hope in church and world to keep alive the vision of Vatican II. Roche tends to be the practised politician who emphasizes institutions and structures as key to renewal. Leddy is more likely to affirm small communities of faith sharing and witness, spirituality that helps us keep in touch with the riches of a tradition of reverence and prayer, and a strategy of building coalitions and social movements. Quite clearly, both are needed: renewed structures and renewed small groups where people experience community and life-giving faith. But with the present impasse, structural reform is systematically blocked and people become weary of putting out so much energy merely to protect structures already in place, like episcopal conferences.

I tend to side with Leddy's emphasis on building intentional support groups. Most sociologists

think there is more hope in reform from below and subsequent responsiveness from above than vice versa. When structural reforms are institutionally blocked, a turn to small creative groups can serve as a seedbed for a later time. After all, Vatican II itself grew out of biblical, liturgical and social justice movements that were initially marginal.

One unhappy phenomenon of the post-Vatican II years is the new polarization in the church between progressives and conservatives. The church engages in internecine cultural wars that sap its energies for outward witness and mission and weary those who work for new reform. But we cannot simply wish the polarizations away. Nor does it do merely to blame one side or the other, and happily none of the participants in this conversation do that.

De Roo suggests a model from Victoria of a diocesan synod that does not rely on secular notions of parliamentary procedure and agenda setting. His synod was more like a Quaker meeting, with people engaging in contemplative listening to one another across the ideological divide. De Roo's way of contemplative listening and conversation does not promise cheap and easy fixes but suggests ways to achieve a deeper unity in the spirit, which mere debate cannot bring about. As a Jesuit, I suggest the Ignatian rule of listening contemplatively to those with whom I disagree in the church and putting the best interpretation and spiritual meaning on their intentions and desires.

This splendid book would have been enriched if it had included some conservative Catholic voices. Ultimately, Vatican II's communion model for the church depends on conversation, dialogue, collegial address and attentive listening to the Spirit to

help us look outward to the world to discern the new signs of the times. Roche is impatient with the church for its failure to embrace this outward mission in a world calling for moral leadership. But in the long pull—as Bosnia may show us—the first precondition for community is respect for the other as other, and a listening that listens deeply to the voice of God.

In my saner and more prayer-

ful moments, I do not despair about the future of Vatican II. For the word of God and the spirit of God will not be bound—not by old fogeys in the Vatican, not by the impatience of reformers and not by temporary setbacks. The great virtue of this book is that it recalls and stirs up the right attitude for contemplative listening, and right now we need some strong doses of that. ☩

The Ecological Crisis as a Metaphysical Question

Enlarging our concept of what is real will uncover the limits and possibilities of Being

Graeme Nicholson, *Illustrations of Being Drawing upon Heidegger and upon Metaphysics*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992. 293 pp. \$49.95.

“**P**hilosophy: big words, small print, no sales,” quips a character in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rope*, when introduced to a philosophy professor at a social gathering. But what about after the soirée? After her new spring wardrobe fails to satisfy? Does she ask, perhaps in desperation, “What does it all mean?” Or as the snubbed professor would ask in a more reflective tone, “What is the meaning of Being?”

Graeme Nicholson, long-time philosophy professor at Trinity College at the University of Toronto, has written an excellent and timely book to help our society again raise this question. Like so many other thinkers of the academy, Nicholson raises the spectre of the annihilation of the biosphere. But how can the philosopher contribute to the discussion about the biosphere’s sur-

vival? After all, did the media interview any philosophers during last year’s Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro?

Nicholson contends that our society’s wilful contamination of the biosphere is evidence of its continued avoidance of the question of the meaning of Being. He insists that the West must set itself on the “pathway of reflection,” a reflection not simply on political and technological strategies but on Being. What is this Being? How can we come to speak of it and think about it?

Inspired by the work of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), that absolutely original thinker from the Black Forest best known for his 1927 work *Being and Time*,

Duane Falconer

Nicholson tracks down and scrutinizes the West’s four primary ways of thinking about Being: Being as substance (Aristotle); Being as reality (modern philosophy and science); Being as inter-

preted by modern logic; and Being as the transformation of form (the Christian patristics, through Hegel and Marx, up to modern dialectics). Nicholson calls each of these four readings of Being an illustration, for like illustrations, they both reveal and conceal, shedding light on some things while leaving others in the shadows. Each exercises a great influence on how we think and act, both for good and for ill.

Aristotle interpreted Being as substance, a term we still employ, although without really understanding its philosophical presuppositions. This is not the case, however, with the characteristic modern interpretation of Being as "reality." Being refers to that which is "actual," over and against our consciousness. Something is real as opposed to being the product of imagination, illusion or mere conceptualization.

The origins of this illustration of Being lie in modern philosophy, inaugurated by Descartes and perfected by the sciences. Modern philosophy began as a freedom movement, with the aim of liberating all knowledge and action from the irrational aspects of social and religious constraints and grounding them on secure foundations. Applauded by business entrepreneurs, this liberal philosophy furnished the theoretical justifications for the new science and technology that had begun to provide new wonders. It cut a swath through the old Europe and its power seemed limitless.

From this movement, nineteenth-century science developed a simple picture of the world: at one pole, material objects; at the other, the human subject, fraught with bias and error. The task of sci-

ence was to measure accurately the objects that confronted the subject. Knowledge was "objectivity"; it would be compromised by any subjective intervention. For these scientists and their philosophical counterparts, then, "reality" was but the sum total of what is represented—that which remains external to human subjectivity.

Although Friedrich Nietzsche was the first voice to cry in the wilderness about the nihilism contained within liberalism, Heidegger was among the first to examine the phenomenon systematically. Like Nietzsche, he saw the West deferring yet again the question of the meaning of Being. Hence he wrote *Being and Time*.

The central character in that work is *Dasein* (literally, "being there"), the human being considered in its basic ontological structure. *Dasein*—or as Nicholson names it, the "Exister"—is the being that always stands within Being. Being is already present to it, though not always clearly. *Dasein*'s constitution lies in its care (*Sorge*) for things and affairs, as well as for other human beings. Preoccupation is central to it; reaching outside of itself, it is always wrapped up in something or other.

Existers require tools to assist them in their reaching out. In principle, everything is usable. Heidegger's own example is a hammer. It is a thing available for use and so generally nobody reflects much on it: we simply use it. It is something "ready at hand," a *Zuhandenes*. The hammer withdraws into the background of nails, the rush to complete a wall before the rain and the joy of building. The being of tools is to withdraw, so that they can present themselves as usable things, as extensions of the human being. The same hammer may also be "present at hand," a

Vorhandenes, an "object." It is simply the hammer on the workbench when we have no thought of building a house. As an object, the hammer simply rests before us. Simple, permanent presence is the very being of objects.

Liberalism's view of Being as represented reality reveals the Being only of material things. But even in material things, this disclosure is but one showing of Being. We see their simple presence, but not their usability, their incorporation as part of the Exister reaching outside itself. Liberalism leaves us in a world of objects that we can only manipulate, not take up as harmonious extensions of ourselves. Even today, many believe that this interpretation apprehends the whole of Being, when in fact it grasps but a part.

The modern liberal interpretation of reality presents not only a truncated view of material things but also an incomplete view of the being who represents, the Exister. Existers project themselves in all sorts of ways; unfortunately, the supporters of the liberal interpretation take representation as the only mode of projection that will yield access to Being. They fail to grasp the being of the Exister, which cannot be comprehended through a representation of its simple objective presence. The roots of representation in *Sorge*—the care that creates an inextricable ontological link between human beings and nature—are cut off, thereby cutting off other and more profound aspects of the Exister from the larger world.

So we return to the original question: what is the meaning of Being? This is the first generation with the choice of whether or not human history is to continue; what reasons can we give for our choice? Nicholson feels that our inherited lack of an adequate concept of Being limits our capacity

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for dealing with this question. Other generations have asked, "Why is there anything at all?" With the capacity to destroy humanity and the entire biosphere, our time has its own question, "Why must we be at all?" This question is not artificial or externally imposed: everyone understands it, especially a generation carrying manifold possibilities to no longer be. The philosopher's task is to spark interest in that question, guiding us in reflection on our acquaintance with Being.

Sciences investigate "reality"; their "knowing" is of the actual. Philosophical "thinking," in contrast, seeks to track down something much more elusive than reality: Being. Being directs our concerns outward and towards the future. Being is possibility. To reflect on Being is to inquire into the possibility of being myself or not myself, of continuing or halting the quest for humanity's well-being. Never requiring a laboratory or excursions to exotic lands, ontological thinking needs only to consider the possibilities within humanity, asking which possibility is good, better and best, which one is the most beautiful. The task of philosophy is to dwell not on "actualities" but on these possibilities.

Characterized by the search for autonomy, the West is at a crossroads. Its unrooted rationality and ungrounded autonomy are incapable of providing a sufficient reason for the continuation of human history. Nicholson insists that ontological thinking leads us to humanity's best (and most beautiful) possibility: if we are to be, we must submit to Being. This is the meaning of Being!

Nicholson assures us that submission to Being does not imply a simple-minded "hands-off" relationship to nature, for science and technology can not only im-

prove the human condition but also reveal aspects of Being. To abrogate our will in our approach to the future is impossible. Yet scientific and technological readings of Being, often accompanied by a will that recognizes no limit, fail to teach us about what deserves to be desired by our will.

Our generation hears daily about the biosphere's delicate balance. This, urges Nicholson, should give us an unprecedented appreciation for what is good in nature and focus us intently on it. This is a movement of ontological reflection, a consideration of the Exister, not just of nature. Care is the constitution of the Exister. Because care binds the fate of humanity to the destiny of the Earth, my own reading of Nicholson leads me to conclude that philosophy can boldly proclaim these imperatives: "Seek the good in the Being that reveals itself in humanity!" and "Submit to Being by rooting all of your energies, including willing and reflection, in the Earth!"

The sciences and the media have alerted us to the threat to the biosphere. Unfortunately, the West still looks to technocrats to "solve the problem." Our crisis is no mere problem to be worked out by technocrats. Testing and tinkering in themselves are no cure. Our predicament is the result of the nihilism concealed within our very way of being, which makes us submit every aspect of na-

ture and human existence to research and the market. These two inventions of liberalism have increased our standard of living, but they have also manufactured our environmental disaster.

Philosophical inquiry is no frivolous occupation. It has something to teach those in the so-called "real world." Philosophy is crucial to our survival. Without a philosophical vision, the people will perish! So why did the media forget to interview philosophers at the Earth Summit? In the Platonic Dialogues, when Socrates has confounded his interlocutors, they always quickly conclude the discussion and rush off to some other event. Today Nicholson's "big words" force contemporary interlocutors to rush off to cover the latest in Brazilian spring fashions. But if we stay with a sustained questioning of Being, we may discover that there are larger and more human possibilities. ☐



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The Samaritan's Opportunity for Freedom

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho....

—Luke 10:30

We know from biblical scholars that the parable of the Good Samaritan is not an example story, that is, a narrative about an individual case, ending with an application. The point of the story is not merely to go out and "do likewise." Nor is it to be seen as an allegory, where the main elements of the story can be "translated" into handy propositions or ethical maxims. We might also add that it is not primarily an ethical story about the ideal of loving one's neighbour, teaching that a good Christian should emulate the behaviour of the Good Samaritan and perform acts of charity prescribed by the church. Such a moralistic interpretation, for this is what it is, plainly misses the dramatic meaning of the parable.

The parable is not persuasive or even pedagogical. It aims, rather, to mediate a sense of reality. The text is about an encounter rather than a moral action. On one level, then, the meaning of the parable will emerge only in our reciprocal encounter with the text. It lies not so much "in" the text, or within the subjectivity of the listener or the reader, but "between" the revelatory power of the parable and the receptivity of the hearer. The hearer must be drawn in as a participant in the story. As one commentator put it, the hearer will identify

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with "that nameless fellow jogging along the wild and dangerous road" to Jericho. Only in this kind of identification, in taking up a role and playing out the drama, will understanding take place.

The parable forces a question on the audience: "Who among you is willing to be served by a despised Samaritan?" The parable suggests that the hearer become a victim in the ditch who is helped by an enemy. This becomes clear when we consider the alternative scenarios. How different would the story have been, before that same Jewish audience, if the traveller had been a Samaritan and the helper a Jew? Then the parable would then have been a simple example of good neighbourliness, with an anticlerical twist and the added injunction of loving your enemies.

Here, however, the role given to the Samaritan ensures maximum shock value. Our everyday understanding of reality is challenged. The result is an emphasis on presence rather than on ethical duty. If the Christian virtue of charity is to mean anything, it will mean presence.

The Samaritan has no choice. He goes to the man in the ditch not out of some moral sense of obligation (recall Nietzsche's critique of *ressentiment* and its devastating application to Christian pity) but because his personal destiny is tied to that of the man in the ditch. He does not come as one who is superior. That would not be solidarity. Nor is the man in the ditch humiliated. The parable is not a story about humanitarianism but a story about freedom. The Samaritan has no choice because the man in the ditch represents the opportunity for freedom.

The institutions of today, and the mentality they presuppose and encourage, put forward a model defined by success and effective control over a particular area of life. In such a view, charity, or the closest thing to it, is an action directed to a fellow human being in need out of an abundance of good intention. In distinction to this, the Christian model is one of holiness, where the action is not out of abundance but out of nothingness, the result not so much of a will-to-good as of a desire to have life to the fullest. Christian love does not humiliate. Rather, it presupposes that the lover is humiliated, that the lover is aware of his or her own nothingness. The act of charity is not really out of choice but out of obedience to the overwhelming urges of grace.

In the sacrament of our brother or sister we encounter God, the meaning of our lives. We encounter another not out of some moralistic sense of duty but because our destiny is implicated with another, because we are in need of an other. Only thus implicated will our actions be free. In this sense, charity is a subversive activity.

We do not know anything about the religious interior of the Samaritan, about whether or not he was a believer. But the meaning of his encounter with the man in the ditch is evident: "No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and God's love is perfected in us" (1 Jn 4:12). In the midst of the anonymous, sometimes violent structures in which we live and work, an encounter occurs. My colleague and I become neighbours. Such is the face of charity today. ☩

—Christophe F. Potworowski

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