

TOPICS ON THE DAY

UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL POSSIBILITIES: A SOCIOLOGICAL
NOVEL: A "MOVIE" REVOLUTION: JUGO-SLAVIA

IN THE UNITED STATES the stage is now being set for next year's Presidential election and both the major parties are now busily engaged in preliminary manoeuvres and preparations for it. After their decisive victory last November in the Congressional election the leaders of the Republican party were serenely confident that they could elect almost any candidate to the Presidency and retain control of both houses of Congress in 1948, but their complacency has been waning lately as the result of the evidence of Gallup polls that there has been a swing of public sentiment away from the Republican party and that the Democrats have regained a short lead in popular favor. This setback for Republican hopes is undoubtedly due to the extremely conservative and highly inept leadership given to the Republican representatives in Congress by Senator Taft and a group of likeminded associates, who have arrogated to themselves direction of the party's policies, and to a wide fissure in its ranks, produced by a revolt of a group of liberal Republican Senators, who, apart from their own personal views realize that the American people have not reverted to a mood of extreme conservatism and are not ready to countenance the complete reversal of the Rooseveltian policies desired by Taft and his friends. They inflicted a severe blow upon the prestige of Senator Taft and impaired his chances of securing the Republican nomination for the Presidency, when they opposed successfully his ill-advised attempt to block the appointment of Mr. David Lillienthal, an admirable public official, with a fine record as Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, to the Chairmanship of the United States Commission on Atomic Energy. In this revolt against their leaders the liberals in the Senate were led by Senator Vandenberg of Michigan, who has been transformed amazingly in recent years from a conservative isolationist into a progressive minded internationalist. As a result he has been steadily earning the confidence of the progressive elements in the United States, and if his age were not a handicap, he would to-day be the most formidable candidate whom the Republicans could nominate for the Presidency. It is a great gain for both the United States and the whole world that at this time a liberal wing of the Republican party has taken definite form under competent leadership and is in position to prevent it from following completely reac-

tionary courses, which would be ruinous both in the domestic and international fields.

Meanwhile President Truman, who has evidently resolved to seek renomination, has been playing politics with considerable skill. Encouraged by the evidence that his more vigorous foreign policy is popular in the country and that he, himself, has been regaining favor with the voters, he has been handling affairs with a surer touch and has been taking full advantage of the fissure in Republican ranks and the resulting confusion in their tactics and policies. He is now about to be faced with the problem of dealing with a substantial number of bills that represent the will of the Republic majority in Congress and that constitute a reversal of the policies of his own party, and it is expected that he will use his power of veto very judiciously, applying it only to such measures as are favored by the "big business" interests and therefore disliked by the mass of voters. He cannot, however, have any sure hopes of re-election until he manages to conciliate Mr. Henry Wallace and his quite substantial following in the United States, who dislike the general Rightist trend of the policies of the Truman Administration and take particularly strong exception to its programme for bolstering up the present governments of Greece and Turkey as bulwarks against the spread of Communism in Europe.

However, there are distinct signs in the latest public statement of General Marshall, the Secretary of State and other developments that the Truman administration has come at least partially round to the view of Mr. Wallace that the best answer to Communist infiltration would be the reconstruction and revitalization of Western Europe. President Truman has secured authority from Congress not merely for his programme of aid to Greece and Turkey but also for the expenditure of 350 million dollars worth of American funds on relief in Italy, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Austria, China and Trieste, and there has been launched, presumably with his approval a campaign of popular education about the need for a very comprehensive program of relief for Europe and Asia if a wholesale débacle in the social and economic life of these continents, and a world-wide depression are to be averted. In this campaign a lead is being taken by Mr. Dean Acheson, who has just resigned from the office of Under-Secretary of State to return to his law practice and can therefore speak with high authority and great freedom. In speeches broadcast to the nation Mr. Acheson has given clear warning that the economic débacle with

which both Europe and Asia are now faced will produce unmanageable poverty, insecurity and misery and lead to the triumph of political extremism unless the United States moves quickly to avert these calamities by a continuance of emergency loans and grants, and for the liberation of the channels of international trade, which alone can restore general prosperity, makes a good contribution by admitting more imports. Governor Stassen of Minnesota, who has just returned from a tour of Europe to resume his campaign for the Republican nomination for the Presidency, has taken an even stronger line, for he advocates that the United States should for the next ten years devote 10% of its national production of foodstuffs and manufactured goods to "building for worldwide peace and plenty and freedom" under a generous, practical farsighted plan for coping with a very menacing situation. It is therefore, plain that intelligent leaders in both parties in the United States are alive to the need for much greater efforts than are now being made to rescue Europe and Asia before it is too late, but the votes in Congress on President Truman's measures for helping European countries showed that there was still a hard core of selfish isolationist sentiment, which wants the United States to wash its hands of all responsibilities for the fate of less fortunate peoples.

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MISS GABRIELLE ROY's admirable book *Bonheur d'Occasion*, which has now been published in English under the title "The Tin Flute," deserves, quite apart from its high literary merit, attention because it constitutes the first serious attempt to use the novel for the portrayal of the life of the urban proletariat of French-Canada. It is a simple, stark and moving story of the daily activities and emotional fortunes of a group of French-Canadians of the working class who found existence a constant economic crisis and lived cramped, frustrated lives in the slum district of St. Henri in Montreal. Nobody who has any familiarity with that area can honestly challenge the accuracy of the grim picture that Miss Roy draws, and it constitutes by implication a terrible indictment of the politicians and captains of industry and finance who have permitted such a cesspool of human poverty and misery to emerge in the heart of our greatest city.

If the late Sir Andrew Macphail, whose stout Protestantism did not prevent him being a steady champion of the French-Canadians, were alive, he would acclaim the book, because he

would find in it full confirmation of his forebodings concerning the consequences of industrialism for Canada. He was wont to assert that in his youth just after Confederation Canada was a sort of Arcadia, a land in which a healthy, sturdy yeomanry was the main ingredient in the population, where there was an abundance of rough plenty and few luxuries, where great fortunes were so scarce that people used to point out Lord Strathcona, then Donald A. Smith, in the streets of Montreal and say almost in awe, "He's worth quarter of a million dollars," where industrial factories were both rare and small, where there were no real slums and only casual unemployment. He was wont to lament the disappearance of this happy state of affairs and denounce as pestilential revolutionaries the entrepreneurs and financiers, who were busy trying to bring upon his native land the blight of industrialism and reproduce in it all the polluting features that were visible in Britain and in a lesser degree in the United States.

It was the spectacle of the fruits of industrial development in Montreal, where he lived, that moved Sir Andrew to this wrath, and apparently Miss Roy, who has obviously personal experience of them, shares his indignation or she would not have turned the searchlight of publicity upon the foetid slums of St. Henri. The demands of the factories of Montreal for labor have sucked out of the countryside of Quebec thousands of its most vigorous youth of both sexes and huddled them, as Miss Roy shows, in squalorous surroundings in homes mostly unfit for human habitation. It may be claimed for the sort of industrialism that has flowered in certain parts of Montreal that it brought a great addition to the aggregate wealth of Canada and opened up roads to prosperity and higher standards of living for a substantial number of people but on its debit side is the soul destroying brand, which it has set upon several generations of men, women and children, in the shape of stunted bodies, poor health and unformed minds, to whom the real pleasures and beauties of life are a closed book. It is only fair to Montreal, however, to say that other cities in Canada can show the same baneful fruits of an unregulated industrialism.

If industrialism were to be judged by its social results as visible in the Clyde Valley and Lancashire in Britain, in Pittsburgh and Chicago in the United States, and in our own Montreal, history would pronounce it a crazy adventure without any justification. It is, however, impossible to turn the clock back and revert to Sir Andrew's vanished ideal of a simple

agricultural society. It would be an act of madness, even if it were feasible. When millions of people have come to find occupation in, and derive their livelihood from, a type of human activity, it cannot be summarily halted without disastrous consequences. The logical goal of industrialism is a state of general well-being and greater leisure for everybody, and since the conditions for the achievement of that aim are now present, an increasing number of people, not merely manual workers, are demanding that somehow or other that goal must be reached. To-day industrialism is breaking down under the burdens of the problems which it has created without solving, and the view gains ground everywhere that it must be consciously controlled if its evils are not to become a fatal cancer in the body of nations and if the potential good in the system is to be realized. If the leaders of industry, under the plan of free enterprise, cannot ensure that the system of modern capitalist production will bring benefits to the whole community and that its evil features, which Miss Roy depicts so clearly, will be eliminated, then it will assuredly be replaced by some other system. Meanwhile Miss Roy's book, which is being very widely read, is wonderful propaganda both for the King Ministry's plan of family allowances and also for the Socialist program of the C.C.F.

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THESE ARE WELCOME signs that British "movies" are going to give the products of Hollywood such formidable competition on this continent that the magnates of that citadel of the "movie world," if they do not want their revenues to shrink, will have to bestir themselves and provide a much better average fare for their audiences than they do to-day. Mr. Billy Rose, now demonstrating his versatility by writing daily a very racy and readable column, which many American and Canadian papers publish, has, as the successful promoter of "Aquacades" and other forms of entertainment some claims to be considered an expert judge of the trends of public taste. In one of his recent columns, he showered lavish eulogies upon the superior quality of the British films now being shown in the United States. He declared that a year ago he could see no prospects of success for them in his country but that films like *Henry V*, *Great Expectations*, and *Green for Danger* had altered his opinion and convinced him that Hollywood would have to take cognizance of their merits. He attributed the superiority of the British films to the fact that they were written

for adult people and did not insult the intelligence of audiences, and he looked forward to the influence of their competition making it possible "to go to the cinema without our rattles and teething rings." The magazine *Time*, reviewing the film based on Dickens' *Great Expectations* in its issue of May 26th, completely endorses this view. Pronouncing it "a beautiful and satisfying movie", it sees in it one more proof that the movies, "can make a fine thoroughly intelligent translation of a literary classic" and attributes its high quality to the discerning talent of its producer, Mr. J. Arthur Rank, which consists in providing gifted people with the wherewithal and then leaving them severely alone.

In his admirable book *Bright Day*, Mr. J. B. Priestley makes his hero Gregory Dawson, who writes plays for the films, discourse with great wisdom and penetration upon the film industry. He has a good word for many features of the technique followed in Hollywood, the aim of providing entertainment all the way through a film; the smooth continuity, the glossy finish and the absence of any suggestion of the theatre about the small character parts, but he goes to the core of the fundamental trouble with American movies in this passage: "I never met a man who thought first of money and profits and cared nothing about the things that he dealt in who seemed to be a satisfactory human being. In my own trade of making motion pictures the difference between the two types was very marked, and all that was rotten in the industry came from those who went into it not because they were fascinated by film-making but because they were first attracted by the possibility of huge quick profits." It is the ascendancy gained at Hollywood by this element of movie moguls, animated mainly by acquisitive motives, that has been misusing the best instrument or intelligent communal entertainment and the spread of culture and enlightenment ever devised by man, and employing for the debasement of the intellectual standards of our younger generation.

So it is very fortunate that this ascendancy is now being challenged by a very remarkable Englishman, Mr. J. Arthur Rank, to whom *Time* gave such praise. Thanks to the business ability and acquisitive instincts of his father Joseph Rank, the great English flour milling magnate who used to be rated 'Public Enemy No. 1' in Western Canada, Mr. Rank had as deep a purse as any of the Hollywood moguls. A sincerely religious man who aspires to employ his great fortune for the

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effit of mankind, by hiring the ablest producers, actors and
resses available and giving them a free hand he has already
eved an amazing revolution in the British films, which before
advent were not entitled to much respect. Now, invading
th America, he has acquired a chain of theatres in Canada
secured, through powerful allies in the United States like
Robert R. Young, the progressive-minded railway magnate,
nections that will provide much greater facilities than ever
re existed in the Republic for the exhibition of British films.
size of the audiences that are flocking to see them is con-
ing proof that both the Canadian and the American people
ready to welcome films that cater to something above a
onic level of intelligence, and if Mr. Rank and his organiza-
can only maintain the high standard of the films that they
now showing on this continent, we may be on the eve of a
y beneficial and wholly desirable revolution in "moviedom".
d it behooves parents who deplore the corruptive effects of
many films upon young minds, to give every possible support
Mr. Rank's intelligent and praiseworthy adventure for the
rmation of the chief agency of entertainment in the modern
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BILL OF RIGHTS for Canadians is something that is over-
due, and the Progressive-Conservative and C.C.F. parties
Ottawa deserve commendation for exerting successfully
t pressure upon the King Ministry for it that it has agreed
parliamentary inquiry into the subject as a preliminary
he introduction of legislation. The British people enjoy
protection of a Bill of Rights, a fruit of the revolutionary
ement of 1689, which placed William of Orange on the
ne, and it was the model for the similar Bill of Rights that
wards the fundamental liberties of the American people,
no parallel measure has so far graced the statute book of
ada. The need for it becomes plain now that the United
ons, whose charter binds its members to respect "human
s and fundamental freedoms of all", is proceeding to draft
ternational bill of rights, and it will become the plain duty of
ada as a member of the United Nations to implement its
sions within her own bounds. But an even more compell-
rgument for the passage of such a bill at Ottawa is the
ulation of evidence that in recent years the personal
om and elementary civic rights of groups of Canadian
ns have been brazenly violated by both federal and pro-

vincial governments, and that we are living in an illusion about their sanctity under the British flag. The blots upon the escutcheon of the present Federal Government in this connection almost destroy its right to the title Liberal. The conduct of the Department of Justice in regard to the famous espionage affair has been a subject of general condemnation, and its derelictions have been thrown into high relief by the acquittal by the courts of a substantial proportion of the persons whom it had accused and arrested. Equally reprehensible has been the Government's treatment of the Japanese citizens of Canada, and it now appears in an even worse light through the disclosure of strange transactions about the disposal of the property of these Japanese, which are now to be investigated by a parliamentary committee. Another sinner has been the provincial government of Quebec, which has been guilty of a deplorable interference with religious liberty, and the critics of the Socialist Ministry now ruling Saskatchewan charge that some of its legislation violates the elementary rights of citizens. So it is eminently satisfactory that all parties at Ottawa are agreed upon the necessity for a Canadian Bill of Rights, and there should be little difficulty in producing a satisfactory measure. But sovereignty is divided in Canada, and since the provinces are endowed with jurisdiction over civil rights, it is only fair that they should be consulted about the terms of the bill as their acquiescence in them would avert controversial litigation about their interpretation in the future. Moreover there is a good deal to be said for the suggestion of the *Winnipeg Free Press* that our Bill of Rights should be made an integral part of our constitution by its insertion in the British North America Act through the necessary amendments, which the British Parliament, still the custodian of that measure, would certainly pass.

A discussion in the press about the reasons why so many young Canadians, particularly graduates of our universities, migrate to the United States after completing their education has coincided with the disclosure that a very substantial contingent of Yugoslavians, who seemed to be happily settled in Canada, have returned or are returning to their native land. No effective compulsion of any kind could possibly have been applied to them, and it arouses some disquietude that these Yugoslavians, having tasted the blessings of liberty in Canada, should voluntarily renounce them for life in the sort of totalitarian police state that Marshal Tito rules. One of the favorite explanations of Canadian emigrants to the United States for

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departure is that Canada is a country dominated in the main by old or aging men and that youthful ability does not have the same chance to prove its mettle and receive the same rewards as in the United States. But according to an article in the *Manchester Guardian* written by Mr. A. J. B. Taylor, a recognized authority upon the Balkans, a contrary situation prevails in Yugoslavia, where youth is definitely in the saddle and the spirit throughout the country is reminiscent of a Boy Scout camp.

The transformation of Yugoslavia into a federation has resulted in the establishment of eight state governments, each with a President, a council of Ministers and a local legislature. Mr. Taylor asserts that virtually all the members of these legislatures, the Ministers and the civil servants functioning under them are men under forty. They all belong to the Communist party, which has deep roots in Yugoslavia as in the last election held in 1921 it captured 54 seats in the country's parliament and most of these members served in the partisan forces under Tito during the war. The political and administrative hierarchy of the country may lack experience, but they bring to their task the compensating advantages of their vigor and confidence of youth. Moreover, since it happens that a large proportion of them are former school teachers, special attention is being paid to education with very beneficial results for elements like the Macedonians and Albanians, among whom illiteracy has been rife. The universities, which have always been strongholds of liberal thought, are crowded to the doors and, while there is evidence of some concerted efforts to make them disseminators of the Marxist gospel, it is a significant fact that in the University of Belgrade some 300 students are engaged in English studies as compared with only 100 engaged in Russian; here is evidence that the younger generation of Yugoslavians, while they look upon Russia as their political protector, want to maintain contacts with western culture.

Moreover, the ruling authorities in Yugoslavia, besides providing education for the youth of the country, are mobilizing it for the work of reconstruction, for which a five-year plan has been evolved. Mr. Taylor reports that he found in the central Belgrade the main street being torn up and relaid by "regiments" of students from the universities and secondary schools all over the country and that this summer the first standard gauge railway to Sarajevo is being built by voluntary

youth labor. Furthermore it has been arranged that these young students should work on the railway in the mornings and spend their afternoons teaching the peasants of the adjacent countryside to read and write. So, while it is quite true that freedom of speech and of the press are at a discount in Jugoslavia, the whole country, despite the terrible loss of life and physical devastation that it suffered during the late war, is pulsating with progressive vitality and youth is having its day. This new order of things is probably the chief allure now drawing back to Jugoslavia natives of the country who left it because they could not tolerate the reactionary regimes of the late King Alexander and his brother, Prince Paul. Unless the accuracy of Mr. Taylor's account of Jugoslavia can be challenged, the country, which seems to be united behind Tito, has infinitely better prospects ahead of it than its neighbor Greece, where a corrupt conservative government is now being bolstered up by American dollars, and it is quite certain that as long as the governments of the United States and Britain try to buttress supporters of the old order in different European countries, they will find countries like Jugoslavia, in which the younger generation is permeated with a revolutionary temper and wants a new social and economic order, sticking close to Russia.

There is now the prospect of a happier solution of the problem of India than seemed possible two months ago. Faced with a series of bloody clashes in different parts of the country between Hindus and Moslems, which held the threat of a general civil war, the leaders of the Indian factions seem to have come to their senses before it was too late, and with the helpful cooperation of the British Government and the New Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, they have reached a concordat, which will enable the British to fulfil their pledge to concede full self-government to India. The plan of compromise now adopted represents a regrettable triumph for the religious bigotry, which prevents India from gaining her freedom as a united country, but it ends an *impasse*, which had very dangerous features. The Congress party has consented to division of India into two separate sections, Hindustan and Pakhistan, but Mr. Jinnah and his Moslem League do not get all their own way, as they have had to concede the rights of minorities, who do not want to give allegiance to the Moslem state of Pakhistan, to vote themselves out of it. Meanwhile the constituent assembly that is trying to evolve a constitution for India, will continue

work and presumably the Moslems, who have hitherto stood aloof from it, will now participate in the task.

For the time being, Hindustan and Pakhistan will have the status of British Dominions on the understanding that they may secede or not from the British Commonwealth as they please, and Lord Mountbatten will function as Governor-General for both. It remains, however, to be seen whether the arrangement now agreed upon will prove workable in practice; the two main parts of Pakhistan, Bengal and the North-west province, are so far separated territorially that their administration by a common government will present very difficult problems and questions like that of national defence will almost certainly demand close cooperation between the two governments of India. Indeed, the theory is advanced in some quarters that in order to have available a balancing force that will help to avert continual friction between them, they will decide to remain under the aegis of the British Commonwealth. The settlement, unsatisfactory as it is in many ways, allows the British to withdraw from India on friendly terms with its inhabitants, who must honor them for the faithful fulfilment of their pledges, and it represents such a triumph for the British Labor Ministry that it earned the rare congratulations of Mr. Churchill. No small measure of credit for it is due to Lord Mountbatten, who has added to the great laurels won in the war as a fighting soldier by revealing qualities of wise and enlightened statesmanship during a very difficult crisis.

J. A. STEVENSON