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FAHRENHEIT 451 Francois Truffaut: 'from lyric to dirge'

review by David Dunsmuir

*Well, I'm very fond of Daddy, but he
hasn't time to play.
And I'm very fond of Mummy, but she
sometimes goes away.
But most of all I'm fond of
Julie Christie any day.*

Fahrenheit 451 introduces us to a cinder of a world. Through the hot medium of film, where signals come flooding in without much mental "recreation," we are pitchforked into a post-literate society where books — all books — are banned as disturbers

of the peace. The medium has seldom been put to better use. The message is timely, and thoroughly disquieting.

Director Francois Truffaut, whose *Jules and Jim* was a superbly exultant look at life, has switched from the lyric to the dirge. There is little joy in this story of one man's rebellion against a world that is as quiet as a bone, where experience comes mechanically pre-strained like pabulum.

The rebel's flight takes him to a camp of walking books — one man, one text — that have no illusions about their own future. They are not a corps of Gutenberg guerillas, preparing to reintroduce the printing press by persuasion or force of arms. Each man is his own icon, the Word made flesh. His mental attitude is just as frozen as that of any silent watcher with a wraparound TV screen. The difference is that the bookmen are at least aware of an outside world, and have made a conscious decision to immerse themselves in someone else's reality. Many would regard this as a saving grace and a promise of redemption, but I find the two groups almost equally forbidding.

As Montag the salaried book-burner, Oskar World-Weary Werner seems at first to be typical of his age — unfeeling, unquestioning, and unbearably strait-laced. His later doubts do not unfreeze his face, but his anguish is all the more moving for its limited means of expression. Like Billy Budd, he is driven by his own inadequacies to an act of violence that has spectacular results.

Julie Christie bothers me. She probably bothers most men. An unfortunate casting decision gave her the dual role of Montag's sleep-walking spouse and his giddy mistress, and slathered an extra lay of symbolism over a chillingly realistic plot-structure. She evokes more sympathy as a zombie than as a frightened live-a-little missionary. I'd abandon reality with her any day.

As Montag's chief, Cyril Cusack adds another subtle and stimulating performance to a distinguished stage and movie career. Here is a man who finds book-burning an act of love in a particularly unsavoury way. For Montag, the reason for the so-called fire brigade is simple: "Books disturb

people — they make them anti-social." For the chief, each burning is an exercise in lip-licking voyeurism, where his own sexual repressions bubble to the surface as he watches the seed of Cadmus being sacrificed to the flames. There may be an Oscar for Oskar in this film, but Cusack deserves one far more.

The chief's sensitivities flare at many of the by-products of a bookless age. Books, it seems, provide a bridge from one consciousness to another. Without them, the individual loses the power to connect, to gain insight into the workings of another psyche. Vaguely dissatisfied by videotaped affection and canned violence, he can turn only to mind-numbing drugs and narcissism. The film abounds with pathetic gestures of self-love — mirror-worship, hair-stroking, hand-rubbing. The chief reacts to these symptoms with a viciousness that makes his own unease disturbingly clear.

A washed-out (and perhaps washed-up) world has been photographed here in compatible colour. Technicolour shows unusual delicacy in depicting grey townscapes visually dominated by the glittering fire brigade and its insignia — a crimson salamander. Interiors are madly gay, with the right touch of desperation. The decor is close enough to the present to persuade us that it could all happen here, and now.

The sentiments come uncomfortably close to home as well. As I left the Fox Cinema, one patron summed up his views on the film in a pungent sentence that included two scatological words and one anatomical absurdity. The stale combination conveyed only dislike, with no clue to reasons. For that man, the books have already been burned.

David Dunsmuir is a former art, music and drama editor of the University of Toronto newspaper, The Varsity, and a theatre columnist for various Ontario dailies. He is now a part-time graduate student in linguistics, and is the current director of information at the University of Victoria.



page poet

living in shadow

bi maria paulson

street of shadows

December dips from the one
shy from the gutter
standing rump, long-faced building
was a grey street, and
dark, like fingers, point
in dark oil-water.

muffled motion.
a shadow out stinky sky-eyed
in the shadows;
a rat crawls arched-paw,
finds death
lurking deep in shadow.

violent wiges, ravenous, drunken pass
yanking to their path
blind yidous
children of shadow.



children of shadow

his hair long tawny
from a centre part it softly followed
each ivory-carved cheek
to barely brush his shoulders
as he turned.

he watched his sister's sleeping face
protective, alert
as the voices passed
and with their passing leaned heavily
on his slanger hand
the weight of lost sleep
dragging...

morning chill.
heavy hands prod, harsh acid voice
possitly
and he struggles out of darkness
to face another day

aimless eyes.
wipes rid in still distance
child man's is stifled terror.

infant face, mate, defenceless
looked into him with baseacting
ignorance,
as he watched with helpless hands
a drama of cruelty,
and they turned from the dark room
and fled into the street of shadows.

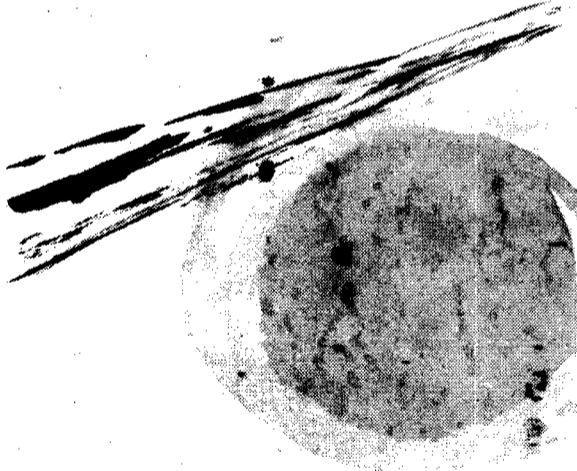
he left helped a drunken father
to stare in lathsome lethargy,
and a withered woman with empty
eyes
to sit in mindless misery
with shattering memories
of motherhood.

and his haunted thoughts hung open
with trembling tenderness
a child held along to,
born easy
in a nightmarish house of shadow.

lost in the shadows

sun-scorched slum,
sinking knees, unsteady steps, burning eyes.
what did he know of murder?
what did he care for revenge?
an aching loss, unrequitable,
goals too great for human dreams
of destruction.

people flow from corner to corner
each a shadow
each a mindless passage
in his distracted passage,
he stumbled,
child of darkness, child of shadow
survived another day
lost in shadow.



shadow pictures

soiled squinting shapes gave way
to a chabou face, an infant smile
small fingers curled around a lock of
tawny hair—he groined in desperation for
the fleeting shadow pictures.

secure in senseless wonder
he felt color, overcome him—
flashes of brilliant flaming color
whirling ribbons of hazy hue,
pastel comfort
dove-gray shadow—
drug induced dreams were his salvation,
unbearable burdens lifted by shadow lands—
drugged delusion,
nocturnal nothingness.

ghosts in the shadows of his dreaming
penetrating the mists of his mind,
screaming, so it seemed to drug sharpened senses,
eyes gleaming,
the room was teeming with human creatures
identities clouded by the fog engulfing him.



flame in the shadows

guitar strings, mellow, mounting
voice imploring—
window to a man's soul
breath of blues, shadow of life
music touched an icy heart
warmly.

they met in a coffee house
the pale and the dark,
detrital society,
found solace in lov-fire.

he touched her hair
tenderly
heavy strands of midnight,
band streaked velvet skin
silken warmth
eyes, dusky, melting along
encouragingly

flash fire

finger,
trembling with pulsating urgency
rising strength
caustic breath
feeling flame of love.

answering passion
swept
quarries hungry body,
breaking waves
and both fell back
in coral depths of darkness,
as the world dropped on



alone in the shadows

and then she was gone.

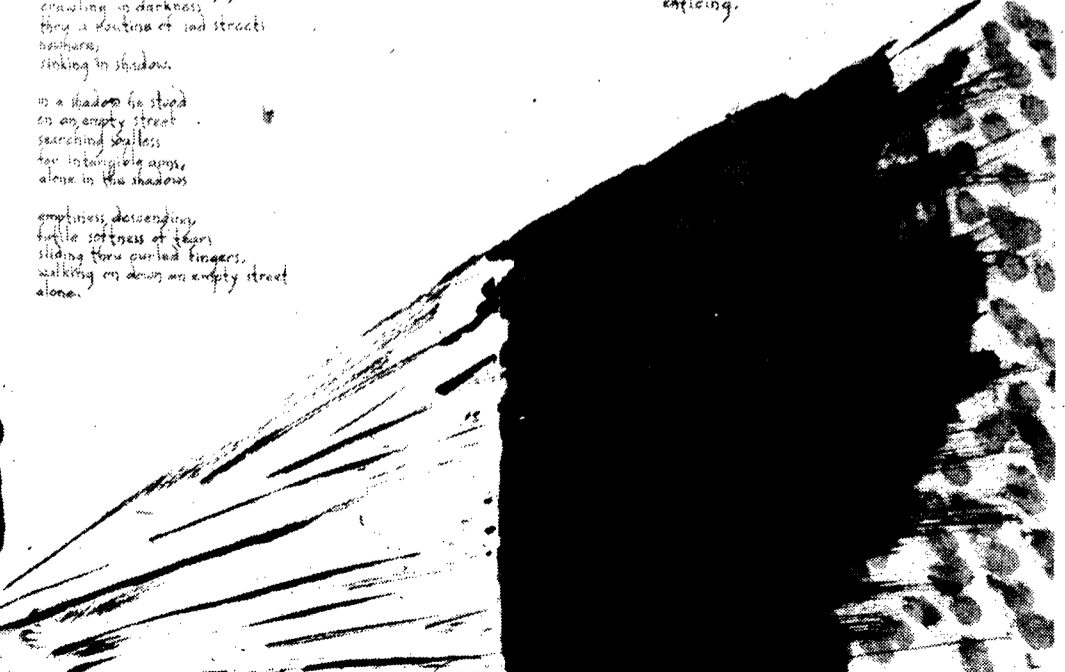
fingered with childhood bitterness,
law was not enough
to keep her from
a life spent for an empty
crawling in darkness,
they a routine of sad streets
nocturnal,
sinking in shadow.

in a shadow he stood
on an empty street
searching shallow
for intangible joys,
alone in the shadows

emptiness descending,
futile softness of tears
sliding from curled fingers,
walking on down an empty street
alone.

out of the shadows

the dark water inhaled
with reflected light,
only light,
sleep
beyond the shadows,
existing.



Balls are Balls for A' That

- Robin Jeffrey -

In the library the other day, I was discussing leadership with a friend. "So-and-so is a regular Matt Busby," I said, paying one of the highest compliments.

"Nat Buzzee?" my friend said. "Who's he?"

And they call this a university! Staggering, isn't it? Do you know there are people here who have never heard of Stanley Mathews? They think he was a British prime minister. Then there are others who think Dixie Dean is Dizzy's brother and Eusebio was a third-century Christian chronicler. It's scandalous.

We are dealing in trivialities.

Therefore, in an effort to lead the world back to the study of The One Thing That Matters, I have written a history of soccer.

In the beginning, then, there was Adam and soccer. Not necessarily in that order. History, however, does confirm that Adam was created on the morning of 10,301 B.C., and when he awoke, he found a soccer ball lying beside him.

Well, of course, he didn't have anything to do, so he took to bashing the ball against the cliff wall next to his cave. He did that for about half an hour, but as he tired, he became less accurate and finally kicked the ball into the top branches of a nearby fig tree.

By this time, he was too tired to retrieve it, so he settled down to have a nap, and of course, that's when he had his rib pinched. A cruel rib, indeed.

At any rate, he woke up to find Eve lying beside him in the all-together.

Overwhelmed by her cosmic beauty and bodily charms, Adam said, "Just nip up that fig tree and we'll hae a wee gamie of shoot-fir-goal." Adam, of course, was of Scottish descent.

Eve was a bit disappointed because she had hoped to get in a little Original Sin before tea-time. But, not having been emancipated, she obediently clambered up the prickly fig tree. She reached the ball, dislodged it, but on the way down it popped on a sharp prickle.

Adam was disconsolate. He accused Eve of popping it on purpose. Then, in the absence of football, his thoughts turned to baser things. And you know the rest.

It is interesting to note, however, that soccer came before sex.

Despite Adam's later discovery, football gained a firm hold on the ancient world and produced the first written languages. Indeed, a way had to be found to chronicle the footballing exploits of such immortals as Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego, that fiery inside forward trio with the old Jerusalem United. Thus the sportswriter became the father of the written word and of literature.

Through him, the ancient greats have become household words, like Hadrian, the immortal goalkeeper. In years of playing against the Scots, Hadrian never conceded a goal, thus giving rise to the famous metaphorical expression "Hadrian's Wall".

Yes, those were golden days indeed.

But when the Romans left Britain, soccer died out for a time.

It was revived, however, in the town of Chester in 803 when a Danish spy was beheaded. Neither the west nor the east of the city wished to be the repository for the head, so the citizens took to kicking it through the streets, attempting to drive it to the other side of town.

This match, however, ended indecisively, for during the game, the Danes reoccupied Chester and had all the players on both teams hanged, drawn and quartered. Thus originated the term, "a draw."

As the game regained popularity, a shortage of heads developed. (The secret of making footballs had been lost when Rome sacked Attila. He had been manager of the Roman team, but he was fired after a bad season. Stomping out in a huff, he took with him the secret of making footballs. This caused the fall of western civilization and the Dark Ages).

In Scotland, heads were kept and used more than once, rather like tea bags, and this accounts for the Scottish football admonition: "Keep the hied."

The shortage of heads was acute in England, and Henry VIII earned great popularity by having Empson beheaded in order that the Cup Final of 1520 might be played. When the match ended in a draw, Henry had Dudley beheaded for the replay. The expression, "Two heads are better than one," dates from this occasion.

Soon after, it was discovered that an inflated pig's bladder would serve as well as head. Since pig bladders were more expensive than heads, the scientists of Britain set out to develop cheaper, better-bladdered pigs. While they were doing this, they accidentally discovered pig iron and started the Industrial Revolution. This is why the Industrial Revolution began in England.

Earlier, however, Queen Mary had missed the chance to become a dearly loved monarch when she insisted on burning Protestants. Deputations of football supporters pleaded with her to have them beheaded, but she refused.

Despite edicts of suppression issued by Edward II, Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, three Archbishops of Canterbury and John Knox, football continued to prosper. And Knox eventually changed his mind. He had to. The Glasgow Celtic, a Roman Catholic team, was so successful that Knox had to found the Glasgow Rangers (see also, Edinburgh, Hearts and Hibs) to hold his flock. This caused the Reformation.

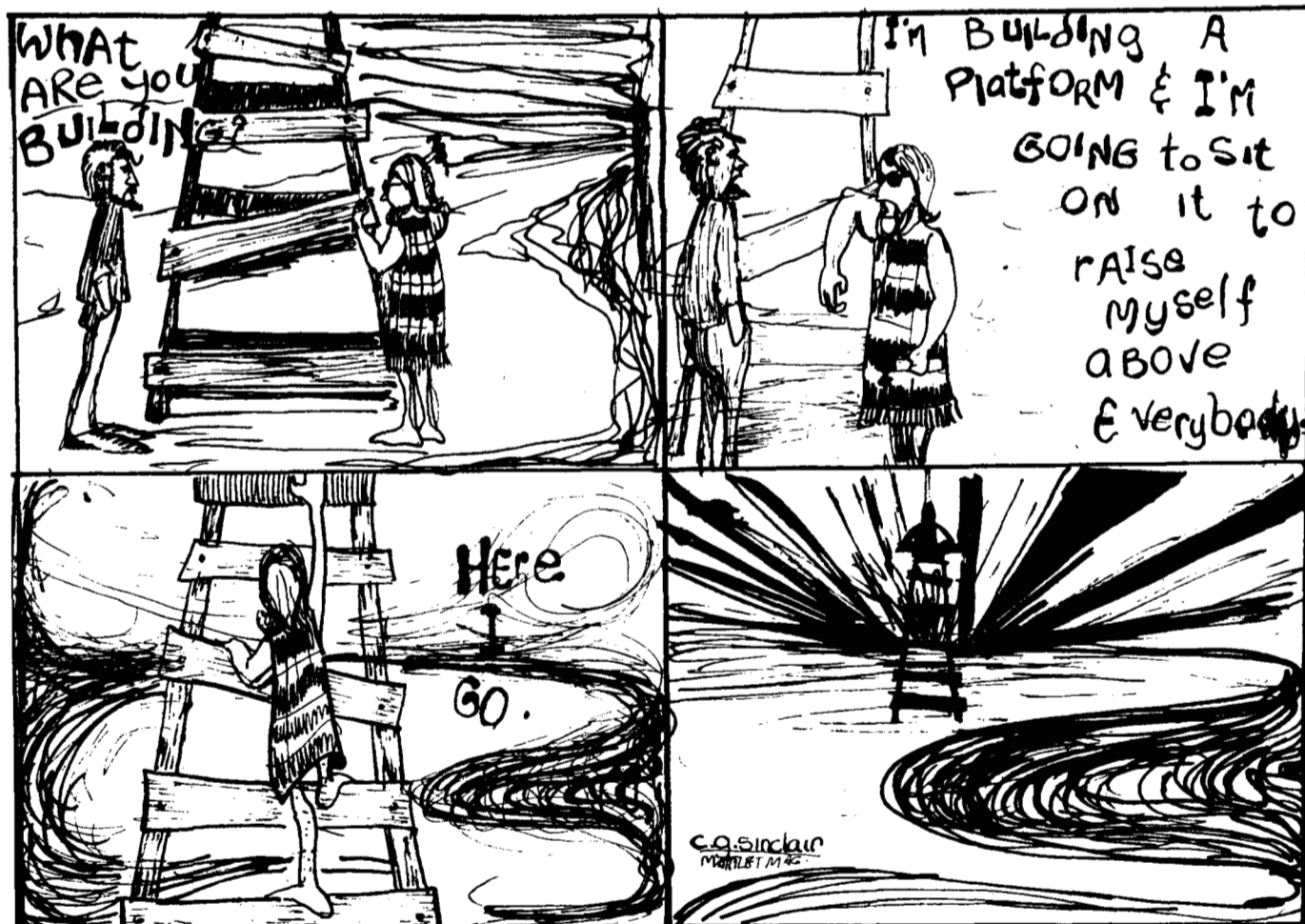
Although football continued to flourish in the 18th Century, much of the period was dominated by a brute-force technique. "Right is on the side of the big centre forwards," one of the managers of the day said.

This finally changed, however, when the enlightened French player Volseau wrote his famous book, *The Soccer Contract*. He revolutionized football by saying it was a game. He said certain rules should be laid down and obeyed. Officials reluctantly agreed, and finally it was decreed that no more than three people could be killed on each team in any one game and that goalkeepers could no longer wear chain mail. This ushered in the Age of Reason.

The most influential manager of the 19th century was Kall A. Mark, a German. The first time he saw a football match (he was on his way to the British Museum), he said, "Ah das ist kapital," and spent the rest of his life writing about football. His famous *Theory of Ball Distribution by Foraging Inside Forwards* ("From each according to his abilities, to each according to his deeds") was seriously misinterpreted after his death.

And now we're up to the 20th century. We've only touched the high points of course, and there just isn't room to present an analysis of modern football. But, for guidance, just keep these points in mind: the Charltons have nothing to do with a dance of the 1920s; Franz Beckenbauer is not the leader of a neo-Nazi party; Pele is not a skin condition (he's not even pronounced that way); Mazzola is not a cooking oil; and Little Bo Peep never sat on Nobby Stiles.

Mr. Jeffrey is a regular contributor to the Mag. and is a fourth-year Arts student at the University of Victoria.



Martlet Magazine

Editor

Martin Segger

Associate Editors..... Jim Hoffman,
Bjorn Stavrum

Illustrations..... Martin Springett

Contributing Robin Jeffrey

Unsolicited material, including articles, poems and short stories, should be clearly addressed to the MARTLET MAGAZINE and either mailed to or left at the Martlet office. Contributions should be signed and consist of topical, political or literary material.

WARS: Youth's Legacy But Senile Ecstasy

by WILLIAM A. SCOTT

Two world wars have given ample opportunity to confirm that it is mainly rich people, seventy and over, who want war. They have proved that they control most positions of authority — political, financial, and the rest. They have proved they can, with impunity, concript both youth and wealth to fight their battles. Viet Nam confirms this, with statistics showing that over fifty per cent of U.S. combat forces are teen-agers, 21 years and under, and with figures showing a rape of material and natural resources in the U.S. as idiotic as it is alarming.

Imagine the next war being fought ONLY by wealthy men and women of seventy and over!

Imagine seeing such aged heroes departing overseas to destroy the Communists, singing lustily "Onward Christian Soldiers", to the accompaniment of Church and Salvation Army bands!

A SACRIFICE FOR THE NEW GENERATION.

Imagine these aged cripples of Christian wealth — crippled in mind and body — being thrilled with the truth that they can do more by dying than by living for their country. Oh, contemplate the joy these well-heeled Christian heroes would experience, as their consciences comforted them in the realization that their heroic deaths would leave money enough to solve youth's education, mortgage, credit buying, and other financial worries!

What ecstasy could rival that of our youth, as they awarded posthumous

V.C.'s to aged heroes who had died of fright before they had even reached the scene of combat! What added satisfaction that their deaths would save youth from paying pensions that rich old age doesn't need!

COMFORT FOR THE AGED.

Consider the comfort the rich old would receive when they realized: they had lost their health in search of wealth, and unable to spend their wealth to regain their health, they were to be spared the fate of living longer and dying more miserably, worrying over their investments.

To further their elders' satisfaction, I suggest youth should allow war-mongering age to fly all planes carrying bombs, atomic or otherwise, allow top brass priests and clerics to release the bomb racks. As to recording this immortal history, the assignment should be given to Editors-in-Chief, not young reporters as at present.

USE PENT-UP ENERGY.

To make success certain, youth might give their aged heroes a devastating "secret" weapon — a weapon against which no Communist force could survive. This would be a suicide squad of aged celibates officered by their virgin sisters. This pent-up explosive power, youth would point out, could, if released, outblast any weapon let loose by the Communists; and would assure wealthy old Christians, who believe in war, certain victory.

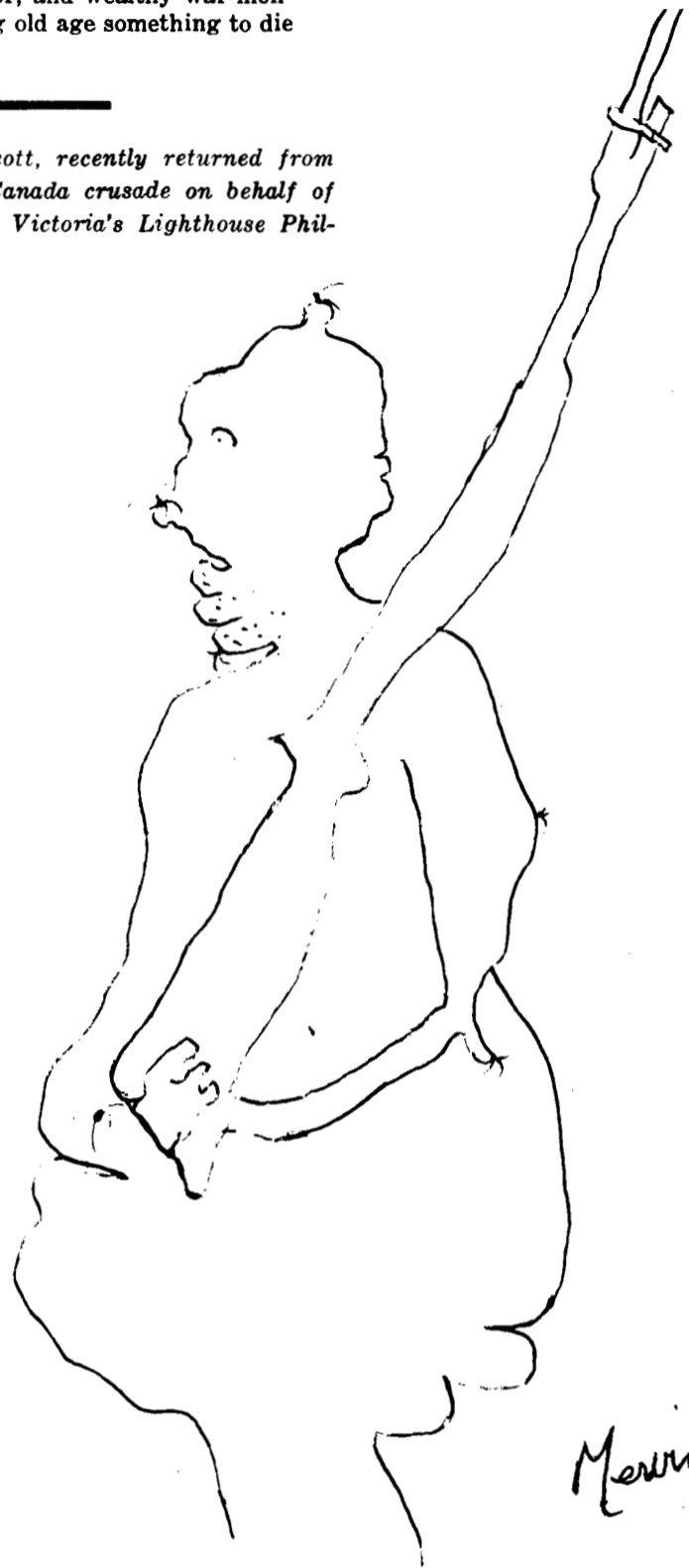
Meanwhile, youth would order all men and women between the ages of 25 and 35 to the dedicated task of producing HEALTHY babies. These new babies to be in proportion to the losses sustained by moneyed old war-mongers. I also suggest that enlightened youth should retain a privileged few aged as technical advisers on how

NOT to produce financial imbeciles. (Before it is too late, I hasten to submit my application.)

When the war is all over, it will have proved:

Youth can have something to live for, and wealthy war-mongering old age something to die for.

Mr. Scott, recently returned from a cross-Canada crusade on behalf of youth, is Victoria's Lighthouse Philosopher.



LETTER

Let it rain, who cares I've free pot, downstairs

Editor

The Martlet Magazine

Sir:

After reading the interview with four members of the Victoria Youth Council in the *Times* of March 2, I find myself disappointed. I am fully in favour of such youth movements (or non-movements) because they are a form of self-experimentation. If you suddenly discover that LSD has led you down a dead-end street, that it is not as necessary to a full awareness as you once thought (experimentation is the only way you'll discover this), then you have plenty of time to try another way. There's no sense in waiting until you're a "mature, reasoning, well-balanced adult" because "mature, reasoning, etc." is just euphemist jargon for someone who has accepted all the tenets of society. He is "mature" like his peers. He "reasons" like his educators. And he's "well-balanced" according to the screwed-up sanity of our society. The "mature, reasoning, etc." will never experiment. He'd rather have his facts and his beliefs poured into him than to try to acquire them himself.

The Council wants a place for the "hippies" to gather. They do have a place lined up in Fan Tan Alley which is going to require a sum of money (a conservative \$2,000). I totally disagree with the Council. A place is needed, definitely. But it is ridiculous to expect the community to finance it. One of the hippies' avowed intentions is to change society, by what society considers rather

drastic measures (drugs, free love, free expression, etc.). To provide monies for such projects is akin to social suicide. Society would be helping to destroy itself. This patently is not reasonable. What is the alternative? To raise the money another way. That is going to involve a certain amount of sacrifice on the part of some in the movement, but it can be done. The Provos, of Holland, raise all their own money, and they have a plan of attack which covers all fronts. To promote their idea of a car-free city-centre in Amsterdam, they placed thousands of brightly-painted bicycles around the streets, which could be used by anyone. When the city fathers impounded all the bikes on charges that they were littering up the place, the Provos took more drastic measures. They warned all resident motorists that any autos left on the streets after a certain date would be vandalized. And a few cars were destroyed before the leaders of the movement decided that this was too drastic a measure (but not before it was obvious that the good burghers had realized the potential destructive—and constructive—powers of the kids). Changing their tactics once more, the Provos elected one of their number to the city council, determined to work on the existing system from within. The point is—they are true activists. They aren't afraid to do a little work and stick their necks out to get what they want.

Perhaps the Victoria Youth Council could raise the needed money by becoming the sole dispenser, in Victoria, of pot and acid. This scheme will have the added advantage of nullifying the fear of many that 'heads' will be turned into mainliners by the pushers and also, the money will be raised from those who are going to benefit. (Of course it could be argued that society would eventually benefit, but there won't be many takers of that theory among the non-hippies.) Such a program, implying a certain amount of real belief in 'dropping out' (as selling marijuana and LSD is illegal) and necessitating a certain amount of sacrificial 'dropping in' (as money is hard to come by any other way), will have the added benefit of separating the fringes from the hippies.

I would be pleased to discuss my ideas with anyone. There are a lot of fallacies or too-simple assumptions in my argument, I agree, but one thing is clear: If you want something you've got to get it yourself, and those who really want something will get it.

A. B. Cairns, Arts II.