

lemma as much as it is ours. In return for participation in the war, Sir Norman invites our alliance with the British empire, an empire, incidentally, which is not what it used to be. One of his central arguments is that the empire has undergone a "most amazing deimperialization" in the last seventy-five years. By this theory, Sir Norman utterly discredits himself. It is just much too much to believe that the Tories who occupied Egypt in 1882, over-ran all of Africa, conquered the Boers in 1900, held Ireland down in 1916, annexed the Turkish empire in 1919, and fought to retain their hold on India ever since, were simply contributing to the dissolution of their empire! And our author ignores the fact that imperialist relations are not necessarily expressed in territorial holdings. You do not wave them away by the Statutes of Westminster: they are the very heart and basis of the capitalist way of life which has perpetuated a ghastly misery for the colonial peoples and brought a hideous war on the world twice in one generation. Reading this volume becomes irritating after a while. Why do we have to let this discredited traveling salesman repay our hospitality by further confusing the issues for the American people? There are enough fools among our own native liberals.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

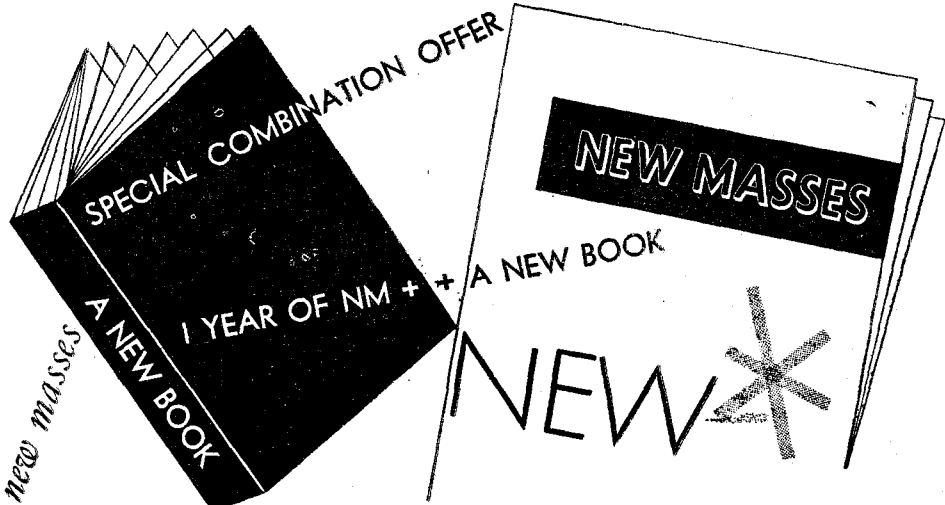
Robert Dale Owen

THE INCORRIGIBLE IDEALIST, by Elinor Pancoast & Anne E. Lincoln. The Principia Press, Inc. Bloomington, Ind. \$2.

A BIOGRAPHY of the amazing and indefatigable Robert Dale Owen, son of the Utopian socialist, has long been needed. While this book is not a definitive account, it is a step in the direction of drawing our attention to one of the most enlightened and liberal products of American society of the last century. Essentially a reformer who sought to institute democratic practices in a society rapidly coming under the control of trusts and corporations, Owen combined the humanitarian ideals of his father with a knack for practical politics and a convincing pen. He took part in the formation of the Workingmen's Party in New York City in 1829, agitated with the rationalist, Frances Wright, for women's rights, led in the demand for free public education, fought for Lincoln's policy of emancipation, and helped foster scientific research. He was always doing something, although his progressive instincts sometimes failed to function, as for example, when he approved the Fugitive Slave Law and favored the Mexican War.

The author's account of Owen is satisfactory as far as collecting the facts go, except that insufficient attention is paid the extremely interesting and important period of his connection with the working men's political movement of the late twenties and early thirties. There are also unfortunate gaps in the account of Owen's legislative career and

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in accounting for his thinking on agrarian problems.

The chief weakness of the book lies in the field of interpretation. The authors show a considerable disposition to excuse Owen's shortcomings, his willingness to engage in compromise by stressing his "powers of accommodation," and by making great point of his honesty and sincerity of purpose. It is by these latter standards that the principal evaluation of Owen is made, although the authors do not neglect to pay their respects to social and economic factors.

STEPHEN PEABODY.

Brief Reviews

THE GANG'S ALL HERE, by Harvey Smith. Princeton University Press. \$2.50.

"THE Gang's All Here" is a slightly "New Deal" revelation of what graduates of one of the more orthodox colleges would be like if their lives since graduation were to be put candidly into print. This is what Tubby Rankin, secretary of the class which left Nostalgia University—which incidentally might be translated Harvard, Yale, or even Mr. Smith's own Alma Mater, Princeton—twenty-five years ago has done. Instead of the usual eulogistic biographical sketches found in class books he has presented what he sees through his liberal sense of humor. Here are social climbers, wolves-of-Wall-Street and perpetual college boys with their varied and comical forms of arrested development; old grads who live on past athletic glory; figures in success stories and suicides; those "upon whom assurance sits" and the henpecked ones. Along with his digs at a college system that seeks to rubberstamp its students even to selecting the kind of clothes they should wear, Tubby Rankin reveals also that most Nostalgians are Republicans politically and reactionary in their outlook; quite a few are proud of their economic royalism, and most are mildly anti-Semitic. Here too are victims of the depression years, the adjusted and unadjusted dispossessed; ne'er-do-wells, dead-beats and romantic bums. And although Mr. Smith prefers to place the burden of his attack upon the personal foibles of his characters, all-in-all "The Gang's all Here" makes pleasant reading.

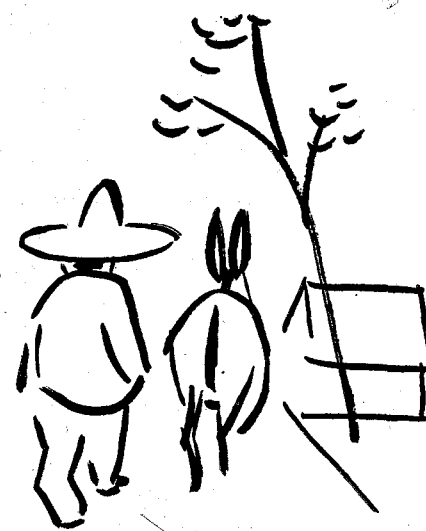
CANADA FIGHTS: AN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AT WAR, edited by John W. Dafoe. Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.

What makes Canada interesting is that one finds expressed there more clearly than anywhere else the peculiarity of the conflict between British and American imperialism today—namely, that it is proceeding under the cover of a most urgent cooperation. The reader who understands this fact will find this particular volume more useful than it would otherwise be. Prepared under the guidance of John W. Dafoe, the leading Canadian liberal and editor of the Winnipeg Free Press, this book is really a series of brochures, calculated

to inform—and influence—the American public. A brief discussion of Canadian history and politics is followed by several passages describing the magnitude of Canada's war preparations. The concluding chapters consider Canada's future in Anglo-American relations. The informative passages are quite readable; the tone is rather frank, especially in dealing with the bad blood of Canadian-American relations in the past. One does not need to read it through to realize that this volume is a deliberate job: it is really a request that the United States bolster Canada's dislocated economy, and finance her "war effort." The authors repeat again and again that the Ottawa government insists upon full equality in relations with the colossus to the South; rather coyly, however, they suggest that since our national income is sixteen times Canada's, the United States ought to assume fifteen sixteenths the cost of "joint defense." The evasive discussion of what has happened to Canada's farmers, the concealment of the havoc to Canadian civil liberties, the silence on the hamstringing of Canadian labor, the failure to discuss the concentration of profit-making and the corruption in the war management, all this emphasizes the semi-official character of this volume.

CORNER DRUGGIST, by Robert B. Nixon, Jr. Prentice-Hall. \$2.50.

Another in the series of old-time doctor-parson-newspaper-editor biographies. Through the windows of Robert Nixon's pharmacy one gets a variegated view of the forty years before and after the turn of the century, often amusing, sometimes appalling. Nixon was a rugged individualist who cherished a utopian socialist dream. He invented a coal substitute, and during the dye shortage in the first world war he evolved a substitute for German aniline dyes. He was unable to get even a hearing for either from the monopolies. And he never understood why. Unfortunately his son's book is a haphazard and anecdotal account of his father's life, with the author unable to go much beyond the father in understanding how his failure was typical of the small businessman in an era of giant corporations.



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