

# They Were Young and Not So Gay

By GRANVILLE HICKS

**T**HERE has never been a city with the romantic appeal of Paris in the Twenties, an appeal that few Americans who had literary hopes could resist. In Toronto Morley Callaghan dreamed about Paris long before he had had a story published. While he was still in college and was working part-time on the Toronto *Daily Star*, he met Ernest Hemingway, who was just at the beginning of his career, and his fate was settled. His first stories appeared, in part thanks to Hemingway, in the little magazines that were being published in Paris, and this drew him closer to the city. Greenwich Village, when he visited it, seemed a poor substitute. At last, in 1929, having had two books accepted by Maxwell Perkins of Scribners, he got married and set off for Europe. "That Summer in Paris" (Coward-McCann, \$5), which he began when his memory was stirred by the death of Hemingway, is his account of what happened.

Paris, he writes, "was the one grand display window for international talent, and if you were at all interested in the way the intellectual cloth of the time was being cut you had to be there, even if you didn't do more than press your nose against the window." Callaghan did a good deal more than that. He met most of the famous writers, from James Joyce down, and knew some of them well. In particular there was Hemingway, who received the Callaghans in the friendliest fashion—his wife was not so cordial—and frequently drank and talked and boxed with Callaghan.

Although he continued to like Hemingway as a man and to admire him as a writer, Callaghan became increasingly aware of qualities that disturbed him. Even in Toronto he had observed that Hemingway was always asserting his authority. "He had to believe he knew, as I found out later, or he was lost. Whether it was in the field of boxing, or soldiering, or bullfighting or painting, he had to believe he was the one who knew." He had to excel: "Something within him drove him to want to be an expert at every occupation he touched. In those days he liked telling a man how to do things, but not by way of boasting and arrogance—it was almost as if he had to feel he

had a sense of professionalism about every field of human behavior that interested him." And when he was frustrated he could be violent, as Callaghan discovered one day when he cut Hemingway's lip in a boxing match and Hemingway spat a mouthful of blood in his face.

He was also distressed by the way Hemingway fitted himself into his own legend. There was something about him that made people see a fictitious personality, and he tried to become the person they saw. Although Callaghan touches lightly on Hemingway's later mannerisms, it is clear that he finds them distasteful and that he deplores the whole development of the Hemingway legend, of which he saw the beginnings.

The other writer that Callaghan admired and wanted to meet was Scott Fitzgerald, who had shown some of Callaghan's stories to Max Perkins. The Fitzgeralds were not in Paris when the Callaghans arrived, but they returned and the Callaghans called on them. Fitzgerald, uneasy and drunk, tried for some absurd reason to stand on his head. ("Do you know you have the craziest friends?" Mrs. Callaghan said to her husband as they left.) Much of the time from then on Callaghan found Fitzgerald difficult. For one thing, there was his constant worry over Zelda, and, for another, there was his conventionality: he was shocked when Callaghan proposed to go to the Ritz bar in sandals.

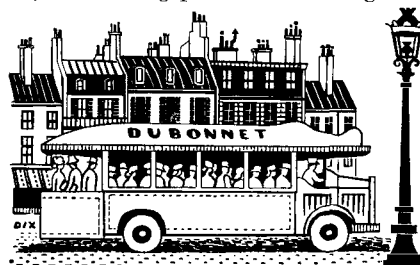
Most troubling of all was the strange relationship between Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Although Callaghan had supposed they were close friends, Fitzgerald seemed to be afraid to approach Hemingway, who, for his part, made it clear that he wanted to see nothing of Fitzgerald. Finally they did get together, and Fitzgerald went to the gym to watch Hemingway and Callaghan box and to act as timekeeper. During one of the rounds, in which Hemingway was taking punishment, Fitzgerald

became so excited that he forgot to call time. On his admitting this, Hemingway turned on him abusively, charging that Fitzgerald had wanted to see him beaten up. What underlay Hemingway's resentment Callaghan never discovered, but he felt its strength.

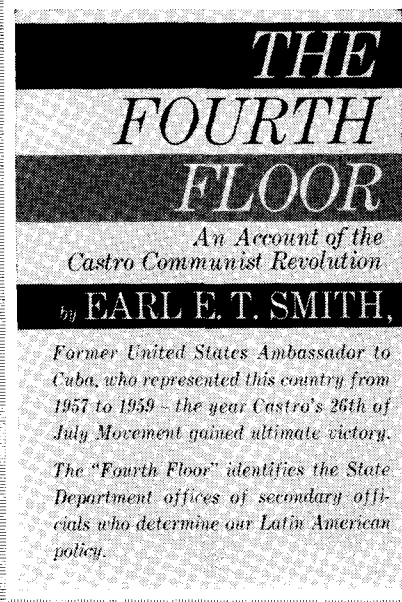
Knowing that he is not presenting an attractive picture of the literary life, Callaghan says a few words in extenuation: "Look at it this way. Scott didn't like McAlmon. McAlmon no longer liked Hemingway. Hemingway had turned against Scott. I had turned up my nose at Ford. Hemingway liked Joyce. Joyce liked McAlmon. Yet these men, often so full of ill will for each other, nursing the little wounds to their vanities, could retire to the solitude of their own rooms and work long hours—sometimes ten hours—a day at the work they loved which gave them their dignity." But it is clear that he was losing his illusions and was not wholly sorry to leave Paris.

There was a ludicrous and unhappy aftermath. When he was back in Toronto, Callaghan saw a newspaper report: Hemingway, it stated, had once told Callaghan that he knew nothing about prize fighting, whereupon Callaghan had knocked him out. Dismayed by this fabrication, Callaghan immediately wrote a letter to the paper, but before it could be published, he received a cable from Fitzgerald saying, "Have seen story in *Herald Tribune*. Ernest and I await your correction." Losing his temper for once, Callaghan wrote a nasty letter, only to discover that Hemingway was responsible for the cable. There was a clearing up of the misunderstanding, aided by Max Perkins, but Callaghan never saw either Hemingway or Fitzgerald again.

Callaghan has tried to tell the story honestly, and he has probably succeeded about as well as a human being could be expected to. It is not his fault if he appears in a better light than Fitzgerald and Hemingway, and in a much better light than the latter. They were both difficult men, and he was not the only person who had a bad time with them. Through the years he has gone his own way, never so famous as his two Paris friends, and, to my mind, not deserving to be, but doing his work. There have been long periods of silence, but recently he has published two novels, and Edmund Wilson has compared him with Chekhov and Turgenev and described him as "the most unjustly neglected novelist in the English language." This is a stronger statement than I could bring myself to make, but Callaghan does have qualities that I admire, and they show to good effect in "That Summer in Paris."



## Book in the News



**"The Fourth Floor: An Account of the Castro Communist Revolution,"** by Earl E. T. Smith (Random House. 242 pp. \$5), accuses bureaucracy in the State Department of having helped pave the way for Fidel Castro. Washington Post correspondent Dan Kurzman wrote the soon-to-be-published "Subversion of the Innocents."

By DAN KURZMAN

**"THE FOURTH FLOOR,"** by Earl Smith, former United States Ambassador to Cuba, is an important historical document, and a particularly timely one as well. For it tells the story of Fidel Castro's overthrow of the Fulgencio Batista regime from the viewpoint of a man intimately involved in the event, which was, of course, to have a momentous effect on the trend of the Cold War, capped by the recent U.S.-Soviet confrontation over the establishment of Russian missile bases in Cuba.

Smith's viewpoint, however, is less important for the validity of its logic than for the light it casts on the confusion of American policy during Batista's twilight years in office. The author, a New York investment broker and Republican Party committeeman who served as Ambassador to Cuba from June 1957 to January 1959, writes with the injured tones of a righteously angry man.

If only his advice had not been ignored by the "Fourth Floor," which refers to the Latin American bureauc-

racy operating on the fourth floor of the State Department, Castro, Smith believes, might never have come to power. Instead, the author charges, the bureaucrats, led by Assistant Secretary of State Roy Rubottom and Caribbean Section Chief William Wieland, helped to pave the way for Fidel.

What were Mr. Smith's views? The reader is never quite certain, any more than he is of those of the State Department. The former Ambassador deplores what he says was the Fourth Floor's tendency to favor a leftist agitator like Castro with known anti-American sentiments over a rightist dictator like Batista, who was friendly to the United States. Washington, Smith asserts, should have given full support to Batista in the civil war.

True, he makes it clear that he hardly considered the deposed dictator an ideal leader and would gladly have supported an alternative to both Batista and Castro. It appears, however, that he sought alternatives among Batista's friends or among politicians with little popular support who didn't dislike Batista enough to rebel against his rule.

The author seems to have regarded the whole rebel movement as Communist-influenced or -controlled. Certainly he was right in identifying Castro and his closest associates as Marxist-Leninists, but one infers from the book that he failed to realize that until the last stages of the rebellion the Castroites represented only one of many forces fighting Batista, and that the best potential Cuban leaders headed some of them. Indeed, the most fanatical anti-Castro Cuban exile groups today are led by such men, some of whom served in the Castro government after Cuba's "liberation" until the revolutionary leader exhibited his true political inclinations.

If Smith had been less categorical in condemning the entire rebel movement as Communistic and had made some effort to differentiate between Communist-inspired elements and genuine patriots, the State Department might have found it easier to strengthen the latter at the expense of both the Castroites and the Batistanos. The fact that the ex-Ambassador could see little gray in the insurrection lends a certain hollowness to his contention that it was the State Department that failed to understand that an alternative to the two main antagonists existed.

Moreover, Smith—perhaps understandably in view of the limited area of responsibility assigned to an Ambassador—never concedes that there might have been international factors that dictated the State Department's and, surprisingly, the CIA's cool attitude toward Batista despite his professedly

anti-Communist stance. With the United States beginning to realize that its traditional policy of supporting corrupt military strongmen in Latin America fed the forces of anti-Americanism on the continent, Washington was wary of backing Batista, at least from early 1958.

Smith is particularly severe in castigating the Fourth Floor for not sending military equipment to the Cuban dictator, arguing that the State Department's excuse that it did not want to leave the U.S. open to charges of interference in Cuban affairs was invalid in the light of the fact that anything this country did or did not do would probably have been construed as interference. The Fourth Floor, he says, simply favored Castro.

Many Washington observers, however, maintain that the State Department deeply mistrusted Castro from the first. If it erred, its error appears to have been rooted, as Smith states, in the excessive zeal of its effort to avoid giving the impression of intervening in Cuban politics. But this zeal was misplaced, not in the sense that the United States should have backed Batista more firmly, but rather in the sense that it should have sought and supported fully a popular alternative to Batista and Castro.

By abdicating its power to guide events in Cuba, the United States did nothing to block Castro's path to the top. But former Ambassador Smith, by preaching an impractical means of achieving this end, seems also to have played, however unwittingly, into Castro's hands.

### FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 1014

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1014 will be found in the next issue.*

NPA BCGWRWPVO PYF  
FVFRDFA NQ LBBA RWD-  
WCFMO HTB AB MBD  
SBDF.

LFBYLF MPDTPM.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1013

*It would be a swell world if everybody was as pleasant as the fellow who's trying to skin you.*

—KIN HUBBARD.