

LETTERA CARON REYNOLDS

1885 - 1978

SOMEONE A DOOR HAN/ SHOT

- LETTERS FROM BOLE

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Docudrama

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Bertha Capen Reynolds graduated from Smith in 1908. She took the first Smith psychiatric course - a summer course in the war year of 1918 - a course intended to examine the so-called shell-shock of soldiers. In 1925 she became Associate Director of the School of Social Work and here at Smith pioneered the integration of psychiatric and psychoanalytic concepts in social work. In the mid-thirties she created the first courses for social work teachers and supervisors.

During the years of economic depression, Bertha Reynolds came to think that Smith's "Casework from the psychiatric point of view", as it was declared, was only one dimension in understanding the human misery which social workers should be committed to do something about. Marxist literature, recommended to her by a student, opened up for her a whole new world of enquiry. She spent the rest of her life attempting to integrate her deeply religious spiritual consciousness with a left-wing political sense of conscience - the search, in her words, for a "science of society".

A hundred years after her birth there is still a great deal of conflicting passion aroused by Bertha's works and the circumstances that led to the eclipse of her career 50 years earlier. These passions, I suppose, demonstrate that she is indeed not forgotten and the controversies over the identity of the social work profession still live.

Her professional writing was extensive and is still among the most readable in all social work literature, though students' attention was rarely drawn to it, nor was it usually made available by social work teachers. However, Bertha Reynolds did not stop writing when she was squeezed out of professional activity and retreated reluctantly into exile to Stoughton, Massachusetts, in the 1940s. In the Sophia Smith archives here now, there are more than 40 years of her letters, "the real me, somehow", Bertha Reynolds says. They continue almost to her end in 1978 at the age of 93.

Much has been said about her but she must be allowed to speak for herself. This she does in our play. The docudrama does not attempt to encompass her long and full life. She speaks here only from the unpublished and relatively unknown collection of letters. We have only sketched the very deep social reverberations on the surface of a small human-sized canvas.

Our narrative centres around the emergence of her autobiography, "An Unchartered Journey". It is not surprising that it was difficult to find a publisher for this autobiography. Smith, too, chose to keep its distance.

The words you will hear are almost exactly as she wrote them, except that, curiously, the letters in her own handwriting, when transcribed, seem to undergo a qualitative sea-change even though the words remain the same; something strange and not readily explained happens.

Bertha Reynolds was a warm and very human private person and an important figure who searched, stumbled and surmounted vicissitudes and defeats in the historical turmoil and confusions of her time. She would vehemently disapprove of us enshrining her in some social-work Hall of Fame. Nevertheless, she would appreciate profoundly our recognition that the issues she raised for social work and social justice are perhaps even more relevant and urgent for us today than they were for her. The extent to which we are now ready to face these issues anew in our own historical context is the extent to which she endures and can be properly honoured....

So now let us take you back to the 1960s and the Reynolds house at 760 Pleasant Street, Soughton, Massachusetts.

FOREWORD

Bertha Capen Reynolds did not stop writing when she withdrew from professional activity on her reluctant retreat to Stoughton, Massachusetts in the 1940s. In the archives at Smith College there are more than 40 years of her letters (and one hopes more will be unearthed by recipients and deposited there). "The real me, somehow", Bertha said of the letters to her friends, colleagues, and sometimes her antagonists - a correspondence she continued almost to the end in 1978.

Her prolific contributions to the social work literature - the books and the articles - are likely to be reviewed once more and re-appraised during the Centennial celebrations in 1985, and many will speak of what has been assimilated and what are the controversies. However, there is a belief that in many respects Bertha Reynolds is uniquely able still to speak for herself. It was from this contention that the idea for this "docudrama" - a one-actress play - emerged.

It was soon found that to encompass in perhaps 90 minutes such a full 93 years of life was an overwhelming prospect and so it was eventually decided to speak only from the relatively unknown collection of letters and to center the narrative around the emergence of her autobiography, "An Uncharted Journey".

The script now begins with her return to Stoughton, from which she had disentangled herself many years before; setting up home with her unmarried brother; and the growing dispiritidness of the isolation from her profession and day-to-day intellectual stimulation. Her friends' insistence on her writing an account of her life in social work leads to a renewed sense of purpose which reawakens her vitality. The ups and downs of this creative endeavour and the difficulties of getting her autobiography published follow. These efforts lead her to repeated examination of her Marxism and Methodism in the philosophical search for "a science of society" and a guide for making the most of what remained of her "opportunities for living".

Finally she forges a growing acceptance of the limitations of her "age and station" and finds some kind of reconciliation in acting upon a smaller but still significant canvas than her troublesome drive and "overgrown sense of mission" had previously demanded.

All this has been taken directly from her letters and but for some

editing is just as she wrote it.

In editing we have added a minimum of connecting phrases and sometimes re-arranged sentences the better to be spoken. Occasionally a number of letters has been compounded and perhaps, where the subject matter was similar, two correspondents have been treated as one. The process of selection of course colours the presentation but we are satisfied that we have remained true to where she stood, and have left out none of the fundamentals of her belief. Curiously, the letters in her own handwriting, when transcribed, seem to undergo a qualitative sea-change even though the words remain the same; something strange and not readily explained happens.

One hopes the "docudrama" provides a further dimension to an understanding of Bertha Reynolds' place in the growth of her chosen profession; points the way to a full acknowledgement of her enduring relevance to the problems of our own era; and touches the source of her value as a warm and undaunted and very human private person who was forever searching, stumbling and surmounting the vicissitudes and defeats of the historical turmoil of her time and place.

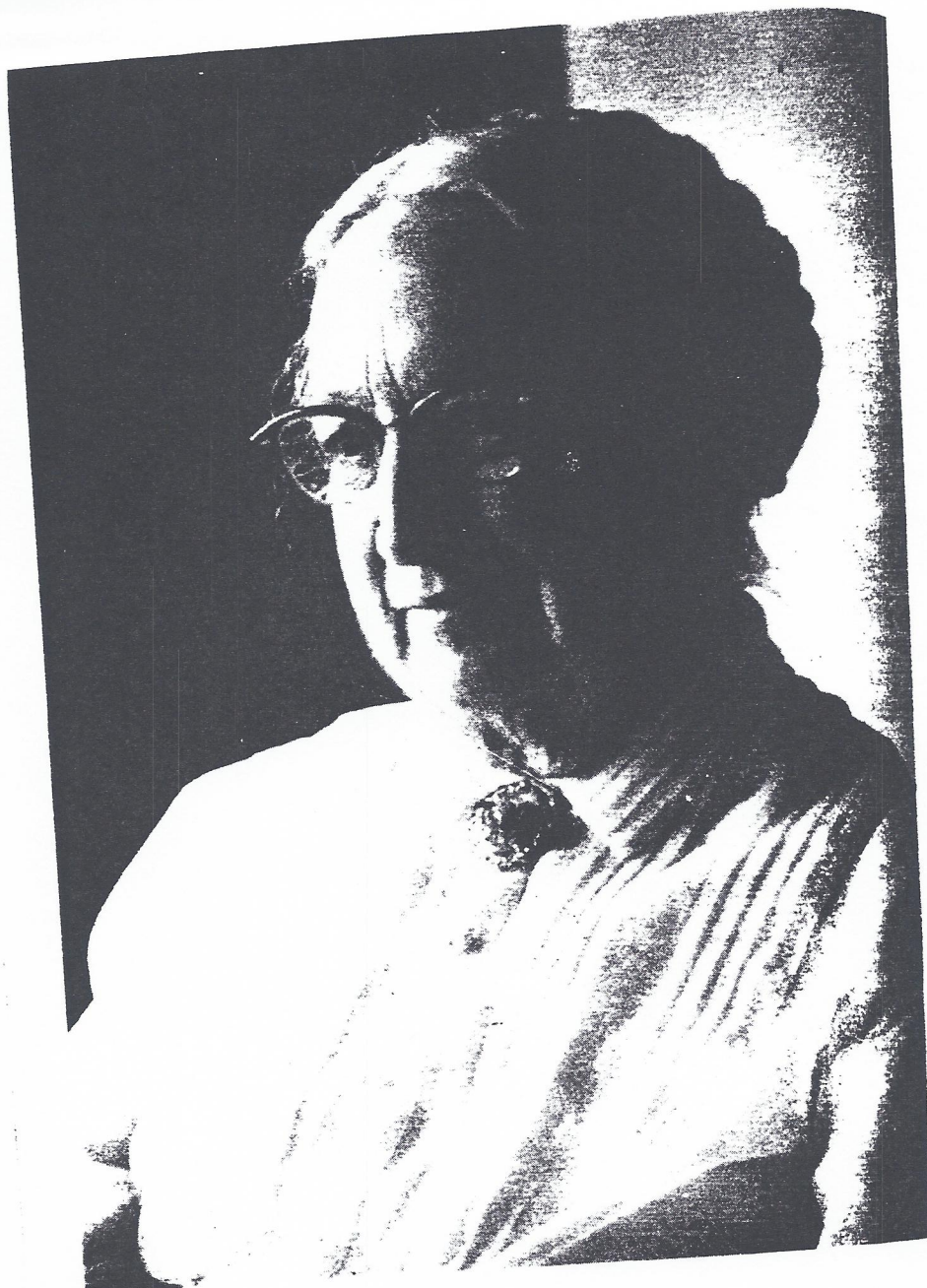
The ordinary folk of Stoughton said of her in her mid-eighties:

"We hear tell that you once blazed a fresh trail in social work education. We've heard that you pioneered the organizing of social workers. The National Maritime Union has recorded your labors on their behalf. There are books in the library that bear your name. We've even heard lately a great university has called you Doctor. All this sounds interesting and very impressive.

But we know you, not as dean, nor as doctor, nor as professor, not as social worker, but as a friend, neighbor and colleague.

- realistic in your perception of life
- tireless in working for human justice
- patient with your co-workers, but
- impatient to see right prevail
- deep of soul
- keen of mind

David Drucker



BERTHA C. REYNOLDS

— This week I am a little mixed up as to time--for at long last I've got at the box of old letters you sent me. It's like meeting myself coming back from oblivion...letters...letters seem to be the real me somehow...and there have been so many letters since I came back home to Stoughton....'Back',^{no!} ~~is~~ not really back, and 'home'? Yes, it is really home but it was a difficult choice to decide I would make it so...A home is more than good physical conditions...

My brother Frank and I had grown up in a house with no electricity, and no bathroom, no heat except for two coal stoves, and coal was an innovation then. There were kerosene lamp chimneys and flatirons wrapped in old aprons which comforted our freezing beds at night. The cellars provided a place for roots and for washing milk bottles for the route every day. Well, yes, roots and routes I suppose are what choices are all about.

In the fall of 1941 I had returned to New York expecting to be as busy as ever...and there was no work. Somewhere a door had blown shut. I sent a letter to the Red Cross which was then begging for qualified supervisors and when it brought no reply I realised that there might be in the background a boycott of my ideas...

There came the death of the journal, Social Work Today, about which I felt as if it were the loss of a family member...

My complete expectation that I would always work among people and could get a livelihood somehow began to lose force.

By the fall of 1942 there was no doubt that I was really unemployed....How then to live for a new world while pressed by the necessities of this one?

The choice of location narrowed to a dilemma: City life near friends with whom I could not keep up, and who would have no leisure to share mine after I retired; city life which I could not afford (since \$100. a month did not look as it used to when a pension was contracted for, - and there were still four years before the pension would be due). Or, on the other hand, country life where I could be comfortable on my income, but without my friends. How could I tolerate the cultural deadness of my own kind of folks, which I had been so glad to escape? I liked the pace, and the people in the country, but I knew there would be no spiritual nourishment from them, and no understanding of the new world in which I passionately believed.

One trouble was that the culture and social life of the New England of my family was tied up with the church. When the church lost significance for me, and became only an irritant, I learned to get my culture from reading and found social life in connection with my profession. When I stopped going to Stoughton every week-end, on moving to Philadelphia in 1925, I rarely entered a church for 20 years. I was too busy to miss it, consciously, and while I longed for a happy group life such as I had once found in the church, I reconciled myself to having a chasm between my pre-analyzed self and the new, scientific, self which emerged when I was set free. If the world was a

little bleak without the fires on the altar, and without the group association with scientists, which had not been possible because I did not "fit" anywhere, it was full of stimulating endeavor. If I felt pretty small and helpless as an individual, I could be a part of something immensely significant. So I reconciled myself to a chasm between my past and the present.

During 1946 I had been going to Stoughton for week-ends about once a month. Mother was 93, and since a near-stroke in 1944 was having trouble with "seeing things," people in trees and around the yard, which frightened her. She was physically well, able to read and sew, and more lovable than ever. On my Sunday visits, I took care of her corns, and enjoyed her lovely humor. Frank was almost a stranger to me. He had never written letters except thanks for a birthday present, and hardly ever addressed me except through Mother ("What is 'Nip going to do?"). I remember thinking that when Mother was gone there would be little to draw me to Stoughton and probably he and I would see each other rarely.

It was the work of my friend, "Rev. Claude," which finally, at the end of 1945, bridged the chasm, knit up the past and present, and made me whole, to go on to a really meaningful future. Rev. Claude Williams was the Director of Commonwealth College, a labor school in the Ozark Mountains at Mena. Mena was in an all-white county of Arkansas where signs had been posted warning "Nigger, don't let the sun go down and find you in this county." It was there also that I met Winifred

Chappell, who had gone to visit the place for a brief rest and stayed ^{seven} ~~four~~ years! It was Rev. Claude who showed me how the line of the prophets was one of struggle for social justice, and how it was the priests who catered to the rich that put to death the prophets, including Jesus. At last I saw that the growing new carries along that which is worthy to survive of the old, all that is still beautiful and useful. I saw how I could go back to the church, of which I was still a member, and without hypocrisy join in a social venture with the people there in seeking the best things that we could vision together. Fortunately, our church is not a stickler for doctrinal orthodoxy. It demands deeds rather than verbal agility with creeds. I have to translate much that I hear into my own language, but it is not too hard to do that.

So I began to see that I could go back after all to the home of my restricted childhood, and take with me all that I had gained since. That possibility was the decisive factor.

Late in January, 1947, Mother went to sleep and never woke up. Frank was evidently pathetically helpless. The neighbor who had done the housework for two hours a day would keep him going for food and house, but he had depended on Mother's strong, clear mind, even after she "saw things." I felt I did not know him, and wanted him to develop if he could, without the domination of another old lady. He might marry, I wanted him to be free of any obligation to me that would hinder him, and yet not to be so uncomfortable that he would be forced to marry to survive.

I do not think Frank had taken seriously my hints that I might come home and live in the wing. I know he thought I was always taking off on some strange notion or other. After Mother went, I talked with him about remodeling the wing as an investment, and renting it to me. (He had saved a lot more than I had.) I soon saw that he would never spend enough to do it right, and if anybody was to remodel it should be I. I had always thought the place would be his. It was his home, and I had never wanted to own property anyway. He did something amazing for me when he insisted that it was mine just as much as it was his. (Mother had made no will, so what she had came to us equally.) He would not allow me to turn the title of the house over to him. At one stroke, he cut away my unconscious belief that I had never quite belonged to the family. I can't describe the change it made in my whole feeling about having a place in the world, being a person, like other people with family ties, having an "old man" who really belonged to me. I discovered how I had longed to say we and ours, not I and mine.

Just a year after Mother's death I went home to live in Frank's apartment until mine should be ready.

I spent the money quickly lest a financial crash should spirit it away. The year had seen the introduction in the U.S. of the blacklist, the loyalty oath, the concept of guilt by headline, the ^{equating} ~~equality~~ of left-wing political beliefs and espionage, and the first contention that there was such a thing as an American atom bomb secret that could be stolen.

At first Frank could not visualise converting a bedroom to a kitchen and a kitchen to a living room and he made a real sacrifice when he chopped down his beloved holly tree to make room for a porch to let in the sunlight. But soon he was as much interested in the project as I and showed his pride by showing the place to visitors and saying, "You should have seen it before."

The house has the ^aroma of a good past, contributed to by forebears who were simple folk and solid. I feel deeply that symbolic of our heritage are the grapes, not only some 20 standard kinds of red, white, and blue, such as Grandpa Reynolds draped around his house in Brockton and pruned relentlessly, but more particularly, the wild kinds that Great Grandpa Capon acquired by going through the woods here and tasting. Those he liked most he draped over the stone walls as they grew, and named Big Blue, Backhouse Blue, Sugar. They make famous jelly.

The two-apartment idea had been with it from the beginning, over a hundred years before, when Great Grandpa Adam Capon moved into one side and Grandpa Jonathan, his son, just married, took the other. I still enjoy and feel proud of the architectural job I did on the house, although I have to give ~~to give~~ ^{credit} credit to the house itself, which lent itself to the rearrangement.

—— I've been involved in medical tests, and finally a major operation. I'm home now, and taking it easy, although to satisfy an urge to produce I have over 50 jars of current jelly to my credit, and a dozen aprons for the next church fair. Soon production will consist of changing wormy apples into good apple sauce, then grape juice, and then more jelly....

In the hospital, to be sure, I was again involved in living other people's lives, old social worker that I am. I was identified with Italian-American and Irish-American families and their plentiful children. Now at home activities around the church are quiescent for the summer, and only occasionally does someone come by to call. It feels strange to be isolated from most social contacts. I try to believe that when you get old you have to be content with what fiddling around comes your way, but I can't quite pull it off.

I can see that most of my contacts will have to be in letters....well, OK. So long as they are real contacts and I have something to say.

—— As I end the reading of your book I have perhaps an unavoidable sense of something unfinished. How does one write of the slow deterioration of a life? Or perhaps one would say, why does one? Is there something to be shown to someone, or is it enough to purge the reader by pity and fear? Perhaps no moral is intended or needed, just a running account of how people lived and feel in a certain place at

a certain time. I'm sure a writer doesn't have to kill his tragic characters always to give a feeling that the story is ended. Somehow I can't account for a feeling that this story isn't ended. In your book is a dream--a dream that hints that a bright ending is coming for some, but not for the main tragic character. Perhaps my trouble has been that there is too great a gap between present defeat and final victory--a final victory not enough prepared for. How could I make a story worth while for any reader out of a life which unfolded and grew in a new profession and was always striving for principles that failed to win acceptance--A life that in a downward movement has eclipsed all that striving?

Eclipsed too, my book, Learning and Teaching, which has gone out of print. Some of my friends in New York got stirred up about it, went to see the publisher but couldn't do anything about it, as I knew they couldn't. Then a new idea hit them. Why not write another? This time an autobiography of the 40 crucial years in social work that corresponds to my working life, 1913-1953. I'd said never again, but this struck me as a must, especially if I'm free to say all I think about these times and ~~what~~ social work has and hasn't done. They said, 'Say it.' Maybe they won't find a publisher able to swallow the class struggle without gagging... And so here I am, writing like all get-out. I plan to write two or three mornings a week, no more, and keep my other duties as usual. The trouble is I can't let it alone, and find myself with the

clothes not washed till Friday, and the kitchen maybe not scrubbed at all. We eat regularly so Frank doesn't mind. It's a wonderful feeling to have something to do that I feel is important, that wakes me up every morning glad for a new day.

I have learned an important lesson, ~~is~~ the necessity for health of mind and body and of full movement through the whole range of our senses. We need to be stimulated as much as we need food if we are to really live. We must digest experience and make it our own; we must give it out in some form of action.....communicate we must, or our thoughts grow stale and any interest in new ideas recedes."

In writing the book I can organize my life around a purpose again, and believe me, the lack of it is what has been bedevilling me almost ever since I came home."

"The project, it seems, dominates my life as it does this letter. Sometimes I transgress the morning-hours limit, especially when something is seething to be set down, or I've been interrupted to do a pot roast. Mostly, though, I can leave it and only think about it the rest of the time. You'd be surprised how much it floods everything else I do, with significance and happiness."

"As I began to work on the earliest period, I realized it would be unwise to set up a censorship for length. It is difficult for me to make an outline in advance. The material has a way of growing on me and changing and shifting the relationship of parts as it goes along, so that if I have made an

outline I promptly make it over. I determined to feel my way among the memories and documentary material, probing, absorbing, soaking up with my sense of significance alert. So I am letting myself go doing a job with wholeness no matter what we may find necessary later, in regard to publication.

There has been a suggestion that I should have a junior collaborator in writing the book. I wonder what the reasons are? Is it that so old an author needs someone to curb garrulousness; is it that publishers have found me difficult before and the collaborator would be a buffer to boost me out of my stubborn ways and act as an authoritative censor of my subversive tendencies?

The writing is pretty well blocked out. I need to go to Boston to a library and go over reports. I have Mary Richmond's papers in The Long View and they are a gold mine. I must review the legislation of 1912-13, Mother's Pensions, Workmen's Compensation, Minimum Wage. I have Mary Van Kleeck's paper which a committee of social workers prepared for North Carolina Charities and Correction in 1912 and which was incorporated in Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party's program in that election.

I have been amazed that, having started out to show how undeveloped social work was in 1913, my researches prove that it was more advanced in some respects than today. There was much more radical thinking than now, and perhaps more, even, than in the 30's. Only our lip-service to democracy is better. I shall have a hard time if I try to show advance and not

retreat in these forty years. And how dreadful to produce an anti-climax! Of course I know that I write now from a low point in history, and the upsurge is sure to come. How can I say that, I wonder, when the signs are so few? I'll worry about that when I get to it. Maybe I'll have another revolution to report by that time.

I've got to read considerably more to understand that period thoroughly and interpret it fairly. It can't be a matter of "I was there and this is what I saw." I was blind as a bat most of the time, and only got the meaning of things years later.

Social Work was all split up into fields with little to draw them together. I think that it was having a school (and not just apprentice training) that unified the separate fields as it built a body of theory out of what they had in common.

Personal biography comes in here--it shows something about the development of Social Work in that day, that so poor a risk as I was accepted for training without much question. I tell enough about my flounderings after college and my lack of social experience since infancy to establish this.

I find it hard to discipline myself to stop at the end of the morning. It is better to, for then my other duties get done with much less rush. I fall for temptation sometimes and at least type in the afternoon.

I'm reminded of the party of Social Workers who went to the World's Fair in Chicago, and while taking a boat ride on the Midway got tipped over and expected to drown. Their last cry

as they sank was, "Oh dear, I never finished my dictation."

But in this kind of job, time spent in soaking up ideas while doing something else is often more productive than steaming ahead and throwing it all away afterwards.

Eleanor Flexner writes, thrilled, and pours on advice not to let too many people tell me too many things, or I'll never get done or come out with a mish-mash. She has no idea how pig-headed I am.

———— "At the moment I'm in the trough of the waves, and think the opus rather boresome, but I suppose that will pass. It is like making a dress, which goes like fire while it is being cut and first put together, and then takes^an unconscionable time to finish." ~~sp. 7~~

For one thing the typing is so poor. Certain fingers don't have the strength they should...I have had my Smithⁱ Corona 40 years. I thought the Smith Corona agency in Brockton had just gone out of business but the man had told me that the Smith Corona firm buys up all the old ones and hires men to smash them to force people to buy new models. He found out by trying to get old ones for repair work. I have resorted to longhand lately as this[↓] machine (Olivetti) knows much less than the Smith Corona about my touch system.

———— The sponsoring group in New York had me come for a meeting. Four of us spent an evening with Grace, the reader for Association Press, who had lots of ideas. She said, "If you want a book to sell, don't bput 'social' or 'social work' anywhere in the title." I asked how anyone could write about something

and not mention it, but can see she has a point. I tried out the idea of calling the book, "Forty Years in the Wilderness," but she said it might be taken for a nature book!

I told Rachel yesterday that I see my big problem was to convince myself really that social work is absorbingly interesting. She disagrees with Grace, who commented about social work in the title, because Rae finds everywhere a keen interest in how you help people, if one keeps away from technical jargon. Her theory is--and I'm sure she's right--that because social work rejected me, I withdrew in hurt and rejected it. As to my not reading the professional magazines, Rachel says there's a reality to that distaste, for she can't get through the accumulated verbiage either. So, as I see it, if I can really become convinced that I still love social work, I can write a book about it that will inspire others. Don't know how, but if anything can inspire me it's the enthusiasm of Rachel and the group.

There is a part of the book that I may call "Citizens of the World," showing what a challenge~~s~~ was presented to social work (by Mary Van Kleeck and others) which they didn't take. The dilemma remains that if I report facts, social workers flubbed all chances to be of leadership quality in a time of world crisis. What I have tended to do was to separate myself increasingly and show that I responded to the challenge, though social work did not. I'll have to stay with it, say what the challenges were, and that they will have to be taken up if there is to be any future. Bless me, what a job. And

first of all reforming my own attitudes. I'll see what I can do about that while I take care of the current crop.

I got in a good two hours on my book this morning. There remains a summary of the science of society and history to which I was introduced around 1936. I have likened this unpopular doctrine to Freud's, and shown why it was shocking. Freud brought sex out into the open and was therefor a dirty man. Marx brought out exploitation and said there was no need of it--even more shocking, and still is. Because so thoroughly repressed, Marxist ideas are surrounded with distortion and maligned. No one who doesn't understand this can begin to approach them in a scientific spirit.

"The sponsoring group has raised doubts about the wisdom of putting in my book that Marxist thought became my philosophy. They liked the ideas but thought them better unlabeled, so I have had to deal with this problem. Well...It is an autobiography of a Marxist so the subject can't be avoided altogether.

In the book I showed the interwoven strands by which I gradually became a Marxist. I thought about all this again and decided to explain to the sponsoring group why I had to give the source of my ideas. So I wrote the inevitable letter.

The Marxist outlook is my blood stream, the source of life. I ask myself still why I should talk of it. I don't feel obliged to tell my religion. The point is that Marxism is my real religion, the scientific world outlook by which I understand the world and to which I give my life, Whatever

contribution I have made to social work is an outgrowth of this very thing, and without it would be bloodless and empty.

What would be left would not be me in any real sense.

I could not, without loss of integrity, urge upon my readers a sentimental or mystical relatedness of social work to the world around it, because I do not believe it is that..
....If I am recommending a scientific approach to finding the place of social work in the world, then, I have to refer to sources of information whereby people can find out for themselves.

I think there is an obligation not to conceal the source, especially as it is already buried under a mountain of lies, and will be uncovered sometime, by somebody.

In this book I think I have succeeded in showing the five interwoven strands by which I gradually came to this way of thinking:

My background outside of class divisions yet definitely predisposed to identification with workers.

The psychology of a child without security or acceptance who had to earn a place in the world.

The effect of the Depression in revealing deficiencies in our economic system.

My need to find a world view that dealt rationally with the contradictions of the economic system.

The inspiration of knowing some people who practiced as well as believed in the Marxist world philosophy.

So the book is full of Marxist thinking--because I can't think any other way.

I do not fear the recoil from mention of Marxism as much as many do. But, as you know, I am pessimistic about publishing, in this generation at least.

I thought that might put an end to the sponsoring group's valiant efforts to get the book out at all. But they liked that letter so much that they now want that to go into the book itself....!

However, I don't envy them the job they will have getting a publisher, but that's what they're determined to do!

 I have something big, not frightening, but very satisfying by the tail. Thanks be to one Antonio Gramsci, who wrote 30 years ago while he was dying in Mussolini's jail.

I have to try to tell you what I'm getting out of Gramsci for myself. We've clearly been too mechanical in interpretation of economic determinism, which is basic. Gramsci studies the superstructure of ideology--arts, sciences--and made me see quite freshly the importance of the superstructure, not only as influenced by the economic and technical development, but as influencing in turn. He analyzes the failures of developing socialism after the people's taking of power to show that if the superstructure is not brought into harmony with the economic revolution, then the state itself may disintegrate. And then he discusses the gap between

intellectual leadership and the mass of the people moving more slowly, and the absolute necessity both that there shall be no limit set on free enquiry, and that all the people should be brought along, constantly renewing and vitalizing leadership. One vivid passage states that a new world view may make headway for a time as the property of a suppressed group, as Christianity did, and its defects in theory may be harmful, but not serious, while its exponents are without power. When the revolution comes and they do take power, theoretical mistakes can become disastrous, separating leadership from the people who are slow but, on the whole, sounder....What do I get personally? I see a place for myself at long last in a movement that doesn't need visible, organized form to be vital. If it is true that in this period, when the economic and technical productive forces have already produced revolution in one-third of the world and created conditions pressing towards it in most of the rest, one of the urgent needs in the next period is to catch up in social relationships and ideology-- in other words, prepare people to live in a socialist world-- then there is something I can work on for as long as I can work at all, and feel that it counts because it's part of something others are doing, too. I've always been a misfit in the movement because I have no talents for the tasks by which individuals assist political and economic change, organizing, leading mass action, etc. Nor was I an intellectual, grasping the weapon of culture. I could see a role as long as my professional opportunities held out. But when they went, where

was I? I could write. What about? And to whom? Gramsci gave me a better feel for the immense changes in people's thinking that are going on all the time in many forms, and into which any individual may throw his bid. I can see that I've been afraid of such a label as "intellectual." In my upbringing it was associated with upper class, which I didn't want; and for a woman with denial of all warm emotions, giving up all hope of marriage, which I thought I did want, though heaven knows why with the distorted idea I had of it. At least the mind I've got is in the best working order of any part of me, and likely to continue longest. I have some talent for integration, bridge-building over to Christianity, for instance, of which I can see the defects clearly, yet cooperate with what is good and vital in it.

The truth of it is that I'm more and more sure that one thinks with ~~w~~one's whole self, not intellect alone, and there are times when the elements that make up the whole aren't in balance. For instance, the body demands too much attention, intellect is appreciated too much for the wrong reasons, joyousness gets lost in trying to catch up with what has to be done--I think I'm right in believing that one does not get the creative balance by saying "Now I'm going to be creative," but by living harmoniously all over till something strikes a beautiful chord. Some activities help and some hinder, and one must find out which is which by living.

— Well, I supposed you wonder how the book is going. This month has been one of hard work (did you see the sparks from my grindstone on the winter sky?) and not spectacular results. I could not

tell if it was loss of momentum or that the material is difficult. Of course it is a groaning job:--writing about a time when disaster piled on disaster, of which a large part, especially the McCarthy era, is unbelievable to many people, and one can't explain without going back and back. The attacks on public assistance, labor, and civil liberties are so intertwined that one must connect them and yet one gets nowhere by appearing paranoid. It is not a disorganized struggle. I know where I'm going and I'm getting there, but it is plain hard work.

— I am uneasy about a gap which might be enough to discredit the whole book--the gap between what many people will think is my idealistic picture of the USSR and what they think are brutal realities.*

After all, why should failure under Stalin be more than a challenge to the rest of the world to do better the work of transforming a decaying society into a socialist new world?

Marxism/Leninism is a never-ending search for truth and accepts inevitable failures. It learns from them and goes on.

Merely to mention Marxism or Russia not only exposes the abysmal ignorance and cultivated misinformation of public opinion, but tends to leave readers to assume my support of a bloody dictatorship which is utterly at variance with my whole life philosophy, I have added a couple of meaty footnotes for this, although aware that I cannot go into a lengthy apologetic discussion, nor would I want to. I kept feeling that I had said too much or too little and would satisfy nobody, not even myself. Finally, I saw what the trouble was--I was trying to solve through this book a personal problem of isolation that has in present reality no solution. To pretend I had found one would help nobody else, nor me. So I just cut out a few paragraphs and have felt

better ever since. I don't think they will ever be missed.

_____ Could you guess it? This is the first act of a "reformed character." Last night, a foggy reminder of spring, I shook myself and resolved, "No more of the grindstone business." The most potent reason: I can't afford to go stale and let the book get stale too. Working too constantly defeats its purpose in the long run. So I'm going to enjoy everything from now on, and stop feeling guilty about the book when I type 25 letters for the Sobell case, or about doing the job of living when I clear everything to one side for the book. I'll have to strike a balance and live with it. I jubilated over the weekend that it was all done but typing. Then I started Monday morning rewrites and throwings-away that have stuffed my wastebasket. If I now think I've almost reached the same place my jubilation is cautiously subdued.

I have worked a lot on revisions. I see that statements fail when one tries to sum up what is too vast in world change, and too small when it comes to reliable learning. ^{The best learning takes place under the surface where words cannot go} I think I have resolved some big doubts that were bothering me last summer, so the project has done a lot for me, even if it is unsatisfactory either as literature or inspiration for others. The book sticks where I have an unsolved problem of my own. This time, it is adjustment to living without what I have considered essential--work with people and fellowship. I have slowly come to realize there is no solution in a society that cannot use its old people any more than its young creatively. Unless social workers shed some of their illusions and really know whence come the disabilities that hamper our practice, there's no hope for us.