Otherwise, politicians and bureaucrats will find many of the articles in this book to be politically naive. Politicians and bureaucrats are often treated as benevolent despots, without preferences of their own and interests to serve, standing ready to adopt any policy mechanism that is technically efficient and effective. Paradoxically, Professor Gardner Brown's review of the experience of six European countries with pollution charges (where rates are set by political negotiation, not environmental considerations) may be the most instructive for British Columbia. The policy mechanisms used to control pollution of various sorts and in various places in British Columbia are permeated by administrative and political considerations at all levels of government. One wishes that the now defunct British Columbia Institute of Economic Policy Analysis were still around to sponsor another conference that would integrate such political and administrative considerations with the economic and technical ones included in this collected volume of articles from a 1975 Conference at the University of Victoria. This volume is, nevertheless, the best of the five volumes of conference proceedings sponsored by the Institute. It owes no small part in its success to the selection of capable contributors by Professor Fox of the Westwater Research Centre at the University of British Columbia, and to the succinct summaries of the articles provided by the editor throughout the book.

University of Victoria MARK SPROULE-JONES

Right Hand Left Hand, edited by David Arnason and Kim Todd. Erin; Press Porcepic. Pp. 280.

Right Hand Left Hand is subtitled "A True Life of the Thirties." It is really a memoir of that decade compiled in the form of a scrapbook with commentary. The moving spirit is Dorothy Livesay, whose formative decade is here displayed; the editors, who have presumably had a great deal to do with the selection and arrangement of the material, are David Arnason and Kim Todd.

Dorothy Livesay was born in Winnipeg in 1909. Her family moved to Toronto in 1920, and there her father was engaged in journalism and eventually founded the Canadian Press Agency; her mother was an amateur writer whose own work was banal and who perhaps contributed most to her world and time by encouraging European immigrants with literary

inclinations to remain true to their own traditions while making the necessary adaptations to the life of the New World.

As a schoolgirl, Dorothy Livesay was already writing poetry, and her first book, *Green Pitcher*, appeared in 1928 when she was nineteen. The quality of her work was soon recognized by fellow poets; *Right Hand Left Hand* includes a letter from E. J. Pratt in 1935 praising her "Day and Night" as a "splendid bit of work." She lived the student life of the time in Toronto and Montreal and Paris; she became involved in the Communist Party and the various literary groups connected with it, wrote for *Masses*, was one of the editors of *New Frontiers*, and wrote agit-prop drama to be performed at the Toronto Progressive Arts Club and elsewhere. Later, as a writer for *New Frontiers*, she moved west, back to her native Winnipeg, and on to the coal mining country of Crows Nest, and then to Vancouver, where she married a soft-spoken Scottish accountant named Duncan McNair, and began the association with the West Coast, with Vancouver and Victoria, that brought her into close contact with Alan Crawley and the *Contemporary Verse* circle.

It is only the last pages of *Right Hand Left Hand* that bring us to the Coast. Dorothy actually arrived in August 1936, but by that time the peak of her Thirties was already past, with the Spanish Civil War and its special griefs and enthusiasms merely prolonging loyalties that were already dwindling, so that it is very clear that some time before the end of the decade she had ceased to be militantly active in left-wing causes and had turned increasingly to the personal and poetic life. It would be during the next decade on the West Coast that she would achieve her first peak of achievement as a poet; later, in the Sixties, she would excel her own past and become — in this reviewer's opinion — one of the best of living Canadian poets or, for that matter, of Canadian poets in any age.

There is really not a great deal in the 280 pages of *Right Hand Left Hand* that clearly anticipates Dorothy Livesay's later quality as a writer, though the book will doubtless be read by literary historians as a source of clues for her later successes. The earliest poems (from 1928) are romantically derivative:

> As long ago one thought he heard a voice
> And could not move until he called her name;
> The name of all names surely loveliest,
> Of lost, foreover lost, Eurydice.

Three years later an individual tone and a sharp visual presentation were becoming evident, as in lines like those that open "Old Trees at Père La Chaise":

Old trees drift silently all down the hill,
And stop beside the green grass at the gate.
Encaged with tombs, they feel the wind, and wait.

And then we are into the socially conscious Thirties, the voice is strident, and the sentiments, with their deference to "proletarian" values, remind one of Cecil Day Lewis in his more naive moods:

Now I am alive, having created
My breath one with yours, fighter and toiler,
My hands ready, with yours, young worker
To crush the boss, the stifler
To rise above his body with a surge of beauty —
A wave of us, storming the world.

Yet, as with all the good Thirties poets, whether they were Americans or Canadians or the British who influenced Dorothy Livesay so much at this time, there were moments of pure lyric or elegiac intensity that emerged from a political dedication which in the brief hiatus between conversion and disillusionment was frank and inspired, and this quality emerges in poems like Dorothy Livesay's elegy on Lorca.

You dance. Explode
Unchallenged through the door
As bullets burst
Long deaths ago, your heart.

And song outsoars
The bomber's range
Serene with wind-
Manoeuvred cloud.

Light flight and word
The unassailed, the token!

These poems of the time, which include personal lyrics, political elegies, and even a mini-epic called "Catalonia" which I first published in *Canadian Literature* thirty years after it was written, are embedded in the mass of material which I have called a scrapbook, since, apart from a few passages of narrative continuity which Dorothy Livesay has recently written, it consists of documents of various kinds that she and other people have preserved from the Thirties. Perhaps, to catch the flavour of the time, I should indeed call the whole compilation a documentary rather than a scrapbook, for the Thirties was the age when the documentary came into being, in writing, radio, film; the age when in England the

younger poets went around gathering *faits divers* for Mass Observation; the age when Orwell went off to the north of England and came back with the factual diaries and the masses of figures he stuffed into *The Road to Wigan Pier.* Original facts, and if possible original documents to support them, were one of the passions of the era, and they produced some very interesting books long before people like Barry Broadfoot and Heather Robertson got into the act with tape recorders.

In this sense *Right Hand Left Hand* is very much a belated Thirties book, full of documents, and all of them print rather than electronic documents — poems, articles, newspaper items, photographs, letters between Dorothy and her friends and family, playbills, an interview about Dorothy with her closest friend of the period, and even pieces, like a letter from Bethune and Ted Allan's interview with Hemingway, which have no evident connection with Dorothy Livesay personally, but which obviously had enough meaning for her at the time to be preserved among her papers.

As a collection documenting one writer's development during a dynamic and long-past decade *Right Hand Left Hand* is indeed fascinating, and the fact that the Livesay of the Seventies is constantly breaking in with her linking comments is surprisingly undisruptive. I think this is because of the total honesty and also the lack of self-condemnation with which Dorothy Livesay regards her past. There is neither guilt nor bitterness; these were the actions that came naturally to her at the time, and she asks no pardon for them, nor indeed does she spend much time explaining what seemed and seems to her so natural; she presents and describes but in no sense offers an apologia. Let me quote two passages to illustrate the honesty with which she treats memories. The first arises from her agitational-cultural activities in Montreal between 1933 and 1934.

> I learned a great deal about Communist tactics of penetration and camouflage; but I was too committed to be shocked. It was only years later that the false actions and fractional tactics were revealed to me in their true light. This did not cause me to hate the communists or to red-bait; rather I was disgusted with myself for having been so duped. But I believe I let myself be duped because no one except the communists seemed to be concerned about the plight of our people, nor to be aware of the threat of Hitler and war. . . .

The second is the last passage of the book, telling of her feelings early in World War II:

> All our perspectives had changed since that Sunday morning when Churchill's voice came over the radio saying that he was giving his support to Stalin. They were joining together to defeat Hitler! This was a moment of intense

emotion for us. Soon all the comrades who had been in jail were released. The unemployed men and women joined the army and the communists, though never permitted to go to the front, marched down the streets of Canada in battle dress. We were all in high hopes again that this time it truly would be a war that would change the world. Instead, we received Hiroshima.

And in that last sentence the future years of reassessment, of realizing life on a deeper level than politics are opened before us. To the readers of Dorothy Livesay's poetry who are as interested in what she became as in how she began, another and more personal volume regarding her later life — whether it be documentary or straight autobiography — is a sequel to *Right Hand Left Hand* to be awaited with eager curiosity.

GEORGE WOODCOCK