For each profession there are different letter-writing rules. For example, dentists writing on the present financial situation of water dispute could say, "As dentists, we are aware..." but could not write, "As a dentist with years of very successful practice..." Lawyers may do neither, unless they wish to reveal their name. All they may do is sign their name to deal with the matters raised without stating with what authority they speak. In this matter no reason why the Bar Council or Incorporated Law Institute think of it, is plain silly. Much of the worth of such letters is the authority behind them. And the public deserves to know that authority so that it has some better basis of judgment.

Lawyers, particularly, have set up extraordinary rules for themselves on this score. In the recent Peter Clyne case, one of the Bar Council's charges was that Clyne had participated in a public debate on divorce reform and that in the advertisements for the debate he was listed as a barrister. While many of the people who remembered Clyne as a first-rate debater at university would have gone to hear him on any other matter, what his qualifications, recture. Here, things like price-cutting, sharing commissions, advertising and so on can get an architect thrown out of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and give him the disapprobation of members, but he is still a practising architect.

All this is not to deny that most of the rules of the professional associations are excellent and in the public interest. Certainly it is a good thing that doctors, dentists and veterinaries are prevented from having their names on medical propositions, and that doctors cannot be directors of private hospitals and funeral parlours (a ghastly combination of this sort was recently exposed in Sydney). But there is no doubt that some are silly.

There are some professions that are not registered by statute at all, but still have very strict professional rules. Accountants, in States other than N.S.W. and Queensland, and stockbrokers are unhamppered by statute but hag-tied by their own regulations. Stockbrokers, particularly, are bound by a mass of rules and interpretations. Most of them are soundly based and designed to protect the public, but many of them are aimed at protecting stockbrokers from other stockbrokers. Regulations against client-stealing and staff-stealing, about advertising, rates of brokerages, and against the splitting of commissions are in this second category.

To a large degree, the Stock Exchange's strictness against advertising (particularly in Sydney) is out of date, and a lot of brokers realize it. Only recently were Sydney brokers allowed to advertise in The Press at all, and that being limited to only a 1" deep by 4" wide maximum space. And this concession, like several others, was "forced on us by unfair competition from Melbourne," whose Exchange seems a little more realistic and more aware of modern business requirements. But Sydney is still an old-maidish about the size of a broker's name when it appears as an underwriter in an advertised new issue, some funny things are seen. For example, the recent Chevron Syndicate was listed as "underwritten by a Sydney and a Melbourne broker. In the advertisements for it, the Melbourne broker's name was in type about twice as large as the Sydney broker's, which rested next door to it in the discreet maximum allowed by the Sydney Stock Exchange.

**Idealists or Ratbags?**

**Life on the Fringe**

By HENRY MAYER

**ALTHOUGH** our pre-occupation with bread-and-butter issues in politics leaves little room for minorities, inspired by an idea or for the pedlars of lost causes, Australia still has its share of these minor political sects. All of them share three things: their ideology is borrowed abroad; with the exception of the "New Left," they are douring (they manage to vegetate on the fringes either of the major parties or the fringes of sanity); they are marginal in every sense - without real hope, yet constantly having to delude themselves that soon, very soon, they will not only join but indeed be the stream of history. There is a hierarchy even among the minorities. On one end of the scale you have, as in the "New Left," people who have just started, who are still optimists, who have not blood and regular contacts with others outside the group. On the other end, there are the Henry Georgeists, who are ageing men, droning on the single solution others refuse to see. They cling desperately to their seedy offices, their stocks of dusty old books, their lectures. A new face or a published letter to the editor is a major event. Their regular means of sustenance is the book of Press cuttings, and one of them recently left over a dozen volumes of his scrapbooks to the Mitchell Library. But this is not the bottom: They have a paper and an office. They can look down on the Domain or Yarra Bank spruiker whom once sent stuffing out of the Public or Municipal Library, his scraps of scribbled-on lavatory paper clutched tightly, as if to warm himself.

On the surface, one can distinguish the fringers who are rational and sane (within the framework of their lost cause) from the real paranoids.

In the first category, the oldest, dullest, and most respectable ones are the followers of Henry George, clinging to the tax on land values as the solution to all the problems of the universe. They are in the top drawer; they have at least two, regular meetings, The Standard and Progress, some sympathizers in the A.L.F. who at times can be persuaded to address a meeting, members in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, a regular Senate team in Victoria, an occasional broadcast and small display advertisement, "School of Social Science." Their preaching is mostly to the converted, though a couple of their members try to spread the gospel in the W.E.A.

The Social Crediters are already
much closer to paranoia. They are deeply split on the exact interpretation of the A' plus B theorem. One branch runs a 'Journal, New Age', in which one finds a mixture of Social Credit, anti-Semitism, and fascists relating to foods, manuring methods and fluoridation. There are links between them and such extreme right-wing organisations as 'The League of Rights', which distributes the speeches of McCarthy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

On the 'left', there are a number of groupings running all the way from purists to pragmatists, from 'old' left to 'new' left. A few Trotskyites of the orthodox type issue a 4-page monthly, 'The Socialist'. The Fabian Society seems to be dead in N.S.W. but lingers on in Victoria and W.A. The Socialist Labour Party, followers of Daniel De Leon's peculiar mixture of purism (no immediate demands) and syndicalism, which was of some importance in the days of the Industrial Workers of the World and the attempts to form One Big Union in the early '20s, has been whittled away for decades. A couple of years ago it was still vegetating in an old building in Bathurst Street. The man in the skull cap in the office was sure I had been sent by the Security Police when I tried to get some old pamphlets from him. He was entirely surrounded by Press cuttings which had not yet been pasted up, and there were eight pots of glue.

The group with the most pretentious name, the Socialist Party of Australia, is perhaps the smallest but certainly also the most intelligent of the "old" left. The S.P.A., with maybe 20 members, is a 'sister party' to a group which has existed in England since 1904 without ever changing a word of its principles. This body, the Socialist Party of Great Britain (known as "small Party of Good Boys" to unkind souls), is unique. It is rationalism run riot. No immediate demands, because before you can get socialism, i.e., a classless, moneyless, leaderless, conflictless, society, the majority of people must first understand that it is all about their candidates never make any promises — and regularly lose their deposits. SPA'ers are young, pleasant, reliable, terribly serious, and about the only people of Australian who really know their Marx. Since they proclaimed from 1917 onwards that the Russian Revolution was not socialist, and since they have always opposed all other parties, they are buoyed up by being able to say "I told you so." But most of the time they have to say it to each other. In Melbourne, their few members tend to be active unionists; in Sydney, they are more intellectual and put their case in the Domain, at the former Socialist Forums, in debates with other small groups, and at W.E.A. lectures. Their spokesman (he would reject that title) manages two paperbacks bookshops with skill and an eye for the unusual. Just as virgins do not usually worry about alternative methods of birth control, the gentle SPA'ers sticks to his purity of principle by re-defining politics so as to exclude compromise, power, choices between values, manipulation, irrationality is unfair to include them with the fringe political groups.

The "New Left", holding their second national conference this month, is by far the largest of these groups. It is held together by a journal, 'Outlook', edited by Helen Palmer, with a circulation of nearly 10,000 a month, consists mostly of University people, has many supporters who left the Communist Party in Hungary. Since a monograph by Alan Barcan on it is shortly being published, I will not deal with it here.

Paranoid movements and tendencies certainly seem to come out more clearly on the right. Professional Anti-Semites have been seen at work in 'The Observer' in an earlier issue (19/9/59). They have recently been joined by a Workers' National Party which, so far as I have been able to discover, is made up of one or two men distributing a British Fascist publication, 'Combat'.

An old-established body is the "peaceful Union," which advertises most Fridays in the Press cuttings to the world at large the latest Communist plot and to show how and why it fits in with Lenin's master plan, which, properly interpreted, is the clue to world history. In 'The Observer' with this meaty stuff, the Sane Democracy League is pretty colourless, contenting itself with exposing the A.L.P. Labour supporters see these two groups and others of a more sporadic kind as financed by the Liberal Party, and doing work which is "too dirty" for it, especially at elections and referenda. In fact, the Lefts find this sort of stuff rather embarrassing.

All these bodies are the very essence of rationality compared with those who believe in the Great Catholic Conspiracy. It is here that one gets closest to a dinky-di Australian flavour. The anti-Catholicite are well in for a tough time today. Instead of running a fat weekly newspaper, 'The Watchman', as it did in the first decades of the century, the Loyal Orange Lodge has to content itself with an annual demonstration to mark the Battle of the Boyne. 'The Rock', which used to be a weekly, has become a thin monthly. The old headlines ("Beastly Brother in Bed with Boy") have lost their punch. In Victoria, there is still a Victorian Protestant Federation, but its monthly, 'The Vigilant', is anaemic in comparison with what used to circulate in the '20s. In New South Wales, the extreme Protestant fringe is organised in a council, but doesn't seem to do much else beyond attacking immigration policy and Mr. Santamaria in Letters to the Editor. Some years ago there was a "Protestant People's Party" in N.S.W., which polled, from memory, a couple of hundred thousand votes in the Senate elections: it had no 1 position on the ballot paper.

To revive the days of Dill Mackay and the Australian Protestant Defence Association, one has to turn to an occasional book. One, by a gentleman who is an expert in this field, has just been published. (H. W. Crittenden: 'Behind the Black Curtain: A Book of Unholy Revelations. Humanist Press, Sydney. 25s.) Here is the real thing: 'This is a book of startling, even shocking revelations. It lists some of the principal reasons, in high places and low, in peace and war; of corruptions in every department of the Australian way of life; of incredibly successful nation-wide organisations working under the lines of decentralised discipline and control. Soon the black curtain is lifted: The Vatican is the cause of two world wars, the secret third force which prevents a settlement of the Cold War.
Observer's Diary

Dr. Evatt and "The Sydney Morning Herald"

ANALYSTS of the behaviour of The Sydney Morning Herald may have been puzzled by the fact that (except for the Menzies column) it has avoided discussion — almost to the extent of censorship — on whether Dr. Evatt should be appointed Chief Justice of N.S.W. His appointment to this position has been in the air for some time. It was one conclusion ever since the first kite was flown some months ago. The Herald's reason for keeping quiet is not the belief that there should not be discussion of appointments to the judiciary; one can imagine the fuss they would kick up if Mr. Menzies were to be appointed Chief Justice. In fact, there is a long record of diversity in the United Kingdom whenever a politician has been mooted as a Chief Justice.

What has got under the Herald's skin is nothing less than the fact that the most popular Labour Party which will give Mr. Menzies a run for his money. This is a practical application of their editorial line in the last Federal election, when they maintained enough people to vote Labour to give the Government a fright and shake belief in Mr. Menzies — but they did not want too many people to vote for Labour in the final result. This was one conclusion social engineering to an unusually high degree of precision.

Mr. Angus Maude, the former British Conservative M.P. who is now editor of the Herald, appears to be taking some personal part in this subtle manoeuvre. He has most enthusiastically joined the anti-Menzies camp — even to the extent of ticking off Lord Bruce for saying that Australia was in the grip of inflation. The argument runs that Lord Bruce took the pension that was offered him by the Richardson report and that there was a clear causal connection between the Richardson report, the margins decision, etc., inflation, etc., etc.

The idea that if Dr. Evatt goes, Labour will again be elected is not the D.L.P. vote is not going to vote for Mr. Caldwell — or anyone else at present in the Parliamentary Labour Party. The 1954 split was not a superficial phase: it represented the implacable irritation of politics, and fiddling around with the leadership will make no difference. The idea that Labour should be bolstered up to provide such an option is also naive: parties move up and down if they are moving up, the movement tends to accelerate. The collapse of the Australian Labour Party is only part of the general nervous exhaustion of socialist parties everywhere.

Reports

From Tibor Meray

ON page 22 Tibor Meray has an article on the death of Camus—the first of the article now being written regularly for the Observer from Paris about cultural developments. He was a late date in the Melbourne "Peace" conference and this release has been carefully considered. His comment on his next novel, which is a country town in the South N.W., and his next book is "Looking for Hitler:" he is also planning a novel's case.