

as free from social philosophy as a three-second-old babe, might have said something about the materialistic interpretation of news faking, but for the honor of freedom of the press he has happily refrained.)

Now let us consider for a moment the case of the war correspondent who takes his job honestly and does neither jazz nor fake the news. Here is poor Will Barber whose malaria-racked body lies in a shallow grave on a hill outside the capital. His closest friend, Robinson MacLean of The Toronto Evening Telegram, whose book is called *John Hoy of Ethiopia (His Majesty)*² tells how Barber risked his life to get the story for The Chicago Tribune, one of Hearst's chief rivals. When MacLean was packing Barber's belongings he found two telegrams from The Chicago Tribune, one saying that a news agency had called him a liar, had denied that he had ever visited the Ogaden desert (where he was bitten by malarial mosquitos) and the other saying: "OUR READERS WHO HAVE SEEN REAL WAR DON'T SHARE YOUR EXCITEMENT." The Chicago Tribune, like the Hearst papers and others, wanted blood and cannonfire, and Barber had not faked. Therefore he was called down by the home office. And after he died, a failure as a war correspondent in Chicago opinion, he was awarded the Pulitzer prize the other day—as the best of the lot, according to the Pulitzer opinion.

Mr. MacLean is no less a romantic than Mr. Hubbard and his book also is light journalism about the war. Once or twice he has something important to say. He tells, for instance, the story of the arrival on the Ethiopian side of a company of Mussolini's African troops, deserters, whom he interviews. "What did the Italians in your camp talk about?" he asks and quotes the black soldiers replying:

Some were praying that God might make the war be over. They said Mussolini told them they could win the country in two days. . . . I myself would like to cut Mussolini's neck and eat his meat uncooked.

This is a revealing little story. It should be followed by an investigation into the whole matter of employing native troops in the wars of fascism and imperialism. Even newspaper readers have not failed to notice that every Italian advance and practically all the little fighting there has been in Ethiopia, was done by Askaris, or Negro soldiers recruited in the Italian colonies. In the World War the French used Senegalese and Madagascar and other colored troops who likewise were forced into a white man's war about which they knew nothing. In all colonies in Africa and elsewhere the colonizing nations have devised systems of fraud, chicanery and terrorism by which natives are recruited and become the sacrifices of white man's imperialism.

But Hubbard also recounts episodes to

prove that white men, who presumably know what is going on, are not the eager soldiers which propagandists have represented them.

We have all seen the movies of the embarkation of Italian fascist troops; the joyfulness of going forth to murder, the pride of mothers sending their sons to death, the universal willingness to die for Benito Mussolini flickering on the screen, substantiating the newspaper reports that all Italy is united in this war for national honor—and profits. But Mr. Hubbard, not being a professional journalist, missed this demonstration of 100-percent fascism. Describing an embarkation he says:

Two-thirds of the soldiers were crying. . . . It was terrible. . . . There could be no doubt. The men being loaded upon that transport were not going willingly to war with the spirit of high adventure in their hearts. Men do not weep when they have that feeling pulsing through their blood.

There was a soldier . . . clinging desperately to an old bent woman, his mother. Both were crying. Two guards started for him. They laid hands on him and he fought them off. . . . There was no doubt he was cursing them and all their kind. He did not want to go, but go he had to. Clubs rose and fell. . . . The soldier slumped and his aged mother supported him, screaming vituperation upon the men who had so cruelly struck down her son. But it was war. . . .

I have of course picked out the few really significant episodes in these books and make a point of the exposure of news faking which certainly was not intended as the purpose of either of them. They are written as adventure and they are good adventure with a colorful background, pleasant, superficial, interesting, for those who want adventure when a nation is being murdered. A much more serious book is *Ethiopia, a Pawn in European Diplomacy*³ by Ernest Work, which I recommend for anyone who cares to follow the decades of intrigue among the superior nations which enabled Ethiopia to hold out so long as the last independent state in Africa.

But neither the adventure books nor the history get right down to the one fundamental fact: the driving force of self-preservation of finance capital and its political form, imperialistic government, which makes war a necessity and the exploitation of Asia, Africa, colonies, one's own working class, another necessity. On this subject the authors have nothing to report. All is quiet on the imperialist, capitalist, fascist front—in Africa. Nothing but life—and death.

³ *Ethiopia, a Pawn in European Diplomacy*, by Ernest Work. The Macmillan Co. \$2.50.

The Definition of Song

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

Singing is best, it gives right joy to speech.
Six years I squandered studying to teach
Expounding language. Singing it is better,
Teaching the joy of the song, not teaching the letter.

And of all forms of song surely the least
Is solo. Only lark in the east
Foretelling sun-rise, lone singer, can say
How volume will amplify with the arriving ray. . . .

So singing is the work of many voices.
For only so when choral mass rejoices
Is the lock sprung on human isolation
And all the many welded into one.

Body sings best when feet beat out the time.
Translated song, order of bold rhyme
Swing the great stanza on the pavement—use
The public street for publishing good news.

Deepest of all, essential to the song
Is common good, grave dogma of the throng;
Well-spring of affirmation in accord
Beneath the chanting utterance, the word.

Song is not static—joy becomes a dance.
In step, vast unison, in step advance.
This is the life of song: that it mean, and move
And state the massive power of our love.

² *John Hoy of Ethiopia (His Majesty)*, by Robinson MacLean. Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.50.

A Disaster and a Triumph

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON.

THE CAUSE of peace has today suffered a disaster and secured a triumph. The disaster is the apparently decisive victory of Italian fascism in Africa. The triumph is the superb rally of the people of France in the cause of peace, democracy and socialism.

Let us first face the extent of the disaster. The success of Italian fascist aggression has had exactly the consequences which ever since last summer the Communist Party has prophesied that it would have. It has immensely encouraged every potential aggressor. It has gravely prejudiced the attempt to establish a system of collective security strong enough to prevent aggression ever paying and on that attempt our lives depend. It is no idle task to fix the responsibility for this disaster, for the game is not yet played out. Despite the chorus of denial which is going up from almost every section of the British press, the responsibility for the breakdown of League action over Ethiopia rests first and foremost upon the British government. Mr. Anthony Eden in a speech of extreme self-righteousness says that,

We have nothing to reproach ourselves with, nothing to apologize for. . . . We have played our part not on behalf of any imperial interests nor for any selfish motives, but because as members of the League and signatories to the covenant we had an obligation which we shared with all other members of the League.

Almost the exact contrary is the truth. The British government was willing to honor its obligations under the covenant of the League just so far as its own imperialist interests were involved and not a step further. It was willing to take part in coercing Italy because Italian aggression threatened the road to India. But it refused to pledge itself to the coercion of German aggression because German aggression seemed to threaten only the roads to Paris, to Prague, to Vienna and to Moscow.

Ethiopia was betrayed last September when Sir Samuel Hoare refused to give the French government an assurance that if France supported League action against Italian aggression Britain would support League action against German aggression. The British government refused to give that pledge last September and still refuses to give it today. This is the torpedo which has come near to sinking the League: this and nothing else is what has done almost irreparable damage to the cause of peace. It is vital to emphasize and to reemphasize this one point for even today it is overlooked not merely by the British government, which is of course intent to conceal it, but by the British opposition. The Daily Herald, the organ of the Labor Party, places the blame for the breakdown of League action against

Italy upon the French government and calls on the new People's Front majority to reverse its policy. Now it may be that it would have been wise in the long run for the French government to have supported Britain against Italy even though Britain refused to give her any assurance of support against Germany. We certainly hold no brief for the odious Laval who was then in power in France. It may be that it will be wise for the People's Front majority which has now come to power to reverse French foreign policy in this respect. But this does not alter the monstrous character of the British demand—the demand that everyone should commit himself to protect British interests and that Britain should never commit herself to protect anyone else's interests. Moreover the British government still fully maintains its catastrophic policy of passive support for the aggressor. It is reported that the questions which the British government is now addressing to Hitler on behalf of the Locarno powers have been so modified and whittled down by the British cabinet that they now amount to an encouragement to Hitler to evade giving any assurances of non-aggression to his Eastern neighbors. The News Chronicle, the leading liberal newspaper in Britain, has an excellent article pointing out the disasters which must ensue and if this is the case, how collective security in Europe will receive another grave blow.

British Communists welcome the wisdom of The News Chronicle, but they point out that it is somewhat belated. No newspaper (except The Daily Herald) played a greater part in helping Hitler to achieve his great success in remilitarizing the Rhineland last March than did The News Chronicle. It played a decisive part in paralyzing the collective peace system in the face of Nazi aggression by enabling the British government to point to the state of public opinion as an excuse for going back on its obligations under the treaty of Locarno. May we hope that on the next occasion when Hitler commits an act of aggression The News Chronicle will not become his apologist? The truth is that unless the popular democratic forces can unite in Britain as they have united in France, the prospect of avoiding war within the next twelve months is small. On the other hand, the triumph of the people of France opens the way to the creation of an unbreakable peace barrier against which Hitler and every other fascist aggressor will rage in vain. The popular peace-loving forces in Britain are at least as strong as they are in France. The eleven million persons who voted in the peace ballot only a year ago can force any British government to do their bidding. United in solid alliance with the popular forces now dominant in

France, they would be irresistible. What the forces of peace and democracy in Britain lack is not strength but clarity. They have allowed themselves to be tragically deluded and misled; they have been made the dupes of Hitler. The four vital factors in swaying this mighty section of British opinion are at present two newspapers and two organizations, namely, The Daily Herald and The News Chronicle, the League of Nations and the Labor Party. Surely the clarion call of the French elections will rouse those responsible to these four bodies to the vital necessity of supporting the French people, whose cause is the cause of peace.

Surely Lord Cecil, leader of the League of Nations Union, and Mr. Attlee, member of the Labor Party, will not hesitate to tell the British government that speaking as they can for at least eleven million British voters they insist on the British government reversing its present policy, abandoning its support of Hitler and linking itself with the democratic pacific peoples of France and the Soviet Union in the building of a system of unbreakable collective security. These leaders of British democracy must rise to their supreme responsibility. The European crisis deepens week by week. So long as the British government pursues its present policy we can expect nothing but a rapid deterioration ending in early war. We should not have any illusions that the present government will yield easily. It is true that it is profoundly divided. But it becomes more and more clear that there is a permanent majority in the cabinet against support of the collective peace system. Overwhelming expression of opinion such as was given by the peace ballot can break that majority.

A world peace conference is to be summoned to Geneva next September. The British political parties will not be represented as such, but working-class organizations such as the trade unions and the trades council cooperative societies and the like will be represented. Indeed, I understand that any body of a thousand persons can send a delegate. I do not know what arrangements for American participation have been made but it is of the first importance that the British and American working-class movements should throw themselves into participation in this world-peace conference. The organized workers must give the whole of British and American democracy an unequivocal lead by the rousing of an irresistible tide of opinion. We can ensure solidarity with the people of France and the Soviet Union today. These great peoples stand as the twin pillars of the structure of peace, but that structure cannot be secured until the British people, and in so far as possible the Americans, also provide the third pillar. Then it will be indestructible.