

# BOOK REVIEWS

## From Addis Ababa to Madrid

*TWO WARS AND MORE TO COME*, by Herbert L. Matthews. Carrick & Evans, Inc. \$2.50.

THIS is a very personal narrative of two Italian wars of invasion. Mr. Matthews frankly treats Mussolini's ambitions of empire as the link between his experiences in Ethiopia and his adventures in Spain. It is as a newspaperman (much more youthful than his thirty-seven years) who loves to get away from the desk into the wilds, that the New York Times correspondent writes. As adventure, his trip across Dankalia with the Mariotti column, the battle of Ende Gorge, and his dash across the Arganda Bridge in February are bright reading. As journalism, the Italian route at Guadalajara is a high spot. Except for a sketch of the battle of Brihuega and another showing the Italian march through Ethiopia there are no maps, and this is a distinct annoyance in a book of this type.

Matthews is a good newspaperman and an ethical one. His innate sincerity, moreover, often leads him to take up the cudgels for the factual truth. On April 10, 1936, for example, he earnestly cabled from Asmara that Addis Ababa would fall within a month. He was deliberately contradicting a hasty and ill-informed world opinion. Time has proved him correct. From Madrid he has repeatedly cabled information consciously designed to combat the thinly disguised propaganda released by dishonest journalists in rebel territory. Whenever Matthews appears to be pleading a cause, he is merely defending the facts as against misinformation. With Rome and Berlin grinding the rebel propaganda mill, Matthews's one-man struggle for truth has given his work an enormous political importance. His book, notably the chapters dealing with the nature of the Negrin government, the Italian intervention, the role of the Communist Party, the necessity for the elimination of Largo Caballero, and the Trotskyist disruption of the Aragon front, should carry on the work of his Times dispatches despite certain glaring faults. The essential facts are there.

NEW MASSES readers who may have speculated on Mr. Matthews's own political opinions will find part of the answer in this book. It is a record of experiences which have left their mark on the correspondent in terms of intellectual growth, not yet ended by any means. In the Ethiopian war he sympathized with the Italians, justifying himself by the argument that he is a "nationalist," who has "no objection to seeing any country better its position in the world." Today his affections

are with the Spanish people. Something has happened to him in the interim—and he frankly admits it. "I, like so many other people, am going through an evolution about fascism that must be obtruding through my daily work, as it will into this book." When he writes of the American battalions, he reveals to the reader something he himself may not fully realize: those incomparable anti-fascists have been a major factor in changing his outlook. "They are fighting," he writes, "because they would rather die than see a fascist regime under any shape or auspices installed in the United States." He observed that the American volunteers in Spain were all on one side. This fact no doubt weighed heavily among the new experiences which were altering his estimate of fascism. He sums up his position (in October 1937) as follows:

There was a time when I was all for it, and I am not convinced yet that it has been a bad thing for Italy. But the export brand of fascism with its link now with Nazism in Germany, however logical, is an ugly thing to behold. Moreover, I should hate to see it exported as far as the United States.

This is a half-way position and it makes for some lack of clarity in his story. He still finds war a great adventure—if only there were no slaughter of non-combatants. If only! And fascism is great stuff in Italy, but the export product fills him with doubts. Murder and aggression are not simply inevitable consequences of war and fascism to him. That view is simply one of the annoying dogmas of leftists and rightists "who had the doubtful advantage of being sure of their convictions."

Matthews is still, as he himself says, something less than an utterly convinced anti-

fascist. Yet his work often has a quality that suggests conviction, indignation, purpose. His recent dispatches—perhaps the most brilliant work he has ever done—deliberately and carefully destroyed two weeks of rebel lies about the status of Teruel. In the present state of his opinions, Matthews's fervor is due mainly to sheer journalistic honesty. He is still at his best when making "on the spot" contradictions of phony stories.

JAMES HAWTHORNE.

## Reporters at Capitol Hill

*THE WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS*, by Leo C. Rosten. Harcourt Brace & Co. \$3.

WHILE *The Washington Correspondents* was written, the same author, under the name of Leonard Q. Ross, was writing *The Education of H\*Y\*M\*A\*N K\*A\*P\*L\*A\*N*. The joint effort was perhaps too much, for a good deal of the ineffable Hyman Kaplan has crept into the account of the men and women who interpret the doings of government to their constituents.

With Mr. Kaplan, student of the English language in an Americanization school, the touchstone was his lack of command of the language he was studying, plus an incomparable amount of confidence in his ability to know and understand. With Mr. Rosten the touchstone is a pseudo-psychoanalytic method of social analysis after the manner of Prof. Harold Lasswell of the University of Chicago.

To start at the end, Mr. Rosten finds it deplorable that publishers are uncontrolled, that "the ills with which contemporary journalism is afflicted are an integral aspect of our society rather than a disease with an etiology of its own," that American journalism does not have an American Bar Association or an American Medical Association to primp its ethics, and that the news is not free.

With these conclusions few will disagree. But when Mr. Rosten winds up with the suggestion that perhaps the solution lies in the licensing of newspaper owners in the same manner that doctors, pharmacists, and veterinarians are licensed, there are many who will be quick to wonder if Mr. Rosten failed completely to learn the nature of government in the time he spent in Washington gathering material for his book.

In a left-handed manner Mr. Rosten recognizes that newspapers are a part of big business. "Publishing," he says, "has become an enterprise which is no longer accessible except to the wealthy." (The italics are his.) Yet a corollary recognition, that newspapers naturally fulfill certain functions as a part of big business, is lacking. That the function of

### Recently Recommended Books

- Letters from Iceland*, by W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice. Random. \$3.
- Old Hell*, by Emmett Gowen. Modern Age. Cloth, 85c. Paper, 25c.
- Madame Curie*, by Eve Curie. Translated by Vincent Sheean. Doubleday, Doran. \$3.50.
- Six Centuries of Fine Prints*, by Carl Zigrosser. Covici-Friede. \$5.
- Young Henry of Navarre*, by Heinrich Mann. Knopf. \$3.
- The Pretender*, by Lion Feuchtwanger. Viking. \$2.50.
- The Flivver King*, by Upton Sinclair. United Automobile Workers of America. Also by the author, Pasadena, Cal. 25c.
- Ralph Fox: A Writer in Arms*, edited by John Lehmann, T. A. Jackson, and C. Day Lewis. International. \$1.75.
- Labor Agitator, The Story of Albert Parsons*, by Alan Calmer. International. 35c.
- The Civil War in the United States*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. International. \$2.50.
- C.I.O.*, by J. Raymond Walsh. Norton. \$2.50.
- Engels on Capital*, translated and edited by Leonard E. Mins. International. \$1.25.

newspapers, consciously or unconsciously, is to defend property and speak on behalf of property is not an assumption which Mr. Rosten takes into account. One may more justifiably accept that assumption than the one upon which the book is written, that is, that newspapers at present are part of an on the whole healthy society, with only the necessity for the same measure of regulation that is accorded other public enterprises.

In speaking of the lack of an ethics-formulating body for the publishing fraternity, Mr. Rosten cites the shortcomings of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association and the American Society of Newspaper Editors and remarks, "The American Newspaper Guild has devoted its brief life to the problems of unionization and recognition and has so far indicated no program along personnel lines."

It might be recalled that the organization of the Guild had a rather remarkable effect on the newspapers of Akron in their treatment of the rubber workers' strike in 1936. It might also be recalled that the Guild has done much to make clear to the reading public the stand of certain publishers regarding the question of collective bargaining, and has thereby effectively reduced the validity of the publisher's paper which may profess to be a "true friend of the worker."

While it is true that the American Newspaper Guild makes no attempt to control the nature of the material appearing in news or editorial columns, it is also true that organization of newspaper workers has a tremendous effect on the way in which they see a strike or the way in which they interpret union action. In appreciating his own worker-boss relationship, the newspaper worker is the better equipped to appreciate the worker-boss relationship elsewhere. To dismiss the Guild because it is devoted to unionism is to ignore the effect of property relationships in molding society.

But Mr. Rosten's book is not entirely useless in understanding the Washington correspondents. There are some interesting tables in the appendices. There one learns, for instance, that forty of the one hundred and twenty-seven guinea pigs favor government operation of mines, public utilities, and railroads, while fifty-six are opposed; one learns that forty-six think that "in general news columns are equally fair to big business and labor," while fifty-one think to the contrary; forty have had stories killed, played down, or cut because of policy reasons, while thirty have not; forty-two agree that it is impossible to be objective while twenty-four disagree; fifty-eight are in favor of a newspaper guild to improve salaries, contract, and bargain collectively, while thirty-eight are opposed.

As far as the correspondents themselves go, Mr. Rosten finds, 76.3 percent are children of professional, proprietary, or clerical groups, 51.1 percent are between thirty and forty, 49.6 percent come from communities of under 10,000 population, 51.1 percent are college graduates while 18.1 percent had no college

education at all; 86.6 percent feel the need of knowing more economics for their job; most are married and of a respectable character though 51.1 percent never go to church and only 9.4 percent go regularly.

To Mr. Rosten's book there has gone much praise, even from liberal organizations which are pleased because he says that the free press is a much overworked myth. It is the first book of its nature and the pioneer always deserves credit, but there is still a great deal of room for a study which will adequately explain and demonstrate the role of the Washington correspondent and his newspaper in a capitalist democracy.

WALLACE MOORE.

## Three Novels of Frustration

FINE FLOWERS IN THE VALLEY, by Donald Wayne. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

MORE JOY IN HEAVEN, by Morley Callaghan. Random House. \$2.50.

THEY CRIED A LITTLE, by Sonya Schulberg. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

THESE novels are not especially noteworthy as individual achievements, but they are indications of an interesting trend in middle-class fiction: the exploration of personal maladjustment and the effort to trace it to social roots. The main characters are young and frustrated. They don't "belong," not because they suffer from some inherent viciousness but because in different ways they deviate from the rigid pattern of morality imposed upon them by their environment. In each instance this deviation, from the point of view of the novelist and the reader, is a healthy expression of revolt against the norm.

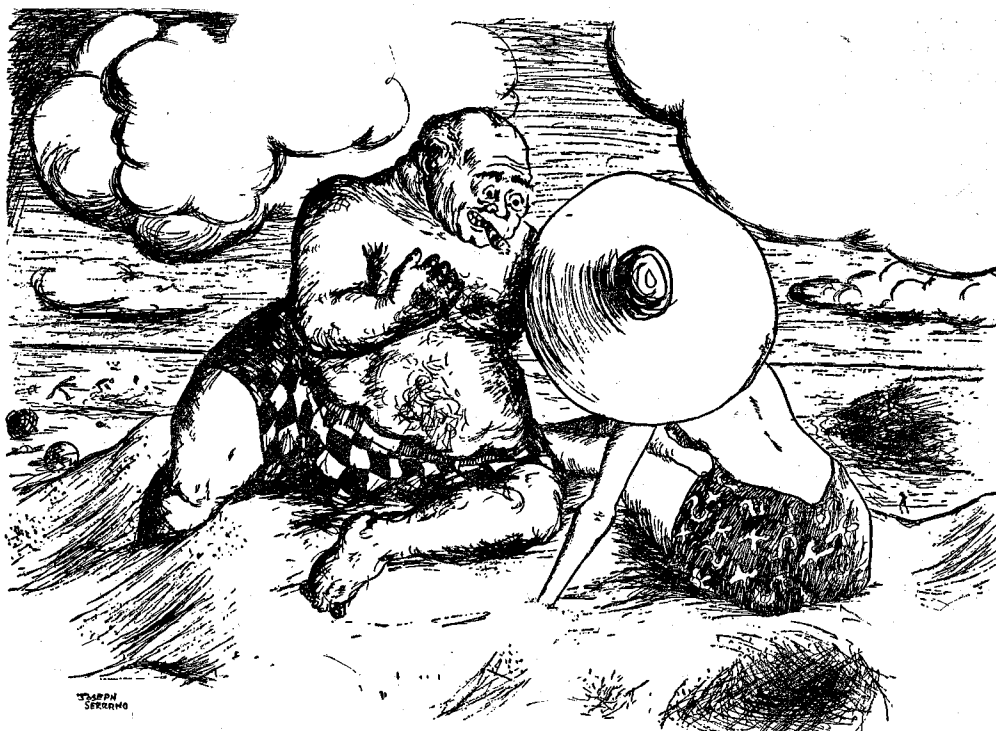
Blame is cast on the machinery of society rather than upon individual will.

Donald Wayne's heroine is Jane Whitland, a Brooklyn girl of nineteen, who is arrested for killing her "illegitimate" child. She is acquitted by a jury, but the pressure of public opinion forces her family to send Jane away to stay with relatives in a small town upstate. She is driven from here, too, when her story becomes known. After working as a waitress in a small city restaurant, she returns to New York, where she marries a garage mechanic. As she looks forward to her "legitimate" child, her husband is killed in an auto accident. While the story borders on the melodramatic and the monotonous, it succeeds in translating a familiar newspaper story into human terms which are at times moving.

Morley Callaghan's new novel is about Kip Caley, a notorious bank robber, who reformed in the penitentiary. Here again the newspapers provide the starting point for a tragic narrative. Kip's parole at the end of ten years is the occasion for a big publicity stunt. He returns to his town, writes his autobiography for the papers, is wined and dined by Senator Maclean, his exhibitionistic benefactor. Kip, who had nourished dreams of getting on the parole board and giving criminals a decent break, is dropped by his rich friends as soon as the public becomes bored. He is finally murdered by the police.

Callaghan's novel is not as impressive as some of his earlier work. He alternates between his preoccupation with good and evil abstractly conceived and his concern with the social restrictions on a criminal who tries to come back. The characters do not spring to life in this parable of the modern prodigal son.

Most successful of the three is Sonya Schul-



"This is my tenth trip south and I've never seen anything like what  
Erskine Caldwell writes about."

Joseph Serrano