

sembly as a sounding board for propaganda:

... we have heard some intemperate invective, seen instances of disregard for the chairman and his rulings, and watched develop what has been described as the "technique of studied insult."

Such developments, if maintained, will tend to bring the Assembly into disrepute. There is a tendency for some delegates whose proposals have been defeated by a large majority in subcommittee to reargue the matter so long in committee and then in plenary sessions that procedural delays preclude getting nearly as much done as the United Nations should. This is further complicated by the fact that many delegates "feel it incumbent upon themselves to make several speeches on the same subject, merely reiterating what they said earlier instead of raising new points or meeting criticism."

At San Francisco there were signs of a dangerous tendency toward bloc voting, a situation which complicates procedures immeasurably since the Latin-American bloc alone can defeat anything in the Assembly requiring a two-thirds majority.

There is complete laxity in the matter of atomic energy and armaments, awaiting settlement of which the Military Staff Committee of the Security Council has been cooling its heels in an outer room for much too long.

With all this, however, Evatt is optimistic. He says:

In my opinion the United Nations organization as a whole has done a very great deal of useful work since its birth less than two years ago. It shows no signs of lassitude or inanition. Though an infant, it has been asked to carry almost from birth the burdens of an adult. In all the circumstances, I believe it has done reasonably well.

Unfortunately, the final section of the Evatt book is something of a let-down. Nobody asked the author to become a long-sighted, much less a second-sighted, statesman; but the very word "future" in connection with the UN can conjure up visions of promise. Thus, when the author clings tenaciously to recommending procedural reforms, and fails to outline the next basic steps in the evolution of a limping international organization into a powerful international force for peace, it is disappointing.

At its most efficient, the UN will still lack that force of genius which would make the organization rise up and stride like a conquering giant across the doubtful years ahead. Too many of us feel that something is missing which procedural details cannot supply.

Europe Simplified

CONTINENTAL JOURNEY. By Leo Lerner. New York: The Citadel Press. 1946. 214 pp. \$2.50.

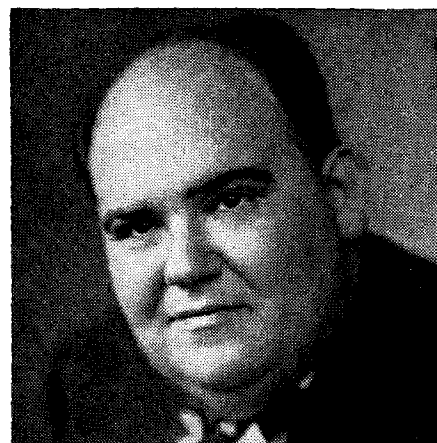
Reviewed by HENRY B. KRANZ

EUROPE two years after the war—as seen with the eyes of a Chicago editor of community newspapers: that does not promise very exciting reading, and, in fact, it is not. But "Continental Journey" is more than that. It is the story of the European trip of a man who has his eyes open and his heart on his tongue, a man known in the Midwest as the "poor man's William Allen White."

There are many millions of people in this country who have no idea how Europeans live and suffer and hope and what they think about war and about America, this "new kind of world power." These millions freely spend their pennies and nickels for tabloids but they rarely buy books. If they should want to know about the world as it looks on the other side of the ocean, on the continent where war and peace for our generation will be decided, "Continental Journey" is their fare. It is written by a man who has the common touch, who knows how to report essentials in simple, every-day language. If anything, he is perhaps overly naïve, as when, wandering through Venice, he is reminded of Richard Wagner's vacation in this city and explains that Wagner was "the great German operatic composer."

Mr. Lerner visited nine European countries (but not Germany). He was in Poland and Czechoslovakia, Holland and France, reporting what he saw, both the surface and underneath. He spoke everywhere with the rich and the poor, with prime ministers and waiters, and summarizes his impressions thus: There is much more war talk in the United States than in Europe. The people of Europe are too busy to crawl out of the wreckage of the last war to talk about the next one. The thesis that we must rebuild German industry because "Germany always has been an industrial country" has not been accepted by Europe. Neither has the idea that "you can't have a stabilized Europe without a restored Germany." The Czechs, Mr. Lerner found, are nearly unanimously Western in their outlook. Throughout Europe the Communists trade on their role in the liberation. Both the Right and the Left are trying to make socialism a hated word in France.

Finally, comparing the condition of the individual European with his pre-war status, Mr. Lerner finds things are worst in England and Holland.



Leo Lerner is a man "who has his eyes open and his heart on his tongue."

The countries which are in the "best" condition are Belgium and Czechoslovakia. If Europe keeps going downhill, Mr. Lerner believes we will have extensive "illegal" immigration into the United States with people storming our beaches the way they do now in Palestine. But the reader should not think that "Continental Journey" is all about politics. It is principally the story of a jovial, warm-hearted, and witty "average" Middlewestern newspaperman and the people he met on a vacation-cum-fact-finding trip. And it is amusing and refreshing.

Ponds, Pitch, & Lava

THE WORLD'S GREAT LAKES. By Ferdinand C. Lane. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1948. 272 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by GEORGE F. CARTER

IT IS POSSIBLE to write a book about anything. And depending more on the skill of the author than the subject matter the book may or may not succeed. Mr. Lane has chosen great lakes as his vehicle. Greatness is defined in terms of size. There are forty-two lakes in the world with an area of 1500 square miles or more, and these become his subject.

The unifying threads are a discussion of the area, outline, history of discovery and exploration, and peoples who live about the lakes. With forty-two lakes to cover in a short book that assignment is barely possible. Unfortunately, Mr. Lane has also included general chapters on how lakes are formed and filled; he has included lakes of pitch, lakes of lava and several rivers, as well as sections on lakes and civilization, and mar and lakes. This becomes too much to do, and the treatment of all part becomes thin and hurried. Even the

it would be interesting to calculate how much of the book is actually about lakes. Often Mr. Lane spends most of his time relating explorers' tales, or describing ways of life that have but little connection with lakes.

However, some will enjoy reading a miscellany of geography and exploration strung together with lakes as a unifying element. Excerpts from explorers' accounts and descriptions of the ways of life of peoples in various lands are always of absorbing interest. Lakes themselves have many intriguing facets. For example, some fresh water lakes now far inland have porpoises and seals. The questions of how and when are intriguing even though unanswered. The great climatic shifts in recent times that have dried up lakes in one area and created thousands in another is of special interest now that we have evidence that these changes are not only continuing but have recently accelerated.

Unfortunately, the book is often misleading and in general betrays a lack of understanding of the earth sciences. Many geologists will be surprised to learn that the present period is known as "the lacustrine era." It is interesting to learn that the meteor crater in Arizona has a "fixed" date within historic time; the "rock fragments suggest a date between seven hundred and five thousand years ago." "Artesian wells probe" for water is an interesting animism that betrays a misunderstanding of the word artesian. This is the more surprising as the author frequently tells us what definition Mr. Webster gives for similar terms. It will be news to the anthropologists to learn that lurking in the forests about Lake Kivu are men "definitely simian, with short legs, enormously elongated arms, prognathous jaws, and slant foreheads, while their bodies are notably hairy."

Readers sensitive to the use of adjectives will feel drugged by the frequency and strength of those used. It is like California olives; there is no size smaller than large and one progresses to the super colossal. Readers will also find many familiar phrases: never-never land, old man river, immemorial times, incantation of witch doctors, throb of drums, safely traversed, dreaded tsetse flies. And there are such similes as lakes being due to the same forces that cause water to accumulate in spots on the linoleum of the kitchen floor. And, mountains become "titanic combs carding the clouds, like wool, for their moisture—."

In short, Mr. Lane's book, though unsubstantiated in many parts, may serve as a stimulus for the reader to learn more about the multitude of ideas he sets forth.

Personal History. *The biography of Barrios, reviewed here, might well be read with Ralph Roeder's recent study of Juarez, the Mexican hero who backed up Barrios's revolution in Guatemala in 1871. Thirty years earlier the American John Lloyd Stephens first explored the great Mayan cities in Guatemala and Yucatan. His career, offers many parallels to that of his younger contemporary Bayard Taylor. World travelers with a series of phenomenally successful travel books to their credit, Stephens became minister to Guatemala and Taylor later was sent to Germany. Van Wyck Brooks's recent "The Times of Melville and Whitman" did full justice at last to Bayard Taylor; "Maya Explorer" resurrects an interesting contemporary. . . . The author of "David Lilienthal," discussed below, reviews elsewhere in this issue "The Tennessee," a book which is a natural companion to her biography.*

"I Owe This Country A Lot"

DAVID LILIENTHAL. By Willson Whitman. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1948. 245 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by ROBERT S. ALLEN

DAVID LILIENTHAL is perhaps the only man in the United States equipped by past experiences to be chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. That is the sound thesis of Willson Whitman's biography, and, to document it, she reviews what transpired during the fourteen years he directed mighty TVA.

But after Miss Whitman has made her point she seems to distrust it, and begins asking herself, "But what is wrong with the man? There must be something wrong."

The author finally concludes that perhaps there is one flaw—"or what could be a flaw . . . David Lilienthal really believes in people," and "un-

less you share his faith in the wisdom of the people, you think there may come a time when the people or their representatives will tell him wrong."

Obviously Miss Whitman was badly shaken by reading the record of the Senate hearings on Lilienthal's confirmation. She picked out excerpts almost with incredulity, and a fear that they might not be believed. Her summation:

As an exhibition of individual senility the McKellar attitudes were no more than embarrassing to the human race, but as a disclosure of government dilapidation they were a threat to the country. Senatorial courtesy, it was explained, required that the septuagenarian from Tennessee be allowed to waste weeks of working people's time and to dominate the proceedings of a committee on which he had no seat. This was discouraging to those aware that democratic procedures, in a world that does not always wait for the worst tricks of parliamentarianism, are still on trial.

Miss Whitman was shaken, too, by public-opinion polls disclosing how little the public realizes that about the atom bomb there is no secret and there is no defense. And she asks, "Suppose that, despite the best efforts of the commission and the eighty-per-cent efforts of the press, people are still misled by the loud-talking fabricators of delusion and fomenters of war?"

The author warns solemnly that, in spite of the confidence Lilienthal's record inspires, "it is just as well not to relax and be too happy. It isn't the same job he had as chairman of TVA, in spite of the parallels," and she urgently reminds the reader that Lilienthal is not actually head of the international Atomic Energy Authority proposed in his State Department report, but only of a United States



—Wide World.

"There is one flaw—David Lilienthal really believes in people."