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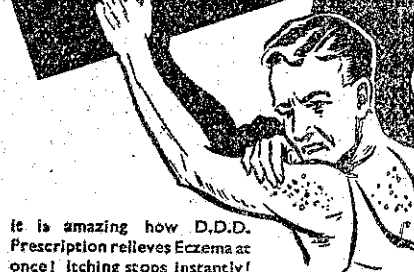
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MORALS, POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY

IT'S not the sort of book you'd pick up for a light-hearted half-hour's read before bed. Nor is it the sort where you start at Page One and arrive at Page 240 as quick as Don Bradman can reach a century. But, for all that, Professor C. E. M. Joad's "Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics," is a very good book indeed. Having read it, I feel sufficiently improved to believe that acquaintance with it would solve the loose thinking that obscures much of our politics and that understanding of the real meaning and portents of Fascism and Communism, two of the great beliefs of our day, would be more complete and inevitably more effective.

Treatises of the kind are never gay. But to discover the ways and means of thinking, to react against the arbitrary judgment of one school of philosophy by considering other thought lines, and to inquire into the fundamentals of political philosophies which are changing the trends of the time can be a fascinating exercise. The fascination can become almost horrifying as one reads on, discovering just what the intentions of men like Hitler and Mussolini and Stalin really are. And, though plenty of people like their horror no closer than a leering face on the films, for those who have ideas the discovery of new facts in political and moral theory is profoundly stimulating.

Listen in to any tramcar or street corner conversation and you'll find it's undoubtedly true that thinking on moral and political issues among many New Zealanders is most remarkably loose. The wildest ideas and facts are circulated with no proper consideration of their truth or merit and the wildest surmises about Nazism and Communism go their ways with every wind. One epigram has it that the greatest discoveries of all times have been made in advance of common sense; but the way plenty of people think of politics is not commonsensical, but nonsensical.

There are obvious dangers in the habit. Political hacks spout the most blatant philosophies, dictators persuade nations to march to war, students without an idea in their heads pass examinations brilliantly on the strength of curricula serving no stimulating purpose. Inquiry into fundamental issues is obscured and governments profit.

Maybe much of Professor Joad would bore you. Maybe you've arrived at that stage of life where you'd prefer with some right to sit and think of other days. Maybe your weekly pay envelope is large and your wife careful with her bills.

Maybe. But, if you're a good citizen, you still feel some duty to your country. And it revolts you to think of nations persuaded to the belief that the State is the nation and the individual merely a cog whose disappearance would have no effect. You like to think of the ideal country and you like to imagine it as a place where an individual counted and where effort was directed to the common good. You like to think of convention dictated not by fear but by wisdom. And you hope that some day

"SKIMMABLE" AND SWEET

POPULAR in the circulating libraries will be Countess Nora Wydenbruck's new novel, "Spring in September," just published. It is frankly a love story—one of those love stories in which the heroine is impossibly virtuous, and makes the most angelic sacrifices before Heaven very suitably rewards her. Nevertheless, the romance is set against an unusual background—the Austria of 1860—and there is a little more depth in the characterisation and a little more elaboration of the plot than one expects to find in this type of reading.

Neither ambitious nor original in its theme, "Spring in September" is a good choice if you like your books sweet and "skimmable."

"Spring in September," by Countess Nora Wydenbruck. (Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., London). Our copy from the publishers.

IT WAS BETTER DONE YEARS AGO

MARGARET FERGUSON continues to produce books at a speed that forbids the cautious reader to expect quality. Nevertheless, "Homespun," the latest of her novels to reach New Zealand, is a tolerable enough trifle of the romantic type. It concerns the daughter of an Indian colonel who marries a Lancashire coal-mine owner for his money and finds it rather a hasty bargain.

If you want to see this plot done really well, you should try to borrow or buy a copy of Ian Hay's "The Safety Match." It may be out of print now, but it is worth the remembrance. "Homespun" never comes within coo-ee of improving on its story, its incident or its characterisation.

"Homespun," by Margaret Ferguson (Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., London). Our copy from the publishers.

"Caesar Of The Skies"

"CAESAR OF THE SKIES," the story of the epic flights of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, by Flying Officer Beau Shiel, has now gone into its second edition. Mr. Shiel was intimately associated with the great aviator in his flights and gave the world a record of them in this book, which was widely read and praised in England. Supplies of the second edition, published Cassells, London, are now available

the world will wake up to itself and see the true road ahead.

Yes, you like to think that way and I like to too. But we make no effort to understand philosophies, we plod along, hoping for the best. That's why a book like Professor Joad's, written clearly and precisely, deserves its place on the book shelf. Some of it will bore you. But most of it will stimulate you. And if you can still be stimulated, then you've not lost the savour of life.

"Guide to the History of Morals and Politics," by C. E. M. Joad. Published by Gollancz Ltd