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Book Review: The Censor Marches On, by Morris L. Ernst and Alexander Lindey

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A valuable part of Mr. LaRoe's book lies in the fact that he describes the workings of a parole system with great detail. The reader can follow the steps a prisoner takes from the time of applying for parole until he is actually under the guardianship of his parole officer. Other parts of the book deal with the attitude of the public, police officers, and the sentencing judge. The whole book is written in a style which is simple and readable. The appendix contains a useful summary of the parole systems of the various states with comments as to the relative value of each one.

It appears to the reviewer that Mr. LaRoe has made a valuable contribution by his book to the subject of parole. It should be read by the general public and not just by those who are interested in the serious problems of crime and criminal law.

J. WALTER McKENNA,
Professor of Law.

The Censor Marches On, By Morris L. Ernst and Alexander Lindey. Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., New York, N. Y. 1940 Pp. xi 346. \$2.50.

The authors of this book have represented the defense in many sex censorship cases. This may explain their militancy against the sex and obscenity censorship laws. In *The Censor Marches On*, they present their case against censorship of books, the radio, the theater and the movies. Their book is partial, and does not purport to be otherwise; each page evidences resentment at censorship as it is practiced in the United States.

The volume is not a text or a treatise. It discusses in narrative style the more important censorship cases in the American courts during the past twenty-five years, and is liberally interspersed with discursive treatment of trials, the personalities involved and the activities of public and private bodies on the censorship scene. The authors' major conclusion is that drastic revision should be made in the obscenity laws, so as to eliminate censorship as far as possible. For example, they recommend that motion picture censorship be abolished, because they feel that penal provisions in state legislation "afford ample protection against immoral exhibitions."

To this reviewer, it seems that the authors, like most people who become crusaders in a cause, urge extremes. Because they have found abuses in the field of censorship (the book points out many concededly ridiculous results arising from over-zealous censorship), the authors convey the impression that practically all obscenity censorship is bad. Messrs. Ernst and Lindey's views in this are undoubtedly opposed by many who do not have Victorian ideas on moral questions, but who nevertheless feel that censorship of movies, books and the radio is socially desirable and necessary.

One who is interested in a narrative treatment of the recent history of censorship, within and without the courts, will find this book an easy source of information. But he will know from a moment's reading that it is partial, and he may well question its conclusions.

PAUL NOELKE.