

• R E V I E W S •

"The Grand Alliance"

Mr. Churchill's Third Volume

By FRANCIS NEILSON

Historical Criticism of World War II

SHAKESPEARE, WHO KNEW more about humankind than any other observer I have read, said men and women are merely players. It would be well for us to keep this in mind when we deal with the people who have been in command of us during the wars of the past fifty years. Our political and military gods will suffer a sad loss of prestige in the days to come, if we neglect to ponder the commentary of Jaques in "As You Like It." For the legends that have been built up by propagandists are approaching the limit, when a little reflection may destroy them. Already several of the chief actors in the drama of conquest have lost some of their glamor. The claims made by the publicity agents of allied Christians and enemy barbarians have been examined by unromantic critics; in several cases, they have been seriously questioned, and in others, utterly rejected.

It seems to take a long time now for informative European criticism of the conduct of the war (and the political and diplomatic blunders which made it inevitable) to reach our reviewers. Alfred Fabre-Luce's *La Fumée d'Un Cigar* (Paris, L'Élan, 1949) has not yet been noticed, nor the articles in *Écrits de Paris*, written by François de Grix, Henri de Man, Germain Dallonne, and others. These critics are very severe in examining Mr. Churchill's story of what happened. Then there is "Winston Churchill in War and Peace" (Glasgow, Unity Publishing Company, 1950), by Emrys Hughes, member of Parliament for South Ayrshire, which contains enlightening information. Hughes tells us:

Mr. Churchill has contributed copiously to the history of our time and, of course, a man can hardly be expected to be completely objective about himself. The prima donna is not the most reliable critic of her own performances. Reading Mr. Churchill's memoirs is very much like reading an appreciation of a drama written by the actor who has played the part of the hero. Mr. Churchill's war books are, in the main, justifications and apologia for his own performances. (pp. v-vi)

Later, Hughes reminds us:

Nobody who read the Parliamentary Debates on the Service Estimates for 1936 could agree with Churchill's description in September that year of "unarmed, unthinking Britain." We had plunged into the arms race like other Continental nations. That is the trouble with Churchill as historian; his assertions are so often inconsistent with facts. (p.154)

Another work from an English source is Lord Hankey's "Politics, Trials and Errors" (Oxford, England, Pen-in-Hand, 1949, and Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1950), which deals with the "unconditional surrender" controversy. There are also the articles of the expert military writers, Major-General J. F. C. Fuller and Captain Liddell Hart; these are necessary for a proper understanding of much that Mr. Churchill presents in his books on the war.

The number of dissentients in England and France increases every month now, but Mr. Churchill seems to be too busy, as leader of the Tory party in the Commons, to reply to his critics. His attitude to skeptics, who do not readily believe his statements, is recorded in precise terms: "When I make a statement of facts within my knowledge I expect it to be accepted." ("The Grand Alliance," Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950, p. 55)

This is what he said to Stalin, who received it "with a genial grin." The god of the Kremlin probably knew that men are "merely players," whether, as politicians, they take part in comedies or tragedies. Those who proclaim their merits from the pulpit of Parnassus, or hurl their oratorical thunderbolts from high Olympus, do so at their own risk.

The Balkan Blunders

MR. CHURCHILL'S DESCRIPTION, in his third volume, of the campaigns in Jugoslavia, Greece, and Crete read as pale contributions, when compared with the day-to-day reports of these disasters given by correspondents on the spot. One reason for this might be that the reporters were not handicapped by Mr. Churchill's elaborate instructions sent from London to the British ambassadors, and afterwards to commanders in charge of the armies, ships, and airplanes. His record of the Balkan blunders concerns chiefly the rôle he played in them. Some other actors in the drama have been overlooked, and certain events of vast importance are not even mentioned. Perhaps the London censorship was so tight that the news we received here did not penetrate a single cranny to reach Downing Street.

Because there has been so much misunderstanding about the Balkan business, owing perhaps to the nonsensical propaganda considered neces-

sary during the war, it might be well, for the sake of historical accuracy, to mention that we learned in America of the Allied plans to invade the peninsula many months before Mr. Churchill begins his story. I wrote in "The Tragedy of Europe," under the date of February 12, 1940:

News comes from Budapest that the trouble concerning the export of oil and grain to Germany from Rumania may be the cause of what is called a back-door drive against Hitler's forces. It is stated that Great Britain and France have a force of half a million men concentrated in the Near East and that there are three routes, envisioned by military experts, along which the Allies may strike at Germany's back door. The routes are:

- (1) from Salonika through the Vardar and Moravia River valleys to the Danube;
- (2) along the diagonal furrow from Istanbul through Bulgaria;
- (3) up the Danube River valley from Rumania.

It is to be hoped that the military experts do not think the task a simple one. Although they may imagine the Balkans are pro-Ally in sympathy, it will be just as well for them to understand that any such movement along path number one, path number two, or path number three might mean bringing Russia suddenly upon the scene, not so much in support of Germany as with the set determination to look after her own interests in the Balkans. . . . (vol. I, p. 362)

The agents of the Allies operating from the Middle East were very busy in the Balkans nearly a year before Mr. Churchill begins his narrative. The Former Naval Person wrote to President Roosevelt January 28, 1941: "Colonel Donovan also has done fine work in the Middle East." ("The Grand Alliance," p. 26)

It is surprising how little Mr. Churchill has to say about this work. In the chapter on Yugoslavia, he tells us:

At the end of January, 1941, in these days of growing anxiety, Colonel Donovan, a friend of President Roosevelt, came to Belgrade on a mission from the American Government to sound opinion in Southeastern Europe. . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 158)

But he does not tell us any more about the mission; what the object of it was, whether it was successful; or like so many others, "a dud." The information that we received was not sufficiently sensational to make the headlines. Occasionally a short dispatch would be found on the fifth or sixth page, and receive little or no consideration from editors who were supposed to inform their readers about the aims of the contending forces. It is rather amusing now to go over the day-to-day history of

the terrible events and notice how so much vital information was sent by our correspondents, and how little it was appreciated either in Washington, or in the editorial rooms of the great journals.

It was only some of the soldiers who wrote for the army and navy magazines who realized the value of news about future movements. The reports that came from the Middle East and the Balkans during 1940 comprise a case in point. Consider the rumor about the documents alleged to have been stolen from Colonel Donovan. On May 17, 1943, I wrote in "The Tragedy of Europe" as follows:

When Colonel William J. Donovan was operating for the United States Government in the Balkans there were rumors coming in from American correspondents in the Middle East that he was being closely watched by Axis agents. We now learn that these rumors were correct. Colonel Lanza gives us the whole story of how, in January, 1941, the Axis was aware of a British plan to invade south Europe. The Colonel [Lanza] says:

"... How the Axis secured a copy of this is not known, but it was published in the Italian *Popolo d'Italia* on January 7 of that year. It provided for:

"1. Eliminating the Italian armies from Africa, and clearing the Mediterranean during 1941.

"2. Concentrating American and British troops in Egypt and Italian North Africa, during the winter of 1941-42.

"3. American intervention in strength, and invasion of Europe, via the Balkan route, during the spring of 1942."

I dealt with the probabilities of this plan in Volume I (February 12, 1940) when I first heard of the rumors coming into this country. Now Lanza says:

"Germany was aware of Colonel Donovan's activities. If she did not engineer the stealing of his papers, subsequently returned intact, while he was in the Balkans, she learned much about what he was doing."

The information the Axis gathered from these papers was sufficient to make them take the initiative. Thus, Hitler decided to attack first.

"He invited Rumania and Bulgaria to join him. Shortly before, Russia had 'occupied' the Baltic states.

"Rumania and Bulgaria accepted Hitler's offer, not because they liked the Germans, but as the lesser of two evils. . . ."

From this we conclude that the invasion of Europe has been planned by the Allies since the beginning of 1941. Colonel Lanza says: "Both sides have made their preparations. Both sides are one year behind their schedules." (vol. III, pp. 602-3)

Mr. Churchill was perfectly right to admit in his first volume that his memoirs were not to be accepted as history. As autobiography, the volumes are of great value, for they reveal a unique personality who is

not afraid to expose many of his defects, and seems to glory in his jesuitical career.

In Captain Liddell Hart's new volume, "Defence of the West" (London, Cassell, 1950), the student will find material that will enable him to check much of what Mr. Churchill has written. I would advise young historians who are now at work upon the causes of modern wars, to read the books written by authors of high military repute, no matter whether the story they have to tell of men and events is unpopular, and in many cases flatly contradicts official opinion. It will save a lot of time and confusion of thought if this system of gathering knowledge is prosecuted consistently.

The new work by Liddell Hart will help the student to see clearly the way through many of the dark passages into which we stumbled when the official broadcasters were at work. There is no higher opinion than that of the author of "Defence of the West" for all that concerns the activities of the fighting forces, and the politicians whose blunders led them into disasters, resulting in a peace of havoc and hopelessness.

The Russo-German War

THE LAST SECTION of Book I, "The Soviet Nemesis," exemplifies in a striking way the superficial methods of Churchill in dealing with events that have an important background. In this chapter he reviews the history of the quarrel between Germany and Russia from the date of Hitler's directive of December 18, 1940. The result is by no means satisfactory, and when the historian sets to work on this period, he will find abundant evidence of quite another interpretation in the dispatches that reached our newspapers. Much of great significance had happened long before the date selected by the British Prime Minister for the beginning of his narrative. He does not refer to the descent of Russia on Bucovina and Bessarabia, which was a primary cause of the conflict of opinion between Berlin and Moscow.

We were far better informed by our correspondents than the British were by theirs, probably owing to the fact that we were not at war with Germany until Pearl Harbor. Churchill writes:

... We must now lay bare the error and vanity of cold-blooded calculation of the Soviet Government and enormous Communist machine, and their amazing ignorance about where they stood themselves. They had shown a total indifference to the fate of the Western Powers, although this meant the destruction of that "Second Front" for which they were soon to clamor. They seemed to have

no inkling that Hitler had for more than six months resolved to destroy them. . . . ("The Grand Alliance," p. 352)

It seems to me that the "amazing ignorance" of the Soviet Government "about where they stood themselves" was not greater than that of the British Government and its ministers.

As early as September 14, 1939, I wrote in "The Tragedy of Europe":

What about the Russo-German pact? What will Russia do? We are told today that she is mobilizing along her western frontier. There is a hint thrown out in some of the dispatches that Germany does not know what to make of her action. Is it a threat or a precaution? . . . Russia wants Bessarabia back; indeed, she would like to swallow Rumania, control the Danube where it empties into the Black Sea, and do for herself what Czarist Russia would have done if the revolution had not taken place and her plenipotentiaries could have sat in at Versailles: acquire the coveted Bosphorus.

Trouble must be brewing in all that area and, no doubt, the Nazis at Berlin desire to cover as much ground in southeastern Poland as they can before Russia gets into her stride. . . . (vol. I, pp. 45-6)

About eighteen months later Churchill admits he "cast about for some means of warning Stalin." ("The Grand Alliance," p. 357) This is extraordinary, for Stalin was fully warned, after he went into Bessarabia, by the German descent into the Balkans: Keeping closely in touch with my informants and reading carefully the dispatches published in our principal newspapers, I did not miss a single day in this work from the time that Germany invaded Poland. Many of the chief American magazines were searched, and I read an average of eight daily newspapers. The reports were checked one against another, and now when I look back over the information given in "The Tragedy of Europe," I am amazed to find how much more we knew here than they did in England, if "The Grand Alliance" is a sample of what reached London.

On June 28, 1940 I wrote in "The Tragedy of Europe":

Stalin has celebrated the signing of the armistice terms between France and Germany and France and Italy by advancing more deeply into Europe. The Soviet armies have occupied Bessarabia and Bucovina. The Treaties of Paris are now in the melting pot. Hungary and Bulgaria are making claims which, if they are satisfied, will leave very little of the Rumania that was put together in 1919. Molotov's policy of peaceful penetration in the northeastern borderlands of Rumania is in line with that which he executed in the Baltic States. The advance of Russia to the west, since September last, is one of the most sinister moves of the war. There is no doubt in my mind that the people at the Kremlin will

press forward to the south and southwest until the Czarist ambition of taking Constantinople is satisfied. (vol. I, pp. 534-5)

Churchill writes: "We did not know the tenor of the conversations of November 1940, between Molotov, Hitler, and Ribbentrop at Berlin, nor of the negotiations and proposed pacts which had followed them." ("The Grand Alliance," p. 355)

We knew "the tenor" of them, even though we did not know the detail of the negotiations. The point that caused the greatest friction was that of Russia's demand for the Bosphorus. To this Hitler gave a flat denial. Indeed, one correspondent said that he refused to discuss it. If the student will search our military magazines, he will find information that corroborates this conclusion. Our writers in the army, navy, and air journals were exceptionally well informed, and I checked their reviews with the dispatches from Europe.

In August, 1943, in "The Tragedy of Europe," I said:

. . . In an article written a week or two ago, Colonel Lanza told us that the reason for the war which began between the Axis and the Soviets was that Molotov insisted on Germany granting to Russia the much-coveted Bosphorus. (vol. IV, p. 79)

Why Churchill should think it was necessary for him to warn Stalin, when the latter had suspected German intentions from the first, is something I cannot understand, for it was obvious when Russia invaded Poland that she had no faith in Hitler; indeed, no more than Hitler had in the intentions of Stalin. The Soviet-Nazi pact was a blunder, because once the military machines of both parties began to move, the imperial desires of both would be changed, and new horizons would loom up which would attract them both. Hitler saw the chance of gaining *Lebensraum* in the Ukraine and contiguous territory. Stalin had his eye on the Bosphorus, from the outset. Both intentions were in conflict. And now I wonder what Churchill thinks about his famous "I see" speech broadcast June 22, 1941, just after Germany attacked Russia. In the final paragraph, as it appears in "The Grand Alliance," he indulged in the wildest notion that ever sprang from the mind of a politician:

The Russian danger is, therefore, our danger, and the danger of the United States, just as the cause of any Russian fighting for his hearth and home is the cause of free men and free peoples in every quarter of the globe. . . . (p. 373)

Is it possible that he now imagines the War of 1939-45 was fought for "free men and free peoples in every quarter of the globe"?

Churchill and American Participation

AS I HAVE POINTED OUT before, Mr. Churchill is a public servant. As a member of Parliament, whether cabinet minister or not, he is responsible to the electorate for his political actions, and everything he does in this field is of vital interest to them. As for the American taxpayers, their interest is not lessened because he is not a member of Congress. He gloried in the fact that he had "aimed at" and "worked for" our participation in the war. Moreover, the generosity of our political leaders since 1917 made it possible for Britain to pay salaries to public men and to workers. Indeed, there are many here who hold the opinion that, in both wars, we saved Britain from defeat and bankruptcy. Therefore, Churchill's account of the strife is our concern quite as much as it is Britain's, and it behooves us to learn what he has to say about the conduct of it.

Many democrats who thought we fought for "our way of life" will be surprised to read that Roosevelt was ready to join forces with the Former Naval Person nearly a year before Pearl Harbor. On January 11, 1941, Hopkins had lunch with Churchill and told him: "The President is determined that we shall win the war together. Make no mistake about it." (*Ibid.*, p. 23)

Without authority from Congress, a private missioner, selected by Roosevelt, gave the head of a foreign State information the President dared not impart to the people who elected him. Some may think it an unusual way of conducting affairs of state, but the precedent was laid when this country was more like a political democracy than it was under Roosevelt. Colonel House was employed on a similar errand by Woodrow Wilson long before the United States officially entered World War I. It might be asked by democrats, who are sticklers for correct routine, if the Hopkins case, mentioned above, should be placed in the Nuremberg category of reprehensible declarations of aggressive war, or simply set aside as a precautionary measure taken against the enemy of a personal friend. The notions we hold of statesmanship today are a bit confused, and when we compare them with those in vogue when Disraeli, Gladstone, Cleveland, and Bismarck were at the head of affairs, we might wonder if we live in the same world they had to manage.

"The Grand Alliance" is a very long book, and I must congratulate the heroic reviewers on their patience in going through the first and second volumes. The "blurbs" on the back of the jacket are rewards enough for their industry. More than half of the third volume is taken up with letters, dispatches, reports, and other memoranda, chiefly from

the pen of its author. His accounts of battles in the air, upon the sea, and over the desert are for war historians and military strategists to digest. They differ only in detail and interpretation from the information given to us day after day during the struggle, when our correspondents reported what they saw in a brilliant series of vivid dispatches.

The parts of "The Grand Alliance" that will interest our democrats concern the methods employed by Churchill to direct the policy of Roosevelt. Unfortunately, several of the telegrams are paraphrased, "on security grounds," and therefore lose some of the significance they might have for the historian. Yet, in reading them we see clearly enough the means whereby we became mixed up in other people's quarrels. Now Mr. Churchill cannot be offended if we presume to think Roosevelt was willing to meet the Former Naval Person more than half way. It was not the President who was to be persuaded; it was Congress and the people of the United States. Churchill's task to involve Roosevelt in the welter of war was an easy one. Never was a wooed one so willing to be wooed.

Churchill and the Destruction of Hitler

WHEN WE SEARCH in other books and documents for reasons why the war was waged, we find sufficient evidence to convince us that it was a financial and commercial struggle to maintain British supremacy, not only in her domestic markets, but in those of the empire and foreign countries.

I have before me a pamphlet circulated in the spring of 1939 among leading British bankers and industrialists. It is entitled "The German Menace to Trade." In it there are thirteen statements made by bank directors, chairmen of great industries, and newspaper correspondents, complaining bitterly of unfair competition practiced by the Nazi Government. The object of this publication is plainly set forth: "the boycott of German goods." The gist of it is as follows: "Let us all cease trading with Germany. Let German ships arriving in democratic ports find that labour declines to handle their ships."

Figures are given to show the increase in imports of German goods into Britain. The chief industries injured by the competition of Nazi methods were coal, textiles, wool, and motor cars.

None of this—the chief reason for the war—is dealt with by Mr. Churchill. He was interested solely in the destruction of Hitler. What his own mission would entail in loss of life, destruction of prop-

erty, and the squandering of his people's wealth, is not considered in any of his pages I have read. Whether the position of British bankers, industrial chiefs and their employes would be bettered by ridding the earth of Hitler did not seem to concern Churchill. War (and "damn the consequences") is a very uncertain business; it always was and always will be. Those who would count the probable cost before the shooting begins are usually denounced as unpatriotic subjects. So it has been since the days of William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham. In the House of Commons, December, 1755, he said:

We have suffered ourselves to be deceived by names and sounds—"the balance of power," "the liberty of Europe," "a common cause," and many more such expressions, without any other meaning than to exhaust our wealth, consume the profits of our trade and load posterity with intolerable burdens. None but a nation that had lost all signs of virility would submit to be so treated. (J. C. Long, "Mr. Pitt and America's Birthright," N. Y., Frederick A. Stokes, 1940, p. 6)

For nearly two centuries war lords have indulged in the same stupid slogans, exhausting the wealth of the producers and laying intolerable burdens upon generations to come. "The World Almanac" (N. Y. World-Telegram, 1949) states:

Official sources in Washington and a survey made by the American University, also in Washington, put the total military cost of the war to all belligerents at \$1,116,991,463,084 and property damage at \$230,900,000,000. These figures do not include the cost and damage of the eight-year war in China for which no estimates were available. (p. 317)

It must be remarked that it cost quite a lot of money to assist Mr. Churchill to destroy Hitler, to say nothing of the toll of dead and wounded and the misery the survivors now endure.

Some Allied Errors

WE SHOULD NOTE what responsible critics write, who take issue with Mr. Churchill on many important questions. Hanson W. Baldwin, the military editor of *The New York Times*, in his articles, "Our Worst Blunders in the War," published in *The Atlantic*, reviews the strategy and diplomacy of the Allied leaders, and ruthlessly condemns their lack of foresight. Baldwin's articles were published before Churchill's third volume appeared. It will be an interesting exercise for the student of the war to compare them and note the lack of information in "The Grand Alliance" about the outcome of the war and the future of

European States. The notion that a victory without peace might make things worse never seems to have entered the mind of Churchill. The agreements reached at Casablanca, Cairo, Teheran, and Yalta were made by men who had little thought of what the turmoils of the world would be when a military victory was achieved. Baldwin says:

There is no doubt whatsoever that it would have been to the interest of Britain, the United States, and the world to have allowed—and indeed encouraged—the world's two great dictatorships to fight each other to a frazzle. Such a struggle, with its resultant weakening of both Communism and Nazism, could only have aided in the establishment of a more stable peace. It would have placed the democracies in supreme power in the world, instead of elevating one totalitarianism at the expense of another and of *the democracies*. (Jan. 1950, p. 32)

Further on in the article Baldwin declares: "The insistence on unconditional surrender was perhaps the biggest mistake of the war."

The story told by the military editor of *The New York Times* is a sad one, but what else can be expected when a leader of policy makes the destruction of Hitler solely a personal affair? For the historian it will not be enough to begin only with the long series of mistakes committed after the invasion of Poland in 1939, or after the inglorious retreats from Norway, Belgium, and France, and the disasters to the Allied forces that followed them. He will desire "grounds more relative," and he will seek for them in the political history which covers the period from 1933, when Hitler became *Reichsführer*, to the month of March, 1939, when Chamberlain gave the fatal pledge to Poland. An honest historian will not have to seek far for material on which to base a thorough review of the amazing thoughtlessness of our leaders before the war began.

Liddell Hart, commenting on a passage in Churchill's second volume about the pledge to Poland, says, in "The Great Illusions of 1939," (*John Bull*, September 3, 1949):

It is a striking verdict on our folly. Churchill himself had, in the heat of the moment, vigorously applauded Chamberlain's pressing offer of our guarantee to Poland. Why? He attempts no adequate explanation.

It is only too evident that in 1939 he, like most of Britain's leaders, acted on a hot-headed impulse, instead of with the cool-headed judgment that was formerly characteristic of British statesmanship.

In the same article, Liddell Hart takes Churchill to task for many absurd errors in his second volume. Here is one about tanks:

The later illusion, of Germany's superior weight, is slow to fade.

Even in the latest volume of his war memoirs, Churchill speaks of the Germans as having at least a thousand "heavy tanks" in 1940.

The fact is that they had then no heavy tanks at all.

At the start of the war they had only a small number of medium tanks, weighing barely twenty tons. Most of the tanks they used in Poland were of very light weight and thin armour.

It is inconceivable how our propaganda-drugged reviewers and broadcasters can indulge nowadays in the nonsense that has been blown to smithereens by British military experts.

Students should not overlook the articles and books written by Liddell Hart. The editor of the British weekly magazine *John Bull* says he is "the one world-authority on military history and strategy who warned of the truth" of the consequences of the war.

In "How the War Really Started," published in *Picture Post*, September 3, 1949, he gives us an enlightening survey of events that happened in the spring before the war began. Here are some of his conclusions:

. . . The last thing that Hitler wanted to produce was another great war. . . .

If he had really contemplated a general war, involving England, he would have put every possible effort into building a navy capable of challenging England's command of the sea. But, in fact, he did not even build his navy up to the limited scale visualised in the Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935. . . .

The Polish guarantee, in fact, was the surest way to produce an early explosion, and a world war. . . .

When students ask me to recommend an account of the war that can be understood by an ordinary, intelligent citizen, I suggest the work of Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, "The Second World War 1939-1945." It is written by an impartial observer, an English soldier of high repute. In this book the reader will find a simple, clear statement of the struggles on land and in the air. Longer histories of what took place may be published, but I cannot conceive how any writer will excel the concise descriptive power Fuller reveals in his work. In Chapter XI he gives us a much-needed lesson on war and what its purpose should be. In three or four paragraphs he displays a wisdom seldom found in modern histories on the strife of nations, and the student who reads this book cannot fail to enjoy the sanity of thought and vision to be found in its pages.

Some Results of "Victory"

WHETHER THIS CRUEL TREATMENT of the leading players in the wars to save civilization will be of use to posterity or not is a matter that may con-

cern the cold-blooded, sober historians of the days to come. As things are, no impartial observer would say a war has been won; nor could he say who won it. Three foes have been stricken from the field, but the situation in which we find ourselves is worse than it was eleven years ago when the War of 1914-18 was resumed.

Surely it is nonsense to imagine a victory has been gained when the "result" of a war raises a greater foe to menace us than the one that has been defeated for the time being. The situation of the powers in the summer of 1939 was as follows: the British Empire, despite the troubles of the natives, was intact; China was not then in the possession of Communists; Italy was progressing under Mussolini who was praised by Churchill for his leadership; and Germany had made a recovery so astonishing, that he said it was "one of the most remarkable in the whole history of the world." France was suffering from the effects of the Blum experiments, but it had almost recovered from the devastation of the former war. Russia was east of the Pripet Marshes, and the Baltic States were independent. America was not in Europe for "military purposes." Such, in brief, was the position of the great States before Germany invaded Poland.

It might be asked by a visitor from Sirius: "Were the protagonists in this conflict utterly devoid of forethought?" An unprejudiced reader of Churchill's account of the strife would undoubtedly answer, "Yes." Neither Hitler, nor any of the Allied leaders against him, had the faintest conception of what the war would lead to, and what the consequences of it would entail. In one respect, the alleged villain of the tragedy saw farther than any of his antagonists. In *Mein Kampf* he wrote: "Thus, indeed, *in the formation of an alliance with Russia lies the direction for the next war.* Its result would be the end of Germany." (p. 641)

As for Mr. Churchill's mission, it had one single purpose. In his third volume he gives the report of a conversation with his secretary, Mr. Colville, about British aid for Russia. The date was June 22, 1941:

After dinner, when I was walking on the croquet lawn with Mr. Churchill, he reverted to this theme, and I asked whether for him, the arch anti-Communist, this was [not] bowing down in the House of Rimmon. Mr. Churchill replied, "Not at all. I have only one purpose, the destruction of Hitler, and my life is much simplified thereby. If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons." ("The Grand Alliance," p. 370)

Why should he not say a good word for the devil himself? He said

many good words for Hitler and Mussolini who during the war were placed in the gallery of the blackest devils from the lowest hell.

This bit of candor will not surprise those who have known him since he entered the political arena over fifty years ago. The destruction of Hitler was a personal matter with him. It was his affair, and that is the reason why "The Grand Alliance" is only part of one man's story of a struggle that called into action hundreds of politicians, their diplomatists scattered all over the world, and millions of men who knew next to nothing about foreign politics or diplomacy. It will take a lot more than one man's story of the war to impress the intelligent student with the notion that it was one man's job. What is to be gained by omitting essential information concerning the pre-war work of Roosevelt, Hull, Stimson, and Baruch is not clear. Nor can a fair judgment be expressed on the manifold activities of Daladier, Mandel, and Bullitt until their work is thoroughly examined by British and American students, as it is now done by French investigators.

Churchill's books concern his rôle in the drama. The other players get scant notice. And what history of the war can be approximately complete that does not include a painstaking review of the voluminous German "Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War"? (German Library of Information, N. Y., 1940)

Etiam diabolus audiuntur (Even the devil has a right to be heard), and until Nuremberg, all decent-minded men believed that this attitude of medieval authorities on law was the correct one to take. Furthermore, it is necessary to learn more about the position of Mussolini than is revealed by Ciano. He was the only one of the four chief European political leaders who made an attempt to stop the strife. We now have the facts concerning his effort. In my forthcoming book, "The Makers of War," I say:

The dispatches in *The British War Blue Book* reveal a poignant lesson to all on the cumbrous, preposterous methods of Foreign Offices and diplomatists in dealing with the grave problems that affect the lives of millions. On September 2 [1939] the Italian Ambassador delivered the following communication to the German Foreign Office:

"For your information Italy communicates to you, naturally leaving every decision to the Fuehrer, that she is still in a position to seek the consent of France, England and Poland to a conference on the following basis:

- "1. An armistice, leaving the armies where they now are.
- "2. The calling of a conference within two or three days.
- "3. A solution of the Polish-German conflict, which, as matters stand

today, would certainly be favorable to Germany.

"This idea, which originated with the Duce, is today particularly advocated by France."

To many people this seemed to be a sensible suggestion, but those who thought so were not diplomatists or statesmen. Peacemakers have ever been sanguine, unpractical persons who do not appreciate what honor and prestige mean to those who make war. Still, the people and the committees who made such earnest appeals for peace before Poland was invaded were of the same mind after the event.

Strange to say, the Havas Agency reported on September 2nd:

"The French Government as well as several other Governments have yesterday been informed of an Italian proposal for a settlement of the European difficulties. After discussing the proposal the French Government gave a reply in the affirmative."

Such proposals were not practical. Lord Halifax stated: "His Majesty's Government would not find it possible to take part in a conference while Poland is being subjected to invasion."

That decision settled the matter so far as peace negotiations were concerned, and the appeals of the neutrals were brushed aside as if they were of no consequence. The position of the chiefs in Washington at that time was clearly stated by Baruch who released a report of his interview with Roosevelt, in which he said:

. . . If we keep our prices down, there is no reason why we shouldn't get the customers from the belligerent nations that they have had to drop because of the war. In that event Germany's barter system will be destroyed. (*N. Y. Times*, Sept. 14, 1939)

There is an undercurrent to every tide, whether it is coming in or going out, and the man who writes a history of this war will gather all the information he can from every deep-lying source before he sorts it out for reasonable treatment. Churchill is not concerned with undercurrents. The *why* of it escapes him entirely. Hitler is his game, as if the moral order of the universe could be established by ridding Europe of another politician. The long line of conquerors from Alexander to Bonaparte provides examples enough of the utter vanity of personal power to convince a sober-minded student that war never yet healed a wound it made. Martin Luther summed up the thought of the world's greatest thinkers on this perpetual problem when he said:

War is one of the greatest plagues that can afflict humanity; it destroys religion; it destroys states; it destroys families. Any scourge, in fact, is preferable to it. Famine and pestilence become as nothing in comparison with it.

What has been accomplished? Hitler is gone, but his economic and

political expedients were not destroyed when he fell. Britain under a Socialist Government is forced in many ways to adopt the trade methods of the Nazis. The barter system of trading is more widespread today and is practiced by more governments than before the war.

To a great extent, labor is under restrictive rules, and British goods can be bought here for less than the producers pay for them over there. Moreover, instead of getting the custom of the belligerent States, we have been obliged to send them food to keep their workers from starving, and give them munitions of war to save them from an enemy of far greater power than Hitler. An English writer remarks that there is scarcely one pre-war complaint charged against the Nazis that is not now practiced by the European victorious Allies.

War and the Moral Order

I AM AFRAID Mr. Churchill's crude notions of the moral government of the universe will not be accepted as he would desire. When millions of men are thrown into war by political governments, the laws of morality are suspended, and no matter how many hymns are sung by civilians of all ranks, the carnage cannot be sanctified. There never was a moralist who even attempted to justify political warfare. The great philosophers and poets, all the way from Plato to Milton, condemned it root and branch.

The moral ideas of some Christians during a war are not in accordance with those of teachers venerated in the days of peace. But, in war, when one imagines he is being used "in some appointed plan," it is necessary to remind him that the moral order of the universe evolved from chaos to order and that only politicians are capable of turning it upside down by making chaos out of order. (Cf. "The Grand Alliance," pp. 670-1) Those of us who thought the end of war would bring a semblance of peace to this tiny bit of the universe wonder what went wrong with "some appointed plan," and why the mundane guardian of it has done nothing yet to put it into operation.

Students of the causes of war will make a regrettable mistake if they read the history of the last one backward, from the Nuremberg verdicts to 1933. Those who earnestly desire to learn why it took place should begin an investigation not later than the day when Hitler became *Reichsführer*.

Foresight, consistency, and logic are not political attributes, and if any one should doubt this statement, all he has to do to confirm it is to read Churchill's Books, "While England Slept," and "Step by Step." Review-

ers who compare "The Grand Alliance" with Thucydides and Tacitus should refresh their memories by reading, once again, "The Peloponnesian War" and "Agricola."

Some of our literary critics are suffering from "inflationary tendencies," and such a statement as, "This makes a book scarcely paralleled in literature" does not make sense. A testimonial so sweeping could be of no service to any writer of our time. Still, we must admit the habit of reviewers in saying a book "is the greatest ever," and "There has been nothing like it" cannot be cured, for it is all part of the commercial system under which we grovel.

New York

Henry George in a New Dimension

Henry George: Citizen of the World. By Anna George de Mille. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1950, 276 pp., index, \$3.50.

Henry George Jr.'s life of his father is among the important American biographies; and not, I think, because the younger George was a first-string biographer. Simply, he had an important American story to tell, and told it with a high regard for essentials which spoke better for the respect and conviction George inspired in his children—among many others—than mere filial regard could have done. Henry George Jr. believed in his father. He reflected the great earnestness the elder George had dedicated to his cause. The result was a story of the first significance.

Unfortunately, the younger George's earnestness appears to have made him impatient of what may have seemed to him irrelevant details. His life, accordingly, is written with a certain sobriety: it does not fully reflect the sunlight and personality which Henry George undoubtedly possessed. Anna George de Mille has done nothing less than add a dimension to the old life of George—a dimension compounded of feminine taste, descriptive data, personal recollections, and a variety of observations and remarks culled from private and public papers. They implement her brother's life at many points. She brings her father, as it were, back again with his old quickness and social interests; and, too, with something of the old surprise which attended his phenomenal rise to fame and controversy.

Much of the selfless spirit of her brother directed Mrs. de Mille's pen.