

from Mr. Knauth in his new assignment as bureau chief of *Time's* Paris office.

Age of Assassins is a story of prison life written by a poet and novelist director of the French government press and radio services in Tunis before 1940. Upon the French capitulation and the establishment of the Vichy government, Mr. Soupault became suspect and was imprisoned. His stay was short—only six months. It was not typical (if Mr. Knauth's report of Buchenwald is considered so) of war imprisonments nor of other Vichy prisoners. He was permitted visitors, his wife and attorney. He had his books and extra food allowances. After forty-five days solitary confinement, he mingled freely with the other prisoners, learned their stories, their hopes, their fears. Yet he knew only a dissociated, impersonal kind of fear, not the gut-shattering terror of the concentration camps. His was an intellectual disgust with the judges and the guards produced by Vichy, never the ferocity of Percy Knauth who said of Buchenwald, "if ever we forget it then God help mankind because we shall then have sunk to a level as low as that of the men who made this camp—which is lower than mankind should be and stay alive."

And it is this transformation, the process and the product, that is the significant text of this book. Though written with sensitivity and insight, this book is a variation on a theme and at best is viewed as a *chanson* in a minor key.

JOSEPH HIRSH

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The War in Europe

TOP SECRET, by Ralph Ingersoll. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 373 pages, \$3.00

This is easily the best narrative account of the War in Europe, from Normandy's D-Day to the close, which has yet appeared. The author had the unusual advantage of serving with the G-3, or planning section, of the European Theater of Operations during the months when the broad outlines of the Invasion were being worked out, and later in the same section at General Bradley's headquarters, where much of the detail was filled in. He managed to escape from purely staff duty for a brief period, long enough to participate in the D-Day assault and command a small detachment which helped to establish the beachhead. He then returned to G-3 duty at the Twelfth Army Group, the senior American headquarters throughout the liberation of Allied and the conquest of enemy territories.

It is obvious that an intelligent observer within G-3, is in a peculiarly favorable position from which to record and appraise major events of a campaign. The Army recognizes that fact by making G-3 responsible for preparing the after-action reports which constitute the military equivalent of an historical record.

This much of the background may help to explain his book, which is written in the forthright manner of a G-3 rather than the relatively easy amiability of the editor of "PM." The chapters which deal with the preludes to and the realities of the campaigns are magnificently done—they carry the fine fury of impatience, the exultation of the rapid advances from the margins of the bocage country across the plain of France, into the snows of the Ardennes and the Rhineland Spring. The analysis of the actual operations in the field has a brilliance which solid truth seldom manages to retain. But the author's judgments are as sharply black and white as the features of an operational map. They have the qualities, and the faults, of honest though subjective opinion.

Mr. Ingersoll's annoyance and skepticism over British policy, and British staff procedures, have been shared by many other American soldiers; Field Marshal Montgomery looms practically as a Devil's Advocate, in "Top Secret." But for many other American soldiers, close association with British troops, particularly in the lower echelons, left quite different feelings.

The author's judgment of Supreme Headquarters is hardly less savage. The present reviewer, who also had a good hard look at SHAEF from below, must confess to similar feelings on certain points. This attitude, however, he finds softened somewhat by two factors: increased distance in space and time; and the recollection of what Mr. Ingersoll's headquarters once looked like, from the still lower level of First Army.

DAVID P. PAGE

European Boundaries

PEACE ATLAS OF EUROPE, Samuel Van Valkenburg. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, \$2.00

As a modest primer on Europe's boundary problems, which are now to be the world's problems, this small volume will do very nicely. Dr. Van Valkenburg is well acquainted with his subject and has included in his book, which was originally one of the Foreign Policy Association's *Headline Series*, a good deal of information as yet not generally known to the American public. They will learn also that these problems cannot be considered solely in the light of present world affairs, but must be thought of in a historical context which for practical purposes reaches back into Europe's Dark Ages. In the last chapter, written by Martin Ebon, of the Foreign Policy Association, they will be assured that the principal factors in the future determination of European boundaries are the clashing power interests of the Big Three. On this side of the Atlantic there is a great need for the accurate and timely knowledge offered by the authors of this book.

However, imagine a subordinate officer of the State Department living in post-war Washington trying desperately to support a wife and three children without a rent allowance and at the same time trying to do a conscientious job of political reporting without displeasing his Chief or any of the Assistant Secretaries of State. Imagine that he was given an official assignment to write a report on Europe's boundary problems. The results of his work would be much the same as Dr. Van Valkenburg's. . . . Studded with "one wonders if the solution would be durable," "the solution seems logical," "it would seem," "perhaps," "the situation might, in most cases. . . ."

The author, a recognized expert on European political geography, poses but does not answer these four questions with regard to each continental European nation which has a boundary problem:

What boundary will give it the greatest amount of security in the present world situation?

What economic needs should be satisfied?

What peoples of racial kinship should be brought into the state?

What disposition should be made of national minorities?

For boundary studies, maps are of the utmost importance. Those which Graphics, Inc., has prepared for this volume will not be complete or precise enough, for most readers, especially those who in recent years have been accustomed to working with the excellent military maps used by our Armed Forces.

No attempt has been made in the book to deal with the validity of the motives which nations have had in the past and will soon demonstrate in fixing international boundaries. How much weight should be given to ethnographic, strategic, political, economic and historical considerations and to straight



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demands for national aggrandizement in planning boundaries for a peaceful Europe and a peaceful world? The author again declines to let us benefit by his knowledge and experience.

For the more than a modicum of knowledge offered by Dr. Van Valkenburg, which is better than none, the American public should be thankful. To those, however, who are genuinely interested in the problem of Europe's future boundaries and who already know something about it, it will seem that he could have done a lot better if he had really tried.

WILLIAM DUFF

A Great Woman

BEATRICE WEBB, by Margaret Cole. Harcourt, Brace & Co., 222 pages, \$3.00

In 1885, just about the time when the Conservative Party's taking over of power seemed to mean the discarding of the Gladstonian urge for reforms, the newly-formed Fabian Society announced that "the age of administration has begun." Within a few years the opportunity for the creation of new activities of local government afforded by the erection of County Councils gave such Fabians as Sidney and Beatrice Webb just the chance to gain and use experience in practical administration that they knew so well how to put to profit. In this respect the Tory tradition of administrative skill was more suited to their flair than the Liberal emphasis on