

The American White Paper

Bruce Minton reviews Alsop's and Kintner's apology for Roosevelt's foreign policy. An official-unofficial document.

AMERICAN WHITE PAPER, by Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner. Simon & Schuster. \$1.

THE modest claim made by the publishers of *American White Paper* is that Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner "stole a march on history" by telling "the kind of story that usually stays on ice for twenty years." In other words, here is the real "inside" history of American foreign policy from Munich to the outbreak of the imperialist war.

Of course, Alsop and Kintner don't consider the war "imperialist," but that is another matter. If they actually have added new information, the reader can draw his own conclusions from the facts. The newspapers have made much of this signal addition to our knowledge. But what, on analysis, do the authors contribute?

For one thing, it seems that the upstairs study in the White House is an easy, comfortable room, full of books and prints—something this reviewer did not know. For another, on the afternoon of April 13, 1939, Secretary of State Hull and his assistant, Sumner Welles, brought the midday cables from Europe to the President's office. And again, Hull's language (he lives at the Carlton Hotel in Washington, D. C.) is extremely salty. Did you know that Roosevelt once consulted Vice President Garner on the proper ingredients for an old-fashioned cocktail? Or that some time after Ambassador Kennedy telephoned from London, with tears in his eyes, to announce Great Britain's declaration of war against Germany, President Roosevelt went back to sleep?

The until-now-unrecorded items that Alsop and Kintner have vouchsafed us with such fanfare are not only trivial but often momentarily dull. They add details of the most colossal insignificance—on the weather, on private conversations of no importance whatsoever, on historical moments that are not history making. The meat of their book they filched from the newspapers. They have pasted together news releases from Washington, excerpts from the President's important messages, a few of the better known anecdotes that have been going the rounds for the last months, and have added to this hodgepodge some minor gossip of indifferent relevance.

BAD REPORTING

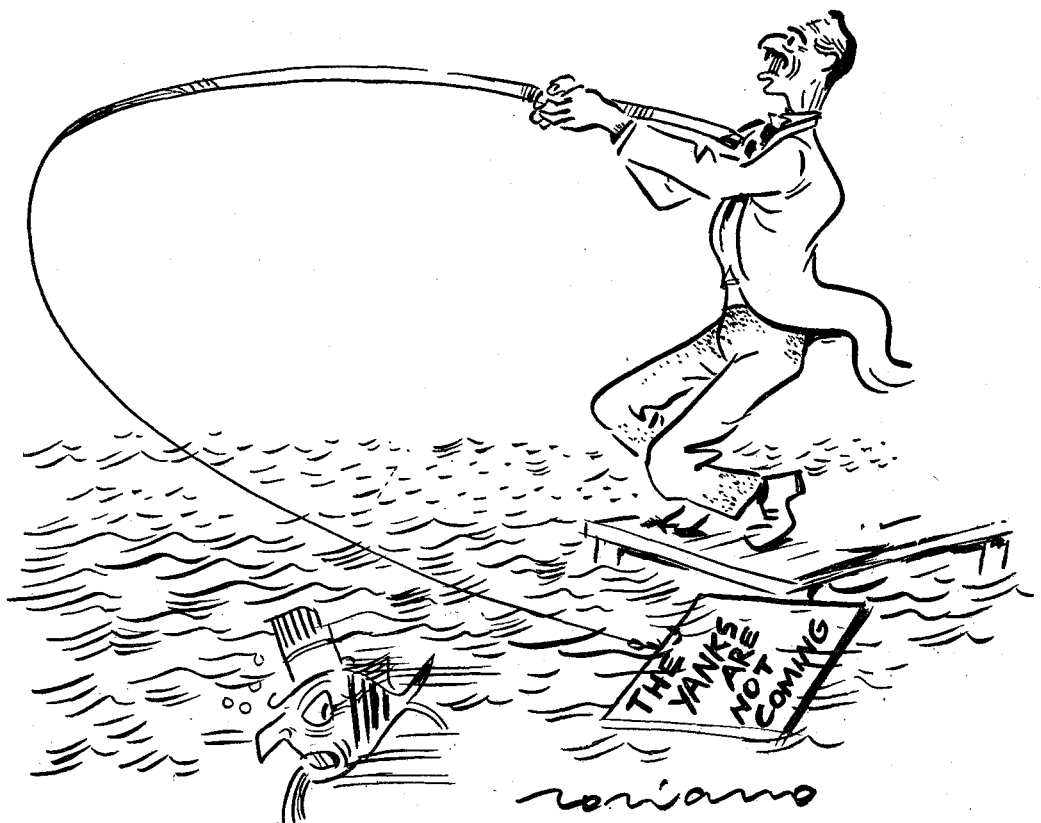
Even as reporting, then, let alone as history, *American White Paper* is not what it is cracked up to be. Alsop and Kintner have overlooked the most significant facts of the crisis days they are supposedly discussing.

While they write about the appeasement policy of Great Britain and France, they carefully avoid any analysis of what appeasement meant. Was it only, as they say, the reflection of the anxiety of Daladier and Chamberlain to propitiate Germany in order to preserve peace? Or were there more far-reaching ends to be gained? Is it not now all too clear that appeasement had as its goal the promotion of an anti-Soviet war? Was not the sanction granted Hitler when he seized Austria, when along with Mussolini he invaded Spain, when he marched into Czechoslovakia and Memel, in the nature of a bribe for the establishment of a "peace in our time" which would provide the setting for the holy war against socialism? Yet once it is admitted that an attack on the USSR was the aim of the appeasers, it becomes clear that when Soviet strength and strategy frustrated this plot, the Allies found themselves in a situation of their own making in which their imperialist position could be preserved only by war. Certainly war did not break out because, as Alsop and Kintner so glibly state, a "one-man jury" so decided; rather it was the result of the encouragement granted by France and Great Britain to German aggression. War came when the rival imperial-

ism of Germany refused any longer to do the bidding of the Western powers that had armed and abetted fascism.


But such an admission would have led the two "historians" to the conclusion that both sides in the present war are brigands and that the war is an imperialist conflict. The admission would hardly be acclaimed by the sponsors of *American White Paper* in Washington. Nor would such an acknowledgement serve as a convincing argument to persuade the American people that their "duty" is to rush to the aid of the Allies. It is better apple polishing for Alsop and Kintner to advance the administration's thesis which rests on the sweet-sounding concept that the present struggle is being waged between the forces of "good" and "evil." Nice old muddled Neville, tricked by the villain Hitler, is at last carrying the torch of democracy, liberty, and what have you. Ergo, the United States should help the naive but terribly decent British ruling class, just as President Roosevelt says we should.

But Alsop and Kintner are careful not to lay their cards too openly on the table. They disguise their purpose by the pretense that here at last is the real "inside news." But for all their exclusive knowledge, they seem



Soriano

IN THE HEART OF THE RAMAPO MTS. . . .



1 hour from N. Y., 225 acres in fascinating hiking country, 5 miles of paths, Tennis, Golf, Handball, Riding, Bicycles, Roller Skating, Library. All indoor & outdoor sports facilities. Congenial atmosphere. Excellent cuisine. Adults. Tel.: Highland Mills 7895
OPEN ALL YEAR
 Formerly Lewisohn's Estate
 CENTRAL VALLEY, N. Y.
 Mgt. Fannie Goldberg

THRILL TO THE JOYS OF SPRING AT
PLUM POINT
 the year-round vacation resort
 Magnificent estate on the Hudson River
 Only 53 miles from New York

All outdoor sports Saddle horses on grounds
 Fine Library Superlative Cuisine Musical Recordings
 Booklet Sent on Request

Write P. O. Box 471, Newburgh, N. Y. Phone Newburgh 4270
 Reservations Now Being Taken for the Decoration
 Day Week-End

Camp CHI-WAN-DA
 FOR BOYS and GIRLS
 ULSTER PARK, N. Y.



On the Mountain Lake
 Esopus overlooking the
 Beautiful Hudson River.

We present a modern cultural environment for your children. All cabins with latest improvements. Reasonable rates. For full information, write or call for booklet.

JACOB I. DOROSHKIN, Director
 545 Fifth Ave., MU 2-4218 — DI 2-7432

An Opportunity for New Masses Readers!
GOLDEN'S BRIDGE COLONY Golden's Bridge, N. Y.
 Westchester County
 (via N. Y. Central just one hour from N. Y. C.)

For as little as \$10 a month you can have an acre of land in this ideal colony. A beautiful 8-acre lake. Social, educational, recreational facilities; children's playgroups. You are invited to participate in this unusual environment. Visit us this weekend. A committee will help you with all information. Ask for Secretary. For further particulars write to:

M. ZAKHEIM
 91 East 208th Street, Bronx, N. Y.
 Motorists: Use Route 22; in Golden's Bridge turn right to Route 138. No tolls, bridges or ferries



To subscribe to
NEW MASSES
 just fill out and
 mail this form

NEW MASSES, 461 FOURTH AVE., N. Y. C.
 Please enter my subscription to New Masses for the period indicated by the checkmark: ☐ six months, \$2.50; ☐ one year, \$4.50; ☐ two years, \$7.50; ☐ three years, \$10.

Name

Address

City and State

Amount Enclosed \$

only too willing to accept trustingly the hand-outs of the British Foreign Office. If, as they claimed they had done, they had taken the trouble to check their information, the Treasury Department could have told them that the assets of Great Britain and France in this country are larger by six billion dollars (at least) than they state. If they had been eager to arrive at truth, they would have given the record of Sumner Welles, whom they portray as a righteous, peace-loving, if somewhat arrogant, aristocrat. They would have admitted that Alsop receives information for his daily column direct from Welles, for which service he is known to give his benefactor a more than generous "break" whenever possible. They would have discussed the financial and political connections of policy makers in the State Department, the role of James C. Dunn, for example, or of J. P. Moffat. They would tell of William Bullitt's almost pathological hate of the Soviet Union, and of Joseph Kennedy's ties with Chamberlain. They would have mentioned the influence on the administration of the Wall Street spokesmen who—so we understand from an impeccable source available to all—are not timid in making their wishes known to the White House. They would have stated flatly that Roosevelt is determined to assure an Allied victory at all costs even to the point of dragging this country into war. They would have expanded their remarks on the Panama Conference where American imperialism began to show its hand, now that Great Britain is involved in war. They would admit that when they talk of a German-Soviet "alliance" they are deliberately and consciously spreading an untruth for the purpose of justifying the anti-Soviet policies pursued so eagerly by the administration.

DELIBERATE HOAX

American White Paper is not history. The record has been left deliberately incomplete, deliberately perverted. Yet the hoax is important. Primarily, the authors, with the blessings of the right people, are apologists for the present foreign policy of the United States. In the guise of "objectively" reporting the course of American diplomacy, with the bait that here at last is the lowdown on what is going on, *American White Paper* justifies every warlike move made by Roosevelt and his underlings. The administration's "neutrality" is never questioned; nor are patently unneutral actions challenged. Alsop and Kintner do their utmost to conceal the very unpleasant reality that "all aid short of war" leads to this country's involvement and therefore to participation in war. This collection of revelations that do not reveal, hailed so loudly by the pro-war press, has as its one purpose not to inform but to trick the reader into accepting the authors'—and the administration's—meretricious conclusion that an Allied victory is to the interest of the American people, that if an Allied victory should be menaced, it is the unchallengeable duty of our people to sacrifice, to bleed, and to die

in defense of British and French—and American—imperialism.

American White Paper is dishonest and venal. It is propaganda designed to please the authors' patrons in Washington. The book has done an inestimable service to the proponents of war. It would have been far too embarrassing for the administration to have undertaken the printing and distribution of this book for itself.

BRUCE MINTON.

Education of a Liberal

A LIBERAL IN WARTIME: THE EDUCATION OF ALBERT DESILVER, by Walter Nelles. Edited by Lewis Gannett. Introduction by Roger Baldwin. W. W. Norton. \$2.50.

ECONOMIC and political developments of the past two decades have made the old type of liberal who centered his philosophy around the doctrine of *laissez-faire* something of a rarity and, indeed, something of an anachronism. But the type of liberal who stresses free speech and civil liberties is still very much with us; and so long as he sticks to his principles, he must be accounted an extremely useful citizen.

Albert DeSilver, born to wealth and a conventional upbringing, educated at exclusive private schools, and at Yale elected to one of America's most patrician clubs, the famous Skull and Bones, nonetheless became one of the outstanding civil liberties liberals in this country during the period of the first world war and the post-war madness. In the early fall of 1917 DeSilver joined the Directing Committee of the National Civil Liberties Bureau and a year or so later resigned from his respectable downtown law firm to devote more time to the work of the Bureau. In October of 1918, when Roger Baldwin was arrested for refusing to comply with the conscription act, DeSilver assumed the position of associate director of the Bureau, which in 1920 changed its name to the American Civil Liberties Union.

In the education of Albert DeSilver no single event, according to Mr. Nelles, "more shocked his conservatism than the suppression of the radical weekly, the *Masses*," which Postmaster General Burleson excluded from the mails in 1917. DeSilver contributed substantially to the *Masses* fight in this case, writing the magazine:

It so happens that I am not a "revolutionary"—if that term has any meaning—but a most law-abiding sort of soul, and accordingly I find the *Masses* prodigiously irritating at times and by the same token pleasing at others. But my law-abiding neck gets very warm under its law-abiding collar these days at the extraordinary violations of fundamental laws which are being put over. Accordingly your fight assumes an importance which makes it imperative that it be concluded.

Later, in 1918, DeSilver furnished the cash bail for John Reed when the latter, on his return from Soviet Russia, was arrested un-