

includes a military offensive (on a second front and/or increased and overwhelming aid to the Soviet Union) and at home, an immediate and drastic series of steps toward economic and political democracy: socialization of basic industries, independence or education for it under international mandates for colonies, and a just plan for a postwar world that will include the German common man as well as those we are all fighting to free.

The book, far more than a review can indicate, reveals Mr. Smith as a young man with an observant eye, a point of view to which to relate his observations, and enough intelligence to make constructive suggestions—which is a good deal more than can be said for a number of chronicles of how much Scotch everybody drank before they had trouble with the censor. You'd better look into it. SALLY ALFORD.

Brief Review

PROLOGUE TO APPEASEMENT: A Study in French Foreign Policy, by Elizabeth Cameron. American Council on Public Affairs. Paper Edition. \$3.

The subject of how and why France fell does not cease to be of interest: we have had a long series of reminiscences and novels such as those by Heinz Pol, Genevieve Tabouis, Vladimir Pozner. There have also been such works as D. W. Brogan's *France under the Republic*, and Arnold Wolfer's excellent study *Britain and France between Two Wars*, which give a more rounded historical analysis of French politics and diplomacy. This monograph belongs in the latter category: it is an extremely well documented study of French policy, domestic and foreign, from the limited period 1933-36. Without pretending to draw fundamental conclusions in so clinically objective a work, the author finds that the men who betrayed France in 1940 and the forces that were unable to prevent this betrayal had already shown all the facets of their policies in the very early and middle thirties. She expresses the hope that "it may serve to clarify the recent past, and by implication, to indicate an analogy for other democratic nations which are vulnerable in many of the same ways" as was France.



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CHRONICLE OF CONFLICT

"The World at War," first of the full length government films, bares the pattern of Axis strategy. From the Mukden "incident" to today. Alvah Bessie discusses the strength and weakness of the film.

THE WORLD AT WAR" is the first of the full length government films being produced by the Office of War Information to assist in broadening and deepening public understanding of the war. It is therefore extremely important in what it says (and what it does not say), and in the way its facts and figures are presented.

Prepared from newsreel sources, from captured Axis footage, and government propaganda film, *The World at War* was edited by Samuel Spewack, who also wrote the commentary spoken by Paul Stewart. Much of the Nazis' own propaganda film about the destruction of Poland, France, Belgium, and Holland has been incorporated in *The World at War*, as well as film documentation from Spain and Albania, Ethiopia and Manchukuo. Aply edited and cut, the narrative is swift and exciting, spanning the past eleven years since the notorious Mukden "incident" was used by the Japanese to initiate their conquest of China.

It is a heartening thing to have, from our government itself, a film that lays bare the heart of Axis strategy—the technique of "one at a time," the tactic of "saving the world from Communism." It is good for American audiences to learn from the government that Spain was a legitimately elected republic; that General Franco rebelled against that republic; that he called for assistance—and received it—from Hitler and Mussolini. And it is especially good to be shown this at a time when the strange proposal is made by the President himself that Americans assist in the rehabilitation of Spain's ancient culture under the aegis of the very Franco whose fascist guilt is so unequivocally exposed in *The World at War*.

The pattern of Axis strategy is explained to the audience. The film shows that China, Spain, many other countries fought the fascists, and that many countries were betrayed. When betrayal is mentioned, however, it does not receive the emphasis that history has given it. We are told that Vichy and Norway are Quisling states, but the extent of the heinous fraud perpetrated upon their democratic peoples is not sufficiently exposed. Nor does it serve the interests of accuracy to attempt, even in so half-hearted a fashion as the OWI has, to whitewash the period of the "phony war" when appeasement elements in France, America, and Great Britain were still striving might and main to divert Hitler's Wehrmacht to the east.

Isn't it about time that the OWI should admit to the people that leading appeaser

figures in the great democracies were a party to the strangulation of Spain, of France, of Czechoslovakia? And if it is now possible to tell the people—as *The World at War* so enthusiastically does—something of the Soviet Union's great strength, its aid to the Spanish republic, its heroic struggle against fascism, isn't it also possible to point out that it was the Soviets who swiftly defeated the fascist-minded rulers of Finland in their provocations against the USSR? And that it was the fascists in France who sold that nation down the river?

If the film, without naming them, can show Senators Wheeler and Nye as isolationists right up to Pearl Harbor, why can't it admit that these men and the forces they represent are still strong and fighting to prevent that second front which will guarantee victory? Also, when labor "conflict" is shown early in the film as one cause of American disunity, why sedulously avoid saying *who* provoked this conflict—and why couldn't we be shown the magnificent unity labor is achieving, its enormous efforts to increase production, and its role on the battlefield?

We raise these questions, not for the sake of emphasizing shortcomings in the film, but because of the important purpose of documentaries like this. They are produced as a contribution to understanding—and the action which flows from understanding. And a people's war demands the utmost clarity on the part of the people who are fighting it. We must know exactly how, why, when, and where. Nothing should be withheld, nothing bilked, nothing distorted, even by accident.

IT SHOULD be said, however, that *The World at War*, despite its limitations, does contribute to understanding in many respects. It says things that have rarely been said before, officially, and it says them through a powerful popular medium. The most valuable point it makes can perhaps be summed up in one passage from the commentary: "America was at war. It had been at war, although few Americans realized it, for more than ten years, ever since Sept. 18, 1931, when Japan clawed Manchuria out of the body of China." And the film ties together that long anti-fascist struggle, putting in proper perspective events which are separated geographically and chronologically, all of them part of the same gigantic battle in which America is absorbed today. The headlines and even more obscure stories from years back assume a timely pertinence. For example, a shot of Fritz Kuhn addressing the German-

American Bund at Madison Square Garden—while an anti-Nazi is beaten on the platform—leaps out at you from the screen with twice the significance that most people attributed to the actual event a few years ago. It was—remember?—pretty much a "local" newspaper story then.

I thought the OWI handled the Nazi propaganda footage with admirable skill. Those portions of *The World at War* show bombing and burning of cities, Nazi conquest. Hitler's men, of course, filmed this because they were proud of their work; they regarded it as a mark of their invincibility and counted on audiences to recognize it as such. As presented in *The World at War*, however, it arouses the opposite of admiration—it stirs revulsion, horror, and contempt, and it steels rather than frightens the anti-Axis battlers.

The men who guide the Office of War Information should be even more determined to present the truth to us. Our people can stand the truth—and the truth will cement their unity and assure their victory.



IN *The Talk of the Town* Sidney Buchman and Irwin Shaw, the scenarists, have made shrewd use of the comedy technique in handling the case of Leopold Dilg.

Leopold, we learn, was a worker in a small town factory that burned down. In fact, he had predicted it would burn down, and when it did, what was more "natural" than that the boss should pin the arson on Leopold? Especially when you consider the fact that Dilg had always been a thorn in the side of manufacturer Holmes, and was the "town malcontent" who had a bad habit of making soap-box speeches.

When Dilg saw the jury of twelve citizens "good and true" who were to decide on the evidence, he knew his chances were nil and he broke jail. This, of course, was a mistake, since it made him a fugitive from justice and, in the eyes of the law and the local public, constituted an admission of guilt. His lawyer, old Sam Yates, believed in Dilg, but he was powerless to prove his innocence in the face of such incriminating circumstance, and Yates' old-time classmate, Michael Lightcap, dean of a prominent law school, who was scheduled for the bench of the Supreme Court, refused to help the man.

From this situation, authors Buchman and Shaw have proceeded, with the nimble camera and intelligent direction of George Stevens, to weave a comedy that is, in certain aspects, profoundly significant. Its main theme is the