

War's Three Dimensions

Reviewed by Fletcher Pratt

WAR IN THE AIR. By David Garnett. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1941. 292 pp. \$3.50.

DURING the "phony war" there was frequently heard the statement from the Allied side that: "We are beginning this war where the last one left off." It proved only too distressingly true as far as the Allied high command was concerned and not true at all for the Germans, who remembered only too well what had happened to them in that last one; and among the things that made it true was the attitude of London and Paris toward the two factors that distinguish this war from all preceding—aerial warfare and propaganda.

The press releases dished out by Allied headquarters at the beginning of the present conflict, in fact, repay quite a little study in the light of subsequent events. They were uniformly of the soothing-syrup character—everything's going to be all right, there will be no more hard fighting—which, students of the art assure us, is the correct approach, and indeed the only one, for thoroughly war-weary peoples. Like similar issues of March, 1918, they were also disingenuous in the extreme; they invented all manner of elaborate explanations why the war in the air should remain phony without once suggesting the deadly and fundamental cause—that the Allied air services were in a state of such hopeless inferiority they did not dare attack, while the Germans were using the winter to make their superiority absolutely crushing by intensified production.

The air part of this is in Mr. Garnett's book; the rest of it is implicit in the fact that the book has been issued. For it could hardly have appeared at all without official approval, and there is internal evidence that the author must have had access to official reports and records. No newspaper or magazine has yet told his story about the Italian government's proud announcement in the summer of 1940 that *H.M.S. Hood* had been heavily bombed and perhaps sunk. (It turned out that the announcement had been made on the aviators' reports; they had bombed a battleship all right, but when she reached harbor they discovered it was the Fascists'.)

The result is the fullest and one of the frankest accounts of the war in the air yet issued, fairly told, without

rhetoric for the glorious achievements of the R.A.F. and without epithets for the Germans. The account is accompanied by some excellent running commentary on the developing strategy and tactics of air warfare. Dive-bombing by daylight does not pay, for instance—that was the great mistake the Germans made in the attacks on England last fall. The conditions of the drive into France were highly specialized and are not likely to be repeated. Air power, surprisingly, is one of the least mobile of all arms; for before airplanes can operate effectively over an area they require the support of ground crews and machine-shops, which simply cannot be improvised. The best way to deal with night raiders is to catch them just taking off from or returning to base.

Much of this is recorded in war plans divisions and official documents; little or none of it has been explained for public consumption, and it is very fortunate that it should be set forth by so skilled a hand and in so even a temper. There are a few gaps, of course; one searches in vain for any remarks on what the British are doing to counter the raids of the long-range Focke-Wulf Condors against Atlantic shipping; in vain for anything about radio locators, or for any intimation that the Curtiss Hawk has been found wanting for work over England. But taken all in all, this is by far the best book on the war in the air yet to appear.

THE DESTINY OF SEA POWER. By John Philips Cranwell. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1941. 262 pp. \$2.75.

ARMIES ON WHEELS. By S. L. A. Marshall. New York: Morrow & Co. 1941. 251 pp. \$2.50.

THAT a book, or books, saying what these do was bound to be written someday by somebody takes nothing from the credit due the men who have accomplished the double task of discovering the nature of mechanical war and furnishing the illustrative examples to support it. It took Baron Jomini some twenty years to accomplish for the Napoleonic system what they have done in two for the Blitzkrieg; and Napoleon's secretary had the advantage of his master's voice, while this pair must rest on the always tendentious and usually mendacious communiqués.

It is probably a benefit, also, that two men rather than one, attempted the job. Mr. Cranwell, primarily interested in the peculiar things that are happening to sea-power in this conflict, was needed to furnish the general background, and Mr. Marshall, fundamentally concerned with wheels, to fill in the details. Under their analysis the Blitzkrieg develops, not as the swing of any irresistible wave of the future, but into something simple as apple pie, that can be made by any people who will take the time to grow the fruit, and that have the intelli-



The watchword of the new U. S. Army is "co-ordination."

gence to handle them in the right way.

Mr. Cranwell first. He holds that the destiny of sea-power is not so much that of being replaced by other forms of military force as of lending its technique to those others. The air? It may replace sea-power some day, he says willingly—but not because bombers can sink battleships. Even if bombers sank all the battleships, there would have to be aircraft carriers and anti-aircraft cruisers to keep bombers from sinking merchant ships. Air power will replace sea-power only when air commerce predominantly replaces ocean commerce, which leads him to a new definition of sea-power, a revision of Mahan, defining it as the ability to use the sea for the transport of goods and men. In connection with which he points out that a German submarine may be quite as effective an agent of sea-power as a British battleship.

But this is only a preliminary to his remark that war on the ocean has been mechanized ever since the sail replaced the oar as the prime mover for ships. Armies today still use for their movement, especially in battle, an enormous amount of that human muscular energy which went out of naval war at the Battle of Lepanto. But the process has already set in on land, and was early developed in the air; and the end of it will be that the vehicle will become the tactical unit; from which it follows that the cannon, a vehicle-destroying unit, must be the primary weapon of the future. If the analogies of the earlier mechanization at sea are to be followed, he insists, we shall build more securely toward our own defense.

This comparison, this analogy, is the main service of his book. At the one point where he attempts specific application, he turns up the doctrine that war in the air will produce planes with less speed and more armament and armor, to fight for military control of the new element. This was exactly the theory on which the French went to work when they built their combat air force around the "flying tank," already a failure in the days of Franco's rebellion.

But at the point of specific application Mr. Marshall takes over. He begins that way—most specifically with brief pictures of the 1941 Balkan campaign, those of Greece and Crete, Romell's desert campaign, and part of the Nazi adventure in Russia, freely admitting that there is much in all of them that remains obscure, yet insisting that in spite of the obscurities, analysis must be made now to be of any practical use. It is rather surprising to discover that although starting from exactly the opposite point from

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Behind the Russian Front

THE SOVIETS EXPECTED IT. By Anna Louise Strong. New York: The Dial Press. 1941. 279 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM H. CHAMBERLIN

IT used to be the fashion in the Soviet Union to launch societies for the vigilant maintenance of "Marxism" and "Leninism" in every branch of human life and thought. Leninism in literature, Marxism in art; it would have been a bold, not to say suicidal Soviet citizen who would have contradicted either formula. But the vogue went still further. It is a matter of record that Soviet journals, in all seriousness, put forward such slogans as "For Party Spirit in Mathematics," "For Purity of Marxist-Leninist Theory in Surgery," and there was a society of physicians called "Leninism in Medicine." A genial foreign Soviet sympathizer who had not lost a sense of humor commented on the latter:

I suppose its practical rule would be: if the patient has a pain in the toe, cut off the leg. If there's any doubt about it, cut off both.

These recollections of the Soviet Union were evoked by reading this latest book by Anna Louise Strong, which rigorously interprets every event in recent and contemporary Soviet history from the standpoint of the "Party line." There has been no such uncritical eulogy of Stalin and his regime since that amazing work of the Dean of Canterbury, the one clerical figure whom communists like to cite as an infallible authority.

A reviewer who is not on the Party line himself is at a distinct disadvantage in discussing such a book. It is not a matter of agreeing with the writer on some points and disagreeing

on others. It is rather a question of analyzing a doctrinal, dogmatic approach to contemporary history, the refutation of which would require, if not another book, at least a good deal more space than a review could claim.

What is one to say, for instance, about such a curious title, in relation to the Stalin-Hitler deal of August 23, 1939, as "The Pact That Stopped Hitler?" The immediate effect of this pact was to let loose the second European war. The second was to permit Hitler to throw his full military force against France and achieve the crushing victory of June, 1940. This in turn facilitated the conquest of the Balkans and finally made possible an attack on the Soviet Union itself. Just where, and how, was Hitler "stopped" by this pact?

One of the features of the Party line is its extreme flexibility. Communist publications which could see in the British nothing but predatory imperialists until June 22, 1941, discovered after that date they were heroes. Miss Strong does not adjust her justification focus, even when some later event has clearly upset an earlier propagandist statement. For instance, she argues gravely that the Soviet protectorate which was forced on Latvia, Esthonia, and Lithuania in the autumn of 1939 did not make them "vassal states." Inasmuch as this protectorate was merely the prelude to forcible annexation and the complete obliteration of the independent existence of these states in the summer of 1940, the point about their not being "vassals" seems, to put it mildly, rather farfetched.

Miss Strong hasn't even caught up with the fact that there was a famine in Russia in 1932-33, something that is grudgingly and shamefacedly admitted now, justified, of course, as part of a higher good, even by writers who are extremely favorable to the Soviet regime. She couldn't find evidence of famine, she says, in individual villages or in the total Soviet census. Apparently she did not visit the right villages at the right time; this reviewer could give her the names of several, in the North Caucasus and in Ukraina, where the local Soviet authorities admitted that from one tenth to one third of the people died during the terrible winter and spring of 1932-33.

The whole picture of Soviet-Finnish relations is comparable in accuracy and realism with a statement of von Ribbentrop or Goebbels about German relations with Norway or Belgium. Without batting an eyelash she suggests that the Finns fired the first



Anna Louise Strong