

Peace through Strength

"Strategy for the West," by Sir John Slessor (William Morrow, 180 pp. \$5), is a bold plan for the maintenance of peace between the West and the Iron Curtain countries by the former British Chief of Air Staff. Lindsay Rogers, our reviewer, is professor of public law at Columbia University.

By Lindsay Rogers

WHEN as Prime Minister he was faced with demands for larger military and naval appropriations Lord Salisbury remarked that to theologians nothing seemed innocent; to physicians nothing seemed wholesome; and to soldiers nothing seemed safe. In "Strategy for the West" Sir John Slessor—until last year Chief of the Air Staff in Great Britain—confidently charts a perilous road to safety and assures his readers that the tolls paid to travel along it will be less prohibitive than the tolls on other less secure roads. Sir John's road is atomic weapons.

Five years ago Dr. Vannevar Bush (who is quoted with approval frequently on the modern arms we are going to get) was faintly optimistic in saying that if total war came again to the world it would be fast and furious, would cost millions of lives, would exhaust the accumulations of treasure for many years, but "it would not destroy civilization any more than the last two wars had destroyed civilization." Sir John disagrees, although he points out that Dr. Bush, who did not know about the hydrogen bomb, might not hold now to his former opinion. In Sir John's view war "would be general suicide and the end of civilization as we know it. Something, of course, would survive, but it would not be recognizable as a tolerably habitable world. We should sink back into another Dark Age." It is a recognition of this fact by the Soviet Union, as well as by the Western world, that gives him grounds for optimism.

Taking a leaf out of the writings *inter alia*, of the Cam-

bridge historian Herbert Butterfield, Sir John says that no war can now avoid creating conditions more unfavorable than those sought to be corrected by resort to war. He hopes that the Americans have learned this lesson in the last "ten years." It was a lesson that should have been learned after the conclusion of the war in 1918. In any event, his view is that the Soviet Union has studied the lesson. With both the West and the East thus informed "no one will resort to war as an instrument of policy." It is conceivable, but unlikely, "that we might stumble into it by mistake or miscalculation." So long as the West maintains its atomic strength "total shooting war as we have known it twice in this generation is a thing of the past."

Now that the Russians have atomic and hydrogen bombs they still insist on proposing their abolition as a weapon of warfare as they began to do in 1946. Why? Because they would continue to have great superiority in ground forces. Nevertheless, the men in the Kremlin know that "as long as atomic air power (and the will on the part of the West to use it if necessary) exists" the Red Army can no longer be used for the "amiable purpose" of



Marshal Sir John Slessor—"no war can avoid creating conditions more unfavorable than those to be corrected."

overrunning other countries without precipitating a "third world war of a kind in which Moscow could not possibly gain on balance, whatever the issue; therefore atomic air power must be eliminated. That is the policy—just as simple as that."

But now comes the terrible question. Assume that the restraint the Kremlin showed at the time of the Berlin blockade, and subsequently, does not continue; assume that some future Korean police action gets out of hand and "massive retaliation" is contemplated. Who is going to make the decision to bomb Russian counterparts of New York or Seattle, or Liverpool or Coventry? The idea is as old as strategy; what is new is the massiveness of the strength.

Sir John discusses at some length the military future of Germany. He does not think it important whether German contingents are in the European Defense Community or attached to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He realizes that the political arrangements for Europe must guarantee "that Germany never again be a military menace to her neighbors." This can be prevented if Great Britain and the United States show the proper determination. His concrete plan apparently chimes in with something that has been in Sir Winston Churchill's mind—an Eastern Locarno which would include the Soviet Union.

He reminds us of the Brussels Treaty of March 1948, which antedated NATO. That treaty pledged Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg to mutual defense against external attack. He would have Germany, the United States, and Canada sign the treaty and then invite the Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia to adhere. Allied forces would be withdrawn from Germany and the German Republic would give an undertaking not to build any fortifications, to destroy existing military airfields, and not to station any troops in Eastern Germany provided Russian forces withdrew behind the Russian frontier.

Then—here are "the teeth in it"—the United States and Great Britain would formally declare that in the event of aggression against one of the high contracting parties the military aid and assistance that they would give would "take the form of atomic air power."

The likelihood of the U.S. consenting to such an agreement is nil.

Instinct of Freedom

"Men of Colditz," by P. R. Reid (J. B. Lippincott, 287 pp. \$3.95), continues the account, begun in the author's *"The Colditz Story,"* of the attempts to escape made by British prisoners of war held in Germany's supposedly escape-proof prison during World War II.

By Merle Miller

THE Nazis considered the castle at Colditz in Saxony escape-proof; almost all of the Allied prisoners there had been caught after at least one attempt to get away from another prison; the castle, which had been a lunatic asylum, was the Alcatraz for those soldiers captured by the Germans, and as such it was a failure.

Patrick Reid, now a farmer in Sussex, has already written the account of his own stay there, which ended with his dramatic leave-taking in November 1942. It was called *"The Colditz Story"* and is the best of the many escape stories of the last major war. *"Men of Colditz,"* his new book, begins where the last ended; it has been pieced together from talks with the comrades Reid left behind. Nevertheless, it has the feel of experience.

There was, of course, a distillery at Colditz; there always is in PW camps. There was an illegal radio, also a standard fixture. Beyond that, the prisoners at Colditz showed far more imagination than most of those in more prosaic prisons. There was the scheme dreamed up by Mike Sinclair, an English redhead whose exploits earned him the title among the Germans of *Der Rote Fuchs*, the Red Fox. Sinclair bore a superficial resemblance to a German guard commander known as Franz Josef because he looked so much like the late emperor of Austria. After months of study, Mike, with the help of a couple of make-up artists, was an exact duplicate of the Guard. For instance, fourteen mustaches had to be discarded before one passed all the tests. When Mike and two phony German "goons" arrived at the front gate of Colditz demanding to be let out, only a heartbreaking coincidence prevented the plan from succeeding. After the German Franz Josef appeared on the scene, Mike Sinclair's disguise and manner were so perfect the other guards could not make up their minds which one to shoot.

As Mr. Reid tells it, the scene is genuine high comedy; there is a good deal of humor in *"Men of Colditz."* Captain D. J. (Jim) Rogers, a mining

engineer from South Africa, was not one of the leaders in escape schemes, but he was essential to morale. "As a writer may use a true story for the basis of his novel, so Jim used the news . . . He was the Knight of the Silver Lining." He managed to make victories out of the fall of Singapore, the landing at Dieppe, and the British retreats in the Libyan desert.

By the summer of 1944, the situation was so desperate that men were leaping over forty-foot walls in broad daylight. That was when Tony Rolt, a lieutenant of the Rifle Brigade who had been an amateur auto racer, decided that a glider could be built which could take off from the roof of the castle and come to earth out of sight of the guards. The scheme was ridiculous, but by the fall of that year the glider was being constructed in a secret workshop. The take-off was scheduled for the spring of 1945.

By the time it was ready for use, the men of Colditz had been liberated by General Hodges's First Army. The total span of the completed glider from wing tip to wing tip was thirty-three feet, and there is every reason to believe it would have worked.

But that is not really the point. Mike Sinclair was killed in a final escape attempt only seven months before the castle was relieved and the prisoners freed. However, Mr. Reid writes, "That freedom would not have been of his own making, nor to his own liking. He had reached that stage in the humiliating mental struggle of a prisoner of noble stature when, to desist from trying and to await freedom at the hands of others, would seal his own future, scar his heart, and sear his soul. His duty would have remained unfulfilled."

That is the point of the *"Men of Colditz."*



—Jacket design for *"Men of Colditz."*

Colditz Castle—"Alcatraz for soldiers."

A Marshal's Faith

"The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim" (translated by Count Eric Lewenhaupt. E. P. Dutton, 540 pp. \$6.75), recounts the career of a distinguished Finnish soldier who fought on the battlefield and in the Presidency, to preserve the independence of his nation against the threats of Communist Russia and Nazi Germany.

By Harry Gordon

THE active career of Baron Carl Gustav Mannerheim spanned a half century of conflict in which he played a leading role both as soldier and statesman. As an officer in the Czar's army he fought the Japanese in 1905, the Germans in 1914-1917. He witnessed and escaped the crumbling of the Russian empire in the Bolshevik revolution. He led the White Finnish army in the War of Liberation in 1918, which established Finland as an independent nation. Chosen regent at the conclusion, he presided over its constitutional birth and through the years between the two great wars tried to build its defenses. In 1939 he commanded Finland's heroic, hopeless stand against Soviet aggression. In 1941 he aligned Finnish forces—by necessity, he argues—with Hitler's, first to recapture the territory lost to the Russians but finally to lose it again. With the peace he took over briefly the Presidency of his truncated but still independent homeland. In 1946, his extraordinary vigor at length failing, he resigned and for five years lived in quiet contemplation of his long, turbulent, and distinguished career.

Something of an old man's calm satisfaction in the fulness of honor is reflected in his recently published *"Memoirs."* Yet the tale of a furious world gains rather than loses impact by the quiet telling. There is a kind of illuminating innocence in Mannerheim's dispassionate account of the greed, brutality, and lack of principle with which Germany and Russia played their games of power, using little Finland as one pawn. But the innocence is not wide-eyed; it is close to, though always distinct from, cynicism. As soldier and statesman Mannerheim lived with the facts of power politics. He wasted no moral energy deploring them, if, indeed, he was so inclined. He was himself quite patently an honest man and in general a fair one who kept faith with his people, his allies, and his enemies. Yet the bad faith of those

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