

# The Iron Lid Lifted Off Yalta

***"Stalin's Correspondence with Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt, and Truman 1941-1945"*** (Dutton, 703 pp. \$7.50), is a collection of wartime correspondence which was first published recently in Russia. It is reviewed by Jonathan Daniels, who was administrative assistant to FDR from 1943 to 1945.

By Jonathan Daniels

**H**ERE in these two volumes of top-secret wartime correspondence, published by the Russians "to help restore historical truth," is the greatest drama of our century personalized in the cooperating but contrasting characters of Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt. They made our greatest war, and as they fought it they showed from the beginning the conflict which still plagues our times.

I am not enough of a scholar of the documentation of World War II to know how many of these letters and messages of the Big Three are here published for the first time, and certainly I do not know what is still suppressed. I am, of course, on notice that these volumes were published with a Russian motive. But if this work constitutes Russian propaganda, I, for one, would like to have more of it. Far from the loud pleading and evident distortion of facts we are led to expect from the Russians, this seems a work of careful scholarship in which even the footnotes are spare and unargumentative. The documents speak for themselves and they cry the story of an edgy, uneasy alliance even in the common purposes of the greatest war—and from its beginning.

Also, they create, as historians may only hope to do, the clear characters of the suavely diplomatic Churchill, the peremptory, suspicious Stalin, and, at the outset of his participation, a Roosevelt who had the feeling that he could, if given the opportunity, fix things up between the two other bristling boys. Yet nowhere in this whole body of correspondence is there so eloquent a passage in protest as that in which at the end Roosevelt expressed his concern, less than two weeks before he died, over Russian action which threatened the disintegration of the agreements at "our fruitful meeting at Yalta."

In this published correspondence that disintegration comes less as a surprise than as the natural outcome of the contentions between the Allies which began even before the United States entered the war. If Russia's failure to permit free governments in the states which we now call the satellites was a surprising betrayal of Yalta agreements, the warning of it was big in the almost monotonous Churchill-Stalin exchanges about Poland from the outset.

Certainly distrust did not grow abruptly beyond Yalta. It was a fixed characteristic of the alliance, which was clearly a marriage of necessity. Stalin showed less gratitude for aid than complaints about delays. And in his mounting demands for a second front he demonstrated the distrust which grew into malignant flower when at the war's end he charged that Britain and the USA were accepting the easy surrender of Germans in the West while in the East Hitler's remnants still fought to hold insignificant places "which they need just as much as a dead man needs a poultice." If the Russians published this book for their purposes, they have provided a classic study of Anglo-American patience with the Muscovite bear.

Obviously, however, the exchanges were not between Stalin and the innocents. In reassuring Stalin about American use of the dubious French admiral, "the rogue Darlan," in North Africa, the Prime Minister said, "Military strategy should know how to use for the war aims not only the Darlans, but even the Devil and his grandmother." Though not included in this correspondence, Roosevelt brought back a similar proverb from his meeting with Churchill in Casa Blanca.

This correspondence makes clear the better understanding between Churchill and Roosevelt in contrast with the dealings of each with the imperious and irascible Russian. Yet, obviously, Roosevelt hoped to do something about the sharper differences between Stalin and Churchill when he proposed in 1943 that he and the Marshal meet in Alaska or across the Bering Straits in Russian territory. Another meeting place, he wrote, "would make it, quite frankly, difficult not to invite Prime Minister Churchill at the same time."

Undoubtedly, from the correspondence as published the Russians may hope to buttress the version of history they prefer. Also from it men who have been arguing since Yalta may find evidence to support their different views. However, if it serves the Russians who published it, it is a service as well to those who seek the story of the greatest drama in their times and the portraits of three of its great protagonists. (Attlee and Truman seem only latecoming understudies in the play.)

No thoughtful student of history in any country can legitimately complain of this publication. If the Russians have held back some documents or distorted others, the fault lies with American and British officials who let them publish first. It is hard for an ordinary reader to see how any security is involved in any of these documents now. And all that serves the documentation of debate now serves, too, understanding of a great continuing conflict. World War II is history, but it is also basis for present understanding. The lid should be lifted from all its documents. Complaint lies only against those in any country who keep them covered with an iron lid.

## Success at Santiago

***"The Splendid Little War,"*** by Frank Freidel (Little, Brown, 314 pp. \$8.50), is an account of the small-scale and picturesque war that followed the sinking of the Maine.

By John T. Winterich

**T**HE adjectives in Mr. Freidel's title are not his, but John Hay's. They occur in a letter to Colonel Theodore Roosevelt of the Rough Riders, who had charged up San Juan Hill in Cuba a few weeks earlier: "It has been a splendid little war; begun with the highest motives, carried on with magnificence and spirit, favored by that fortune which loves the brave."

The Spanish-American War was splendid for those Americans who were not in it; "magnificent intelligence" was not conspicuous in the upper echelons on either side; the spirit was admirable; the American soldiers and sailors were indeed brave and were favored by fortune and Spanish ineptitude. And how about "little"? Yes—but it is Mr. Freidel's opinion that that same Spanish ineptitude, plus "the phenomenal luck of the Americans," were the factors that prevented the war from developing into just such a protracted strug-

gle as the British were soon to be involved in in South Africa. It was a brush-fire war that almost got away from the firemen.

Its proximate cause was the sinking of the battleship *Maine* in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898, with the loss of 260 of her crew—and to this day it is not known whether the explosion that ripped the vessel apart was caused by a Spanish agent, or by a Cuban eager to embroil America, or by some mischance in her magazine. "Remember the *Maine*!" became the cry of the hour. The war produced one other nugget for the quotation books. At the battle of Santiago on July 3rd a gun crew on the *Texas* yelled as one of their shells went home in a Spanish ship. Captain John Woodward Philip reproved them with the words, "Don't cheer, boys, those poor devils are dying." Captain Philip was a devout and pious man, but his chaplain was even more so, for the chaplain always insisted that Philip had said "fellows," not "devils."

The victory at Santiago virtually brought hostilities to a close, and Mr. Freidel's book itself concludes soon after that climactic event. (He does see the troops off to the Philippines, where their travail would be "long and difficult" and "more costly" than the splendid little affair in the Antilles.) Mr. Freidel's main concern is he fighting itself, and he reports it largely in the words of eye-witnesses, chiefly combatants and correspondents. For the Spanish-American war was certainly the most abundantly correspondented war in the history of the world up to 1898. Eighty-nine of them sailed out of Tampa with the first contingent of Cuba-bound troops.

Mr. Freidel's heavy reliance on quotation makes for a somewhat choppy presentation, but it keeps the action vividly alive. The text is supported by a pictorial accompaniment which can only be described as magnificent. The more than 300 illustrations (largely photographs, with numerous drawings and a scattering of maps) constitute by themselves a running history of the war. The 10½" x 8¼" page is exactly the right size to give this great gallery perfect play. No official or professional photographers accompanied the fleet, but amateurs among the crews found or made time, even in the heat of battle, to take snapshots. Captain Robley D. ("Fighting Bob") Evans of the *Iowa* detected "a cadet, lately from Annapolis, deliberately tilting a camera at the *Oquendo* while the machine guns of that ship were making the air sing. He will," he remarked, "probably remember for many years to come the few words I addressed to him." But the cadet got the pictures.

## Piloting a Nation to Its Destiny

**"The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912," by George E. Mowry** (Harper. 316 pp. \$5), is a study of T.R. and of his role in the politics of reform. Our reviewer, Eric F. Goldman, is a professor of history at Princeton University and the author of *"Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of American Political Reform."*

By Eric F. Goldman

LIKE everything else, history has its styles and in no phase of American history is this clearer than in the treatment of the pre-World War I reform movement. During the New Deal enthusiasm of the 1930s historians usually wrote about the progressivism of the early 1900s in a glow of approval. Amid the disenchantment of the 1950s they have tended to treat the Roosevelt-Wilson years with sharp criticism or at least with tongue in cheek. The latest study of early twentieth-century reformism, George E. Mowry's "The Era of Theodore Roosevelt," has neither tone. It is favorable without ecstasy and critical without sarcasm or denunciation.

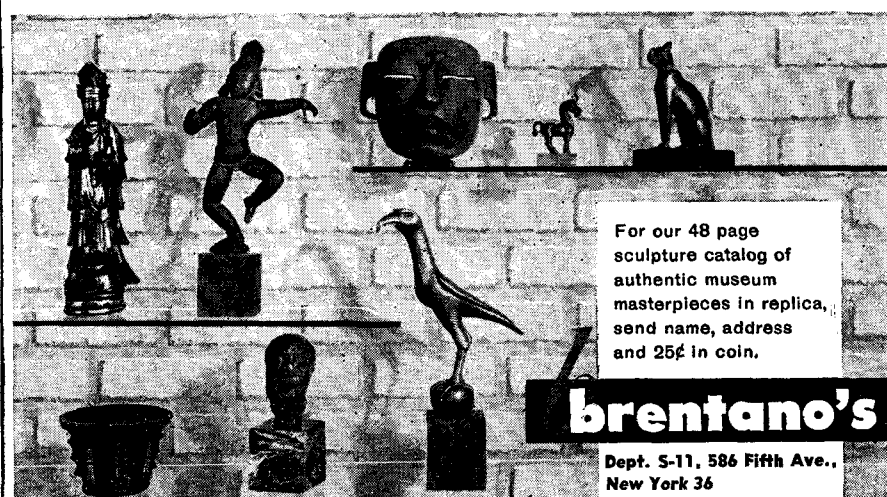
Mr. Mowry, professor of history at the University of California in Los Angeles, brings to the book years of research in the pre-World War I period. From this intimate knowledge he first depicts the United States of 1900—a wondrously burgeoning land but one with economic and social ills so serious that they threatened the very unity of the country. Mr. Mowry then moves on to a political and in-

tellectual analysis of the rising progressive dissent. These chapters skillfully synthesize what others have said, and contribute many fresh insights for the reader.

All of this is background for the central figure of the volume—the redoubtable Teddy Roosevelt. T.R., too, has gone through his cycle in historical interpretation, and here again Mr. Mowry holds firmly to a middle position. He makes plain that Roosevelt cannot be accepted at the estimate of his more rapturous devotees, who have made of him a noble progressivism incarnate. On the other hand, the volume argues convincingly that T.R.'s canny politics, his remarkable instinct for assessing public sentiment, and his hardheaded visions made him a tremendously important figure in successfully taking America over the bridge from its agrarian past to its industrial destiny.

Summarizing the Roosevelt role, Mr. Mowry writes:

Measured against the world-wide socialism of today perhaps Roosevelt was a conservative. What American statesman would not be? But in the context of American history and of his own times his conservatism, to say the least, was a most peculiar type. . . . If occasionally he felt a horror of extremes, that did not stop him at other times from going a long way toward the polar positions when public ends and personal ambitions were pushing him. If at times he criticized radicals, he was also vociferous in his criticism of conservatives. The truth is that Roosevelt, the politician,



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