Winds of Change, 1914-1939

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Harold Macmillan

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This book is a monumental effort in research attempting to prove that the Germans as a nation and a people are not really as bad as the author believes history has painted them. The author travels deep into the records to find relevant material, primarily cultural in nature, that describes the German people, their character, their feelings, their attitudes, their desires, and above all, their hopes. He has compiled an exhaustive amount of data. He quotes philosophers, historians, poets, painters, musicians, song writers, playwrights, statesmen, heads of government, and, in fact, all apparently who ever had anything to say about Germany and the German people, both from within and without Germany, good or bad. He starts with the Roman historian Tacitus (50-110 A.D.), whose essay "concerning the geography, the manners and the customs of the tribes of Germany" was intended as a lesson to the Romans in courage and virtue. The author discusses the Germany of Bismarck, the Franco-Prussian War, World War I, the birth of the Third Reich, the tragedy of the Jews, World War II, and post-World War II Germany through 1964. The book seems to have been written primarily for German consumption. Michael Glenny translated the original German text into English. The author's conclusions seem directed at the German people and the "German conscience." The whole purpose of *The Unloved Germans* is an attempt to prove that good and evil are not confined by time or frontiers and that they are not to be found in one nation alone. The book is very difficult to read, mostly uninteresting except for some historical detail, and not recommended for any purpose.

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*Winds of Change* is an extremely interesting, readable, useful autobiographical account of the exciting period of time from 1914 to 1939, as recounted by Harold Macmillan. He states at the beginning of the Prologue that he started to write the book on 4 August 1964, the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. The next 25-year period then
is the subject of this book and deals with the demise of an old world and birth of a new one. The book will be particularly useful largely from the historical point of view. There is much detail, of course, regarding Mr. Macmillan's own personal career, experiences, and observations. During the First World War, he was commissioned in the Army Reserve, wounded at the battle of the Somme in 1916, and spent the remainder of the war in, or attached to, a hospital. His portrayal of the battlefields and of the men in World War One is particularly vivid. He served in the House of Commons from 1924 to 1939. He then accepted a post in the Ministry of Supply under Churchill in 1940, followed, after the war, by his appointments as Minister of Defence, Foreign Secretary, and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He succeeded the ailing Anthony Eden as Prime Minister in January 1957. His discussions of the period, 1914 to 1939, therefore, are done in retrospect from a vantage position of great responsibility, coupled with his own direct involvement at lower levels of services. The accounts of happenings and decision-making processes are lucid and straightforward, and certainly add to the accumulation of historical knowledge of the period.


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Neighbors Taken for Granted is a collection of essays written by prominent Americans and Canadians which examines American-Canadian relations. Included among the contributors to the book are Dean Acheson, James Reston, General Charles Foulkes, and Bruce Hutchison. The author, who wrote the beginning and final essays, stated that his purpose was to contribute to better understanding of Canada by Americans and of America by Canadians. From the American point of view, the purpose was achieved. Throughout the book the theme of the disparity between the two nations in terms of national power, along with the

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