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German History, 1933-45

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as worthwhile and fascinating reading for anyone interested in military history.

Mau, Hermann and Krausnick, Helmut. *German History, 1933-45.* London, Oswald Wolff (Publishers) Ltd., 1959. 157 p.

In less than 150 pages the authors have given one of the best recent accounts of the Nazi period in Germany. The book contains little that is really new, but it carries a special interest as being the work of contemporary German historians. They write with feeling, yet with such detachment that the reader never is made aware of their nationality until he reaches a chapter called "The Enemy Strikes Back," and finds that the enemy is the United States. However faithful the translation may be to the original, the English style is excellent, and it makes for easy as well as profitable reading. The chapters are clear and succinct to the point that each paragraph is full of significance. The authors seek neither to excuse Hitler nor to absolve the German people of all responsibility by putting all blame upon him. "Rarely had a people followed the banners of a revolution more willingly," they write, and the critical point in their acquiescence was the collapse of the German monarchy in 1918. Catapulted to power in times of economic crisis, "Nazism surrounded itself with an atmosphere of anti-rational fervour, the unique climate of a 'movement,' the stimulant of a dynamism without goal or purpose." More and more, Nazism is shown to be not a struggle for an idea, but a struggle for power. In foreign policy, the authors point out, the public repeatedly gave personal credit to Hitler for what really had resulted from long effort on the part of his predecessors; and then his early triumphs in adopting a belligerent attitude toward the West secured him in his further risks. "Many a doubt in Germany as to the honesty of Nazi ends and means was silenced by the feeble attitude . . . of the outside world." The strict Neutrality Acts of the United States encouraged both this attitude and Hitler's aggressiveness. Demand for unconditional surrender, the authors believe, did significantly

prolong the war. The writers discuss the horrors of the gas chambers and mass executions with frankness, and they remark on the pangs of conscience which a number of people felt sufficiently to cause them to risk their lives in opposing the regime, and even if in a disorganized way, to lend themselves to the project of assassination as the only way to free their country from the prospect of total physical destruction by the war or of complete spiritual destruction by the Nazi tyranny. It should be mentioned in passing that attempts to draw lessons from the German experience during this period respecting the unified command of the armed forces fail to recognize the political significance of the incongruous arrangement whereby the High Command of the Armed Forces (OKW) really was not superior, but was the equal of the high commands of the Army, Navy and Air Force. This is a digest of history well worth the short time it takes for anyone to read it.

Goutard, Adolphe. *The Battle of France, 1940*. New York, Ives Washburn, 1959. 280 p.

The defeat of France in 1940 was a devastating and demoralizing shock to the free world. The speed and decisiveness of the victory cut like a Turkish scimitar through the veil of complacency. Since that time many theories have been propounded as to the cause of defeat. The most popular and perhaps most generous of these theories holds that the French of 1940 were decadent, pleasure-loving, timid, weakened by infiltration and subversion, and defeatist. The same theorists hold that the Germans of 1940 were supermen of overwhelming numbers armed with tanks, aircraft and guns of extraordinary capability and incredible lethality and led by military geniuses of clairvoyant perception. This is perhaps the common view. But a courageous Frenchman, Colonel Adolphe Goutard, in *The Battle of France, 1940*, shatters this view with a cold-blooded analysis of the reasons for his country's defeat. He examines the affair from both sides, and, with the advantage