

NICOLSON, HAROLD. *The Congress of Vienna: A Study in Allied Unity, 1812-1822*. Pp. 312. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946. \$4.00.

Conferences in the aftermath of general war are expected to take steps to prevent the recurrence of conflict. Debates often center in the rival plans, balance of power as against world organization. Taken for granted is the further concept of great power supremacy within given regions. So it was in the settlements after Napoleon's defeat.

Mr. Nicolson considers the plan of balance of power to be now, as in the days of Castlereagh, one of the most stable guarantees of peace and of all policies the most advantageous for the British Commonwealth and Empire (p. 123). One senses this view as timed to support the Churchillian thesis of a western bloc. At the same time one feels the author does not intend an actual balance of strength—unattainable anyway—but rather such a balance as maintained during the nineteenth century. Then, Britain controlled it.

The author sets himself two principal tasks. One details the methods, the problems, and the personalities of the era of the Congress of Vienna. The other indicates the dangers when, after war, the separate interests of allied victors tend to overshadow their wartime sense of common purpose. He examines, in terms of the past, "the factors which create dissension between independent states temporarily bound together in a coalition."

Of the negotiations outlined, those during and after the Congress of Vienna are well known. More informative are the preliminaries, among them Metternich's attempt at peace late in 1813 which, but for Russia and England, might have saved Napoleon his throne and France her "natural" northern frontier at the Rhine.

The hero of the piece becomes Castlereagh, so this version of the Congress of Vienna is best for those intervals when the British Foreign Secretary himself went to Europe. The wily Metternich comes out second in the manifold negotiations, or even third best, for Tsar Alexander I often holds the spotlight, even if with bitted criticism (p. 103). As expected, Talley-

rand fares rather well, giving as he did the "existing dislike a precision and a consistency" (p. 152).

The book's lack of balance in discussing the respective policies of the powers makes the title overly comprehensive. Here is, primarily, a fresh analysis of Britain's general policy for the continent at the time, useful to complement C. K. Webster and others. It is interestingly written, sometimes highly speculative (e.g., p. 40). So extensive is the secondary literature on which it is based that one may scarcely complain of the omission of some favorite titles. There is evidence of the author's intimate knowledge of British cabinet procedures and of the ways of international conferences.

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MADISON, CHARLES A. *Critics and Crusaders: A Century of American Protest*. Pp. xii, 572. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1947. \$3.50.

This is a collection of eighteen character sketches grouped by the author under six sectors of American experience. His method of treatment in each sector is to present the background in a historical statement, and to project against it the life of the individual selected as representative.

He treats first the abolitionists, represented by William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, and Wendell Phillips. Then come the Utopians, from among whom Margaret Fuller, Albert Brisbane, and Edward Bellamy are selected. In the third group are Henry D. Thoreau, Benjamin R. Tucker, and Emma Goldman, styled Anarchists. The dissident economists are Henry George, Brooks Adams, and Thorstein Veblen. Those whom the author styles militant liberals are John P. Altgeld, Lincoln Steffens, and Randolph Bourne. Finally the Socialists presented are Daniel DeLeon, Eugene V. Debs, and John Reed.

One might ordinarily expect to find such a galaxy of queer folk reviewed and appraised by an extremist of their own ilk, or per contra, pilloried in contemptuous phrase by a strict "conservative." Mr. Madison is neither. His offering is thor-

oughly objective. Only in the final chapter, on the Socialists, does he show what would seem to be some bias in his attitude toward court proceedings, but even here he offers damaging evidence to support his point.

Each of these eighteen personages, a seeker after "freedom" of his own brand, is queer. That is to say, he is out of step with his time. As an abolitionist he believes that the future of empire hangs upon the destruction of slavery. As an Utopian he is positive that an ideal world can be built by formula. And so on through the list. The existing order of things is wrong, oppressive, unjust to the masses, faulty in organization.

Mr. Madison's treatment of these lopsided people is eminently fair and highly serviceable, since he has brought together a wealth of material to be found only by long and painstaking research.

Herein lies the great value of the book. The careless world laughs at such personages and calls them "cranks," but at long last it must come to see with Mr. Madison that these persons did contribute to the stream of thought of their respective times. To an appreciable extent they did leave their impress upon the Nation's development. Abused and beaten about because of their heretical and nonconformist views, they still persisted. Their history is well worth recording. In Mr. Madison's hands it is history in the best manner.

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HOLBROOK, STEWART H. *Lost Men of American History*. Pp. xiv, 370. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946. \$2.50.

Mr. Holbrook's thesis can be simply stated; he believes that interesting persons without number have contributed to the making of the United States, and that some of these persons have been forgotten. His purpose therefore is "to make known a number of these men and women, and a few events, that are quite unknown to most Americans today." His "lost men" are not dealt with alphabetically, after the manner of the *Dictionary of American*

*Biography*—where, incidentally, many of them appear. Mr. Holbrook assigns them to their proper places along the chronological scale, from Jamestown to Pearl Harbor.

If the title of the book has any meaning, readers are justified in assuming that Mr. Holbrook regards all his subjects as equally "lost." If some of them are really "lost," nobody but the author "lost" them. Most readers will be at least mildly surprised to find Chief Justice John Marshall and Theodore Roosevelt among the "lost." Here are a few other "lost" ones, picked at random: Charles Bulfinch, Eli Whitney, Samuel Slater, Noah Webster, Uriah Stephens, and Oliver Hudson Kelley. Samuel Adams rates a whole chapter, because he has been "ignored or cavalierly treated by too many writers." But a casual count of proper names listed in the index, through the letter C only, runs to 100, so along with several celebrities the book brings back a lot of unknowns to a degree of fame.

Some characteristics of the author's method might be noted. He writes with vividness and enthusiasm, but with an air of condescension, if not of scorn, for professional historians, partly because they have permitted so many persons to stay "lost." To be more specific, he points his finger at "the group of high-toned Yale professors" who edited *The Pageant of America* because they were ignorant of the origin of the log cabin. The reprimand does not gain in significance when it appears for the second time on the same page (p. 9) even though it may be excused as an obvious slip of the proofreader.

According to some standards of journalistic historical writing, accuracy in matters of detail is not compulsory. This book therefore should not be judged too severely because it contains more than a permissible number of errors. Even so, Theodore Roosevelt would have been horrified if he had been told that, as President, he "was pretty much 'made' by" the muckrakers (p. 302). Again, many survivors of the era of prohibition will be interested to learn that under prohibition "a great nation" was "made to drink slow poison" (p. 340). There were some total abstainers even then, but evidently they