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BOOK REVIEWS

(continued from previous page)

of being tried by their enemies in an *ad hoc* court whose procedure was unrestrained by any one national legal tradition (though British-American standards were dominant), every advantage which their counsel and their own ingenuity could devise for them.

Peter Calvocoressi sketches in briefly but effectively, by his discretion in the choice of examples, the type of crimes for which the 21 defendants (counting out the absent Bormann) found themselves arraigned at Nuremberg. Skill is needed to build up that picture, because the full tale of the brutalities inflicted on Europe by Germans in the recent war dazes the imagination, and, by its unseizable horror, blunts the sensitivity.

The book, regrettably short, contains a good deal of valuable material of continuing historical interest. The appendix which describes the defence of the Warsaw ghetto in 1943 chronicles one of the most heroic episodes in the martyrdom of the Jews. The status of the German army officers is well described; the Nazis were not the only group in Germany which seriously menaced world peace.

The great trial was, Mr. Calvocoressi shows, good law and good justice; he hopes it will prove good history, as a rebuttal of propagandist legend in the future. "The Nuremberg judgment shows that wars do not just happen. It is somebody's fault when they do." His own approach to the trial is here and there polemical, but his point of view is both consistent and high-minded. It is refreshing when law, justice, and commonsense can be made to harmonise so closely.

SHAME THE DEVIL

DEVIL'S DECADE. By Collin Brooks. Macdonald and Co. Ltd. (Oswald-Sealy N.Z. Ltd.).

THE delineation of an epoch in British life by the biographies of its principal figures is the task Collin Brooks sets himself. The *Devil's Decade* is, of course, no other than the nineteen-thirties. From his vantage-point in Fleet Street or thereabouts (Mr. Brooks is editor of the *English Truth* and a lion of the City view of finance) he has watched the procession of the great and the good pass him by, treading, one fears, in a generally downward direction, although the end of the decade is at least partially wrested from the devil's grasp by the decision to fight rather than submit.

The point of view in politics is that of a disabused Conservative who has outgrown Baldwin, admires Churchill (but with some hints of caution), and can find good reasons to defend Chamberlain. He despises Eden who, he felt, was too much given to uttering threats there was never the force to back up. Mr. Brooks writes with assurance of Montagu Norman, Schacht, Hatry, and Kreuger. (He has a good deal of sympathy for Hatry.) Kings, newspaper-owners, playwrights, conductors, actors, and novelists he is equally prepared to pass judgment upon in a book that valiantly attempts to include something for everybody. The "inside" story, sometimes apt, often combating the popular judgment, is his speciality. All his people have one thing in common: they are all already very famous.

—David Hall

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