

1950

World Crisis: Keyhole View

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: The Secret History of the Cold War. By Rear Admiral Ellis M. Zacharias, U. S. Navy (ret.) in Collaboration with Ladislav Farago. 367 pp. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$3.75.

By HANSON W. BALDWIN

ONCE again, for the second time in a decade, Americans are dying to the sound of guns. The Korean fighting is war. Not war with the grand scope and terrible carnage of World War II—but to those who die and to those who grieve it is just as bitter as the campaigns of five years ago. And to the nations who struggle there the eventual consequences may be as extensive as the consequences of World War II.

For this reason, any book which deals with the greater world struggle—that between Russia and the United States—has special significance today. "Behind Closed Doors" is such a book. Its principal author, Admiral Zacharias, served in the Navy as a captain during the war and retired afterward as a rear admiral. His collaborator, Ladislav Farago, was formerly on the staff of the United Nations World, a privately controlled, monthly magazine.

"Behind Closed Doors" is written somewhat like a book-length news letter—confidential in tone, "now it can be told" in narrative technique. Many of the sources cited are "senior officers of the Red Army and Navy, atomic scientists, outstanding economists, diplomats and officials from virtually every branch of the Soviet bureaucracy." The authors even state (with a nice disregard for modesty) that they have amassed their facts from "data and sources which are available to probably no other private persons in the United States." The reader, in other words, is given a keyhole view of world politics and power in the world of today. He is even taken into

tally. Their intelligence service appears to have been no better than the nation's; indeed, there is little indication in this book of impending crisis this summer. There is much interpretation of Stalin and Lenin and a realistic presentation of Russian ideological, military, political and economic power. Taken in toto, little of this is basically new; some statements are in error or are unconfirmed, others are sensational if true.

Despite these faults, the book is valuable for background, interpretation and ideas. At times its interpretations are brilliant. And, though its mixture of past history, present fact and future prophecy are sometimes confusing, the general pattern of Communist behavior and Russian action seems soundly drawn.

The authors believe that "war between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics * * * is likely to materialize some time between the summer of 1952 and the fall of 1956. "War may come in response to a series of aggressive Soviet moves, which the Kremlin will regard as essential to Russian security, but to which we shall react violently and with determination." Russia "has definitely decided to abandon the prolonged shadow boxing of the cold war" and the "Politburo unanimously agreed [to accept] Lenin's thesis that war between capitalism and imperialism and communism is inevitable."

In much of Asia, as the authors point out, "the U. S. S. R. is waging war against us by proxy." They foresee pressure against the Dardanelles and Sweden, and they rightly regard the "clash between Stalin and Tito [as] the gravest rift in Communist unity ever to occur."

Among the dubious assertions the book contains are: (1) The first Soviet atomic explosion occurred accidentally—not in the summer of 1949—but early in October, 1948. (2) Soviet Marshal Feodor I. Tolbukhin now commands the "revamped, enlarged, reoriented Bulgarian Army." There is no proof of the first statement—in fact, informed Washington sources deny it. And the book makes no reference to the fact that Marshal Tolbukhin's death was reported in the world press more than a month before they say he took command in Bulgaria.

The authors, this reviewer believes, are justly critical of some of our political and military policies. But their "action program for peace," which recommends a meeting between Truman and Stalin and includes the "restoration" of Britain and France to power and influence seems to offer only slightly more hope of averting conflict than does the blueprint panacea of the World Federalists.

This is something of a gloomy book—perhaps the proper word is realistic. After all, it is published in what Toynbee, the British historian, has called a "Time of Troubles."



the Kremlin and into the mind of Stalin.

Unfortunately for the authors, the time between writing and publication has dealt them a hard blow. Korea, the little mountainous peninsula that is aimed like a dagger at the heart of Japan, is mentioned only twice—and then only incidentally.

Mr. Baldwin is military editor of THE TIMES.

