

Steiner's book the reader does not know; even the names of his informants have been changed and all that is certain, one takes it, is that the author has conducted his interviews and read the three books he refers to. And such books, it may be added, stemming from iron curtain sources, have not been striking in the past for their reliability.

It is a pity that Mr. Steiner has chosen to mix fact inextricably with fiction for the Treblinka story is an important one; Treblinka, like the Warsaw ghetto, was one place where the Jews did fight back with unquestionable heroism and self-sacrifice and as in the case of the Warsaw uprising a comparatively few managed to escape. One of the reasons, Mr. Steiner tells us, for the revolt, aside from the prisoners' knowledge that they would all be liquidated in any event, was to let the terrible story be told by those who had been inmates of the camp. The more reason, it seems to this reviewer, to keep to strict canons of writing history. Mr. Steiner portrays his shining heroes as well as his villains, and such there undoubtedly were, but in what they thought, or murmured to themselves, when they beamed, or floundered, or sensed traps, or silently looked at one another we have Mr. Steinert, a moderately gifted novelist, and not the courageous men who went down fighting and deserve the historical monument it may be hoped another writer will one day provide.

Reviewed by EUGENE DAVIDSON

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### *His Enigmatic Lordship*

**Halifax: The Life of Lord Halifax,**  
by The Earl of Birkenhead, *Boston:*  
*Houghton Mifflin, 1966. 626 pp. \$8.50.*

THE INNERMOST THOUGHTS of great public men often are elusive, despite the best

efforts of biographers, and such in sum is the problem of this biography of the late Lord Halifax. Lord Birkenhead has written a truly admirable book, the best one could hope for, and yet he is not sure what made his subject tick.

There can be no doubt that the subject enjoyed a remarkable public career. Edward Frederick Lindley Wood bore all the marks of a proper English lord. Possessed of impeccable lineage and great wealth, this immensely tall, thin personage with the atrophied left arm lacking a hand, with the sad face and balding head, habitually wore an air of condescension that seemed to say that he, Halifax, had not sought the office of the moment but the office had sought him and that he did not like the office but had taken it out of reverence for the past and hope of the future, which latter lay in the verities of the Anglican Church as revealed in its Catholic ritual.

Halifax's best friends were ready to admit his lordliness, which often emerged in embarrassing ways. His wife protected him from some mistakes but many came out in public. Nonetheless, with what should have been an impossible political handicap in Britain after 1918, he moved for nearly thirty years in the highest government circles: the ministry of education, viceroy of India, foreign secretary in 1938-41, ambassador to the United States in 1941-46. His career in politics stopped just short of the prime ministry. In none of these posts, one should add, did he perform prodigies. The education ministry bored him and he barely did what was formally required. As viceroy he spent a good deal of time introducing himself to his responsibilities, and later produced a kind of negative triumph when he clapped Mohandas K. Gandhi in jail and then released him, thereby bringing a lull in the agitation for independence, which ended with Halifax's departure. As foreign secretary he seems to have maintained himself in the graces of his predecessor Anthony Eden who had resigned, but again found the work not altogether to his taste. He supported the pol-

icies of Neville Chamberlain; but though he survived into the Churchill cabinet, his presence was a liability, as Churchill admitted when Halifax's wife protested the appointment to Washington.

This mission came at a time of Anglo-American crisis, in the midst of an American domestic debate over foreign policy, and throughout 1941 the new ambassador cut a sorry figure. The years of American participation in the war proved easier and Halifax unbent enough to make many tours about the United States, eventually setting foot in every state of the Union. The problem of postwar adjustment, for Britain mainly a problem of American economic support, tarnished his luster as a diplomat, but he left Washington early in 1946 before too much of the wartime camaraderie had disappeared. His last years until death in 1959 passed in travel and quiet living on his estate of Garrowby in Yorkshire.

All of the above is the picture of the noble lord in action and a fit subject for a Victorian life and times, and yet as Halifax's superb biographer remarks—and Birkenhead probably gets as close to the man as anyone could—this was not all the story. Behind the façade of the man who could begin speeches with such careful qualifications as "I should have thought that one might say that it could reasonably be held that . . ." lay a religious dreamer who liked to ride over the hills and who carried a constant melancholy, who held ambition and yet did not possess it. At the core of the conventionality and lordliness was an inner man difficult to know. His was an odd combination of qualities. In some sense it was the sort of mixture of opposites which Churchill possessed. But Halifax did not have Churchill's prescience in foreign affairs.

This book has some humor, as when Halifax on a visit to Berchtesgaden almost mistook the Fuehrer for a butler and was ready to pass him his hat. Or when as ambassador in Washington he had to follow the American habit of addressing grown men by their first names or nick-

names: having to deal with President Roosevelt's highly influential aide, Major General "Pa" Watson, "Edward picked up the telephone as though it was a rattlesnake, and, with a reluctance palpable to those who observed the scene, inquired in a husky voice: 'Is that you, P-P-Pa?'" The book's major value is its closeness to British politics at the top in the interwar and war years. Halifax apparently kept a detailed, intimate diary. Despite its length—608 pages—this book deserves careful reading, all the way through.

Reviewed by ROBERT H. FERRELL

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### *World of Ancient Rome*

**Roman Culture: Weapons and the Man**, edited with introductions by Garry Wills, *New York: George Braziller, 1966. 379 pp. 33 illustrations. \$6.95.*

**The Erotic Elegies of Albius Tibullus**, translated by Hubert Creekmore and illustrated by Edward Melcarth, *New York: Washington Square Press, 1966. xx + 161 pp. \$7.95.*

IN HIS monumental work *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* the late Werner Jaeger, a classical humanist of the first order who lived and taught both in Europe and the United States, defined culture as "simply the aristocratic ideal of a nation, increasingly intellectualized." He clearly pointed out that in the case of Greek culture the nobility was the prime mover in forming the nation's culture, which involved the creation of a definite idea of human perfection, an ideal toward which the elite, or *aristoi*, was constantly trained. This ideal in Greek terminology was called *arete* and described in an unmistakable way the Greek aspiration of individu-