The Stuggle For Europe Essay, Research Paper

Though this student looked in Who’s Who and Contemporary Authors, no information on Chester Wilmot could be found. One considered searching the Directory of American Scholars, but that would not be helpful since he is from Australia.

In The Struggle for Europe, Wilmot seeks to explain several points. First, he explores and explains how the western allies succeeded militarily but failed politically during World War II. He then elaborates on how and why the western allies crushed the Nazi regime; yet, they allowed the Soviet Union to overtake Eastern Europe and block the Atlantic Charter from taking effect in those nations. Third, the author discusses Hitler’s defeat and Stalin’s victory. Fourthly, he endeavors on a mission to explain how the Soviet Union replaced Germany as the dominant European power.

Beginning with the Battle of Britain, the book takes the reader through the war up to the surrender of Germany. In this process Wilmot touches on Hitler’s alliance with Mussolini, Hitler’s conquest of France, the Lowlands, and the Balkans, and the Nazi dictator’s collapse in the expansion of the Soviet Union. The author strategically builds the Allied alliance, through the book’s course, and he uses the Normandy invasion to illustrate its full effectiveness. Also included are discussions on the concessions granted to Stalin by the Allies in general, and Franklin D. Roosevelt in particular. President Roosevelt believed that Stalin wanted security for his country with no territorial acquisitions in mind. In order to give the Soviet leader his second front in Europe, FDR also put the Japanese problem in the Pacific aside.

By providing the reader with first-hand quotes and writings from the Nazi war machine’s hierarchy, Wilmot looks at the external and internal workings of the German Wehrmacht in meticulous detail. The U-boat campaign, the inadequacies of the Luftwaffe, and the shortcomings of the Panzer divisions are discussed. The war, from April 1940 to May 1945, is expertly covered. He details various meetings of Allied and Axis partners, various battles, and various strategies. In this study, the author used very readable and easily accessible language. Events are described in good detail and his ideas are well related. The emphasis of The Struggle for Europe seems to be on two major topics that are stated in the preface. The first topic deals exclusively with the defeat of Germany. The second topic deals with the alliance between the United States and Great Britain. By covering the defeat of the German armed forces on the western, eastern, and Mediterranean fronts, he gives reasons for their every failure. Throughout the book, statistics are given representing German war production in terms of tanks, planes, guns, vehicles, soldiers, and ships.

The second topic is probed in almost as much detail as the first. Wilmot describes the western alliance from very near the book’s beginning. He details Churchill and Roosevelt’s close friendship and partnership during the war. He skillfully deals with the United States being the number two man in the alliance’s beginning and how the U.S. slowly emerges as the premier partner toward the end of the hostilities. The reason these two topics come to the forefront is due to the fact that the struggle in the west engrossed the defeat of Germany by the western alliance along with the Soviet Union. The Struggle for Europe is very well organized. The book’s organization develops along chronological lines beginning with the Battle of Britain. The author proceeds through the work hitting on all the key quotes, speeches, conferences, battles, and decisions that occurred during the war. Each chapter is organized along the same line as the course of events happened during the war. Background information is insightfully given before and during most events described, so that even one with very little WWII knowledge can understand the event being discussed. The extra background also helps expand the knowledge of the most avid WWII followers.

The Struggle for Europe deals fairly with both the Allied and Axis situations and decisions. Wilmot gives equal discussion time to both sides in regards to strategy, view point, and military standing. The book’s overall organization exemplifies itself in terms of its thoroughness and readability. He touches on almost every aspect of the European theater in 717 pages using many sources gathered from various locations. The sources used include diaries, primary and secondary books, speeches, German and Russian archive material, U.S. Government records, and interviews. His sources were far more than adequate. The author definitely proves all of his points to some degree with some ideas being more justified than others. He proves that the western allies did win the war militarily while losing Eastern Europe to the Soviets, politically. Wilmot also shows how the Soviets skillfully maneuvered into the top position on the European continent after the fall of the Nazis. With tremendous skill, he also describes the demise of the German armed forces from its height of power in 1941 to its destruction in April 1945. His points are satisfactorily proven with only two flaws.

In this reviewer’s opinion, the first flaw pertains to the book’s length of discussion. Unless one is deeply interested in detailed facts and events of the European theater, The Struggle for Europe might be excessive. In this regard then, the book fails for someone seeking a brief overview of the European theater. This is so because it contains so very much. However, for those knowledge of WWII in great depth, this book is ideal. For example, this student could really use the book. The second flaw pertains to the beginning of the book. The author totally disregards the Poland campaign and he only briefly mentions the fall of France. With only a few comments about Poland, he jumps almost right into the Battle of Britain with just slight comment about France. The struggle in Poland is essential to any discussion of the European theater.

Outside of those two flaws, with the length of the book not being a problem, The Struggle for Europe magnificently covers the war. Wilmot succeeds in delivering a thorough history of the war in Europe by all accounts. In conclusion, the book provides a very fine and accurate description of the intricacies of WWII in Europe. For anyone seeking in-depth knowledge on the European theater, this book is almost a must. The book is further useful because not only does it serve a history of WWII, but as a history of warfare in general. He gives great insight to political alliances and agreements. For this student, the book stands as one of the most informative books written on WWII in Europe.