

Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *L'Armée des Ombres* by J. Kessel

Review by: Albert Guérard

Source: *Books Abroad*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Autumn, 1944), p. 354

Published by: Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40084806>

Accessed: 06-04-2020 10:37 UTC

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the republic, forgetting that it was Dom Pedro's empire that had failed to educate its subjects and not the new republic that had neglected to train its citizens.

This is the first appearance in English of Euclides da Cunha's masterpiece—the translation seems an excellent piece of work. The book is published at an opportune moment when the English-speaking peoples are eager to learn more about Latin America and especially about Brazil, one of the world's great nations. In bringing out this volume the translator and the University of Chicago Press have not only made a timely contribution to a better understanding of one of our neighbors in a wartime world but have given us a permanent addition to the great literature available in English.—*Roy Gittinger*. University of Oklahoma.

✎ J. Kessel. *L'Armée des Ombres*. Chronique de la Résistance. New York. Pantheon Books. 261 pages. \$1.75.—Chronicles of the Underground, like *Bataille Secrète en France* by André Girard. Here also, we are assured that episodes and characters are authentic, although it has been necessary to transpose them beyond recognition. Kessel writes with masterly restraint, and his account is convincing. Not "romanced". but the book has greater unity than Girard's.

This tale of horrors makes the most detached reader clench his fists with rage. Yet the hero, the "Big Boss," Saint Luc, is incapable of hatred. The great problem is: Is it worth while? Does it pay? The best are sacrificed, and many innocents. The Underground alone can not win; and the Allies do not strictly need the Underground. "En chiffres, en bilan pratique, nous travaillons à perte. Alors, ai-je songé, alors, honnêtement, il faut abandonner. Mais à l'instant même où la pensée de renoncer m'est venue, j'ai senti que cela était impossible. Impossible de laisser à d'autres le soin et le poids entier de nous défendre, de nous sauver. Impossible de laisser à l'al-

lemand le souvenir d'un pays sans sursaut, sans dignité, sans haine . . . J'ai su que nous faisons la plus belle guerre du peuple français. Une guerre matériellement peu utile puisque la victoire est assurée même sans notre concours. Une guerre à laquelle personne ne nous oblige. Une guerre sans gloire. Une guerre d'exécutions et d'attentats. Une guerre gratuite en un mot. Mais cette guerre est un acte de haine et un acte d'amour. Un acte de vie."

A good statement. It is of the utmost importance that we in America should discover the Underground. The France of Pétain, Maurras and Laval is dead, and deserved to die: but the efforts of these obscure fighters, Royalists and Communists, country squires and mechanics, priests, women, children, prove that the spirit of France can not die. And we must convince ourselves that these men, dangerous perhaps to vested interests and established values, will not accept to be ruled by "les malins," the Attentistes, the fixers, the shrewd bargainers, the Badoglios, the Laodiceans. Like their leader, they will prove "difficult." The more difficulty, the better, for their souls and ours.—*Albert Guérard*. Stanford University.

✎ Ivan Pedro de Martins. *Fronteira Agreste*. Pôrto Alegre. Livraria do Globo. 1944. 351 pages.—A first novel which arouses, as first novels sometimes do, pleasure in its unexpected excellencies, and leniency for its expected shortcomings. A story of the poverty stricken laborers on an *estância* in Rio Grande do Sul, *Fronteira Agreste* has an epic quality which the regional novels of Brazil, if expressive at all, can hardly escape. De Martins is not, like many *regionalistas*, self-conscious about the picturesque aspects of the background of his story, but rather accepts them as simply as do the characters in his book. The plot is negligible, and that is the point of the novel. The characters, sharply, almost fiercely, limned, pursue their respective courses as they did before the book began, as they will do after the last