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The Enemy's House Divided (review)

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

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***The Enemy's House Divided*. By Charles de Gaulle.** Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002 [1924]. ISBN 0-8078-2666-9. Maps. Notes. Indexes. Pp. xlix, 177. \$32.50.

Those interested in World War I and Charles de Gaulle should be grateful to Professor Robert Eden for his fine translation of de Gaulle's first book, *La Discorde chez l'ennemi*. While a prisoner of war from March 1916 to

November 1918, de Gaulle began the reading and reflection that ultimately would yield this book. After the war he continued his extensive reading of German memoirs and war-related materials, especially when he was a professor at St. Cyr and a student at the École de Guerre. Over time he came to understand the "errors" committed by the Germans, especially those committed by leaders who were motivated by "the passion to expand their personal power at any cost" (p. 2).

To demonstrate discord in the enemy's house, de Gaulle focused on five key events: von Kluck's disobedience in the Marne campaign; Tirpitz and other naval officers' insistence on unrestricted submarine warfare in early 1917; the failure of the Central Powers to work effectively as a coalition; the rise to power of Hindenburg and Ludendorff at the expense of Bethmann-Hollweg and others; and the "panic" of the German people and the appearance of a "deep national stupor." De Gaulle selects and explains these five events in order to provide a broad explanation of why the Germans lost the war. Instead of focusing on combat leadership, technology, or battles, de Gaulle ascribes the German failure to their inability to look beyond questions of personal power or prestige, and he avoids the briar patch of cataloguing French or Allied contributions to any German errors. The result is a fascinating explanation that specialists and students will find extremely interesting, especially in terms of de Gaulle's later experiences with and contributions to "discord" in France's own house.

The one disappointing aspect of this new publication is the translator/editor's introduction and his excessive emphasis on Nietzsche. The editor insists, "De Gaulle conceived his first book—and with it, introduced his statesmanship to the world—as a deliberate and studied response to Nietzsche's catastrophic philosophical initiative" (p. xvi). While de Gaulle does mention Nietzsche in his introduction, he does so only to introduce the idea of an elite who are "serving the general interest" but who are not swayed by human suffering and have nothing but contempt for others. An editor with a broader background in French history or greater expertise in military history may have provided a very different interpretation and probably **[End Page 587]** would have offered a very different analysis of de Gaulle's work. Despite the unnecessary tangent into Nietzschean philosophy, the editor has offered a very fine translation of de Gaulle's first book, one that deserves careful reading by those who want a fascinating look into the "house of the enemy."

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Wilsonian diplomacy, as well as a little more restraint and sophistication in its treatment of the Chinese story.

Mark F. Wilkinson

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