

THE CHECK LIST

NON-FICTION

STALIN, by Emil Ludwig. \$2.50. *Putnam*. Oversimplification of recent Russian history is branching out as a sort of school of literature. This political pot-boiler by Emil Ludwig, we regret to say, deserves a place beside *Mission to Moscow*. But whereas the ex-ambassador's puerilities are frankly the product of historical illiteracy, Dr. Ludwig's posture grandly as erudition and profound psychologizing. Mr. Davies, for instance, admits that he solved the mystery of the Soviet blood-purge trials in one flash of intuition somewhere near Chicago, but Dr. Ludwig goes through the motions of "analyzing" them to reach the conclusion "that the spirit of history has vindicated" Stalin.

In his famous Last Will, the dying Lenin warned against the concentration of power in Stalin's hands. "I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution," Lenin wrote. In quoting this, Dr. Ludwig merely omits the word "not," thus turning condemnation into approval! That sort of thing is so raw that one must assume a typographical error. But typesetters and proofreaders can scarcely be blamed for the distortion of elementary facts and offhand verdicts on events the author doesn't begin to understand. They can't be blamed, let us say, for the mentality which brackets the stillborn Stalin Constitution with the Rights of Man and the Declaration of Independence as the three great documents of modern humanity. The one contribution to our understanding of Stalin which this book makes is the author's discovery that the Georgian is "the only dictator who doesn't wear a necktie."

If Dr. Ludwig thinks that the Russian people will be grateful for such drivel, he merely offers one more proof—over and

above the proofs that abound in the book—that he has no inkling of the character of the nation about which he writes. As a historian, he might ponder on the fact that the Russian people fought bravely against Napoleon without illusions about Czar Alexander I, and against Kaiser Wilhelm a century later without illusions about Nicholas II. — E. L.

THE FIGHT FOR AIR POWER, by William Bradford Huie. \$2.50. *L. B. Fischer*. This is the book which was previously announced as a joint effort by Mr. Huie and Col. Hugh J. Knerr. Colonel Knerr's name and some of the "official" aspects were lost in the censorship mill, but the book still remains a powerful indictment of those who opposed the development of American air power and who, even today, are obstructing its proper use.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part tells the story of the struggle by the Army Headquarters Air Force to develop the Flying Fortress during the three years preceding the outbreak of war. The chapter on "The President and Air Power" is particularly interesting at this time. Mr. Huie writes: "It seems unreasonable that a man like Mr. Roosevelt who has been so ready to cast the old aside in other fields, who has shown so little respect for the Past as such, and who has been so willing to experiment with the New, could, at the same time, have given his support to the most reactionary forms in the armed forces. Yet that is exactly what he has done."

The second part of *The Fight for Air Power* considers the employment and development of our air power since Pearl Harbor. There are startling revelations as to what happened at Pearl Harbor, in the Philippines, and in the Java jungles, as our pilots struggled

against heartbreaking handicaps. For the first time, the whole story of the development of the Flying Fortress is told.

The last part of the book details the strategy generally favored by the air generals in our fight against Germany and Japan. Pictures of the twenty-one generals who have led the "fight for air power" are included.

— E. L.

ON BORROWED PEACE, by Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein. \$3.00. *An American Mercury Book, Doubleday-Doran.* The author is an aristocrat all of whose instincts are thoroughly democratic, a deeply pious Catholic who sided with the Loyalists against the fascists in Spain. In this autobiographical volume, Prince Loewenstein tells his story from the time he left Germany to escape Hitlerism almost to the day of publication. It's an exciting story *per se*—his wanderings, his adventures, the unfolding of his views under the hammer blows of events. But it's a great deal more than that. As one of the leading anti-Nazis, well-connected throughout the world, his personal experience is woven into the very pattern of these amazing years. The book is eminently readable and, incidentally, provides some interesting sidelights on the American scene. The author has been here for a number of years and has lectured widely in American colleges.

A NEW CONSTITUTION NOW, by Henry Hazlitt. \$2.50. *Whittlesey House.* Henry Hazlitt, a distinguished member of the New York *Times* editorial board and a former editor of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*, is one of those students of government who believes that changed conditions call for changes in operational methods. No wild-eyed reformer, however, he advocates changes in our Constitution by means of a well-considered plan, one which preserves the spirit of that document while making it more workable for our times. He argues that the present system scatters power among President, House and Senate and therefore dangerously weakens the whole structure, particularly in

time of war. He believes that the remedy is cabinet government, headed by an executive who will have great power but will nevertheless be strictly accountable for the use of it, and will be subject to immediate removal if he is unwilling or incompetent. Whatever your own opinion may be, it is both instructive and encouraging to read such level-headed, well-informed criticism.

LEE'S LIEUTENANTS: A Study in Command, by Douglas Southall Freeman \$5.00. *Scribner's.* Dr. Freeman herewith adds to the Pulitzer laurels he acquired with his biography of Robert E. Lee by creating a multiple biography of the men who served under the Southern leader, and projecting it against the background of the War Between the States. The same tremendous grasp of an immense subject, fine scholarship, and sweeping narrative which made "Lee" a landmark in modern biography also characterize this project.

The volume is the first in a series of three. It is subtitled "Manassas to Malvern Hill" and treats of Beauregard, Johnston, Magruder, Hill, Garnett, Stuart, Ewell, Jackson and other leaders in the Army of Northern Virginia as they came upon the vast stage of the war. The second volume will take the story through Second Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, while volume three concludes the work with Gettysburg and the end of the Confederacy. The remaining two are scheduled for next year.

WORLD IN TRANCE, by Leopold Schwarzschild. \$3.50. *Fischer.* An original and deeply informed account of the two decades "from Versailles to Pearl Harbor." This is historical journalism at its best—not another summation of the facts but a new interpretation based on close-up knowledge. The utopianism and wishful thinking in the democracies which gave Germany, before and after Hitler's accession, the right of way are recorded and taken apart in these pages so devastatingly that the volume should be made obligatory reading for all well-meaning liberals—

especially those who may have some influence in shaping the post-war world. — E. L.

BRAZIL UNDER VARGAS, by Karl Loewenstein. \$2.75. *Macmillan*. The professor of political science and jurisprudence at Amherst has here written what is probably the best and most up-to-date book on Brazil in English. The volume is so comprehensively and so carefully done that it is a veritable encyclopedia of the country, particularly of its more recent history. Dr. Loewenstein argues that the Vargas régime is an "authoritarian dictatorship" rather than a totalitarian or Fascist state, and that the nation is basically liberal-democratic.

THE FLYING TIGERS, by Russell Whelan. \$2.50. *Viking*. Here, at last, is the saga of the American Volunteer Group, complete to the last detail. We have had the story piecemeal from newspapers and magazines, but Mr. Whelan, Radio Director of United China Relief, has gone to sources closed to others and, in a masterly job of reporting and research, gives us the unabridged tale.

FICTION

NEARER THE EARTH, by Beatrice Borst. \$2.50. *Random House*. In this first novel, written with unusual sensitivity and skill, Miss Borst relates the story of a young girl's approach to life. Her heroine is a well-bred "nice girl" whose troubles arise from a conflict of worlds — the ideal, ordered world of childhood and adolescence as it meets the physical realities of the world as it is. This is expressed with such relentless honesty that it becomes a pattern which many another girl will recognize. If, in the end, Miss Borst's heroine discovers she is unable to give herself completely to the world, as did her sister, it is because of the author's uncompromising consistency. The tale is unfinished. One hopes that Miss Borst will ultimately finish it.

BENEFIT STREET, by David Cornel DeJong. \$2.50. *Harper's*. Lively account of a

passel of rooming house characters in Providence, R. I., this is the second novel in which a talented Dutch-American, who has written five, turns from his native land to an American scene. The result is February-Hillish, and good fun. Easy-going girls, footloose oldsters, frustrated young artists — all scattered at last by the 1938 hurricane.

THEN WE SHALL HEAR SINGING, by Storm Jameson. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. A less than inevitable conclusion mars an otherwise realistic tale about Nazi domination. Herr Hesse perfects a brain operation which makes his victims dull and docile and its effect on a town and its inhabitants who once were free is done with far less bathos and sensationalism than you might expect.

MEN AT WAR: The Best War Stories of All Time. Edited, and with an introduction, by Ernest Hemingway. \$3.00. *Crown*. Not the least absorbing pages in the thousand-odd crammed into this exceedingly fine anthology are the thirty-one which the editor takes to explain his job. Mr. Hemingway says his book will not tell you how to die, but it will tell you "how all men from the earliest times we know have fought and died. So when you have read it you will know that there are no worse things to be gone through than men have been through before." He goes on to express his opinions outspokenly about this war and the peace to follow.

As one who has seen much war, Hemingway approaches the anthologizing of it with the sureness of a soldier handling a rifle. He divides war into its several aspects as defined by von Clausewitz — as "War Is The Province of Friction" and "War Is Fought by Human Beings" — and within these divisions, he has assembled the best writing about war from Caesar's account of the invasion of Britain down to the Battle of Midway. Because of the anthology's unique plan, you will find Horatius at the bridge next door to "Shiloh, Bloody Shiloh" and Alexander Woollcott only a few pages removed from a

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