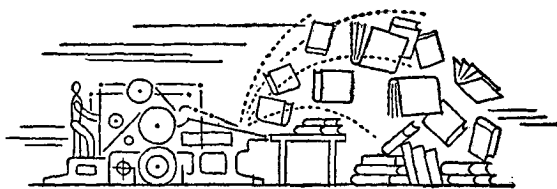

THE CHECK LIST



HISTORY

THE MEANING OF HUMAN HISTORY, by Morris R. Cohen \$4.00. *Open Court*. This posthumous book by the late American philosopher formed the Paul Carus Lectures in 1944. It reveals Dr. Cohen in all his many extraordinary qualities — severely critical logician, scholar of vast erudition and startling penetration, fearless epistemologist, and master of mature English prose. The richness of thought in this panoramic view of human history is so enormous that it instantly takes its place as a major contribution to American philosophy. Dr. Cohen deals severely with the evolutionary and theological views of history, pointing out how absurd they are logically and how they are contradicted by events. His own view, derived in part from Felix Adler, might be called ethical-tragic. According to it all history has to be examined from the point of view of right and wrong, for otherwise history would have no meaning whatever. History, to be sure, is to a large extent, “the cemetery of human hopes,” but it can also serve as a liberating force, teaching humility in the face of values strange to us, and adding assurance to the faith that while evil has won many victories, “the spirit of truth as a superior vitality.” Above all things, history proves that “good causes are more often defeated by negligence in the pursuit of the right than by the active forces of evil.”

RESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND THE COMING OF THE WAR — 1941, *A Study in Circumstances and Realities*, by Charles A. Beard. \$5.00. *Yale*. This massive volume (614 large pages) is both a restatement of the isolationist philosophy and a history of American foreign

policy during 1941. Stated baldly, the thesis of the book is that President Roosevelt tricked and cajoled an unwilling nation into an unnecessary war whose results have been catastrophic; and that because of Roosevelt’s policies “the American Republic has arrived at the theory that the President of the United States possesses limitless authority publicly to misrepresent and secretly to control foreign policy, foreign affairs and the war power.” Professor Beard has little difficulty in demonstrating that the President’s public statements often bore little relation to his official actions; but the argument over the wisdom of those actions tends to bog down in a mass of undigested and conflicting testimonies, documents, newspaper clippings, congressional committee transcripts, etc. Nevertheless, the book has great importance and undoubtedly will wield much influence in the writing of future histories of our times.

THE MARCH OF MUSCOVY, *Ivan the Terrible and the Growth of the Russian Empire*, by Harold Lamb. \$3.75. *Doubleday*. In this book, as in Mr. Lamb’s works on Genghis Khan and the Crusades, the method consists of quoting heavily from diaries and other original sources and stringing this material together with a series of rather personalized narratives. Like most historians, Mr. Lamb believes that Ivan was not insane, but his frequent hysterical outbursts were rather the result of a lifetime spent in justified fear of assassination. The growth of Moscow in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to the point where it became the first city of Russia, is explained by Mr. Lamb in terms of the Muscovites’ appeasement of the Tatar conquerors while the other cities were repeatedly razed for resisting.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

MISSOURI WALTZ, by Maurice M. Milligan. \$3.50. *Scribners*. As the former U. S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, Mr. Milligan was ideally equipped to do this muckraking job on the Pendergast machine. There never was much question, of course, that Tom Pendergast was a complete dictator in Kansas City, but some of the details of his rule (10 per cent of the city's policemen had criminal records) are still shocking. Much of Mr. Milligan's animus is directed against Harry Truman, who is held responsible for the rebirth of Pendergast rule after Tom Pendergast went to prison. The author does not believe that Truman ever made any dishonest money from his association with Pendergast, but he insinuates pretty strongly that when Truman was presiding judge of the County Court he threw a lot of municipal business to the Boss' private concrete company; and that Truman's two elections to the Senate would probably have been impossible without balloting frauds in Kansas City. When Truman became President, the author says, he paid off his debt by stifling all Federal investigations of the machine, which is now almost as powerful as ever.

TOWARD WORLD PEACE, by Henry A. Wallace. \$1.75. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Mr. Wallace's latest book is occasionally apocalyptic and occasionally banal, and not infrequently it achieves a nice synthesis of both. The volume, which bears the endorsements of Jo Davidson, Howard Mumford Jones and Albert Einstein on its dust jacket, will come as no shock to anyone. The author repeats in it his strictures against the Czech "rightists, who precipitated with American support the crisis which backfired." He comes out squarely against "reactionary capitalism" and in favor of "progressive capitalism." He refuses to "accept the support of any person or group which places allegiance to another nation above its allegiance to the United States"; but then, as though this has nothing to do with the Communists, he quickly adds that he is "utterly and completely against all types of red-baiting," which leaves everything about where it was. At one point Mr. Wallace makes a rather surprising concession to his enemies: "Russia," he says,

"must make it clear to her Communist friends that reactionary capitalism still has some years of useful service to humanity . . . before it passes into discard."

OUR OWN BAEDEKER, *From the New Yorker*, by Eugene Kinkadee and Russell Maloney. \$3.75. *Simon & Schuster*. The contents of this book originally formed a series of contributions to a *New Yorker* department, which aimed to give Manhattanites a special global view of other lands. In the magazine they made pleasant reading occasionally for a few minutes, but put together in a book they seem labored, sloppily written and even boring. Indeed, it is rather embarrassing to read page after page of such adolescent attempts at humor: "Constantinople . . . is a hell of a fabulous place. . . . Until recently, 85 per cent of the [Turks] remained illiterate probably in self-defence. . . . Turkey has roughly the area of Texas, the population of New York State, and more headaches than both. . . . Lithuania was big stuff back in the Middle Ages. . . ." Geoffrey T. Hellmann contributes an introduction. It is wholly unnecessary, for it only adds five pages of forced humor and cuteness to a book that overflows with both. The many illustrations by Carl Rose are the only bright spots in the entire production.

BIOGRAPHY

THE JOURNALS OF ANDRÉ GIDE. *Volume I. 1889-1913*, translated by Justin O'Brien. \$5.00. *Knopf*. Dr. O'Brien, in his excellent introduction to this, the first of a projected series of volumes of Gide's Journals, says that on the basis of this work alone Gide belongs to the company of Montaigne and Goethe. One must agree with this judgment, for the journals are amazing in their profound spiritual candor, penetrating thoughts and revelation of a truly great and noble human being. Their central theme is "Data to be yourself," which appears time and again in one form or another, in this volume. Gide sees all human courage, character and drama in terms of this one dictum, and his constant development of it enriches these pages with truly priceless wisdom. Gide reports his struggle with himself in the realms of composition and