

bothered him hardly at all. But he hadn't watched the next film for more than a few seconds than he ripped out a curse. He had double-exposed. How in God's name could he have taken a double exposure? A child, a beginner would know better than that. Then he thought, if Nixon really stayed upstairs, if he really wasn't watching me, I'll tell him she was in such a hurry, she wouldn't let me take many. It would hardly be a lie, I only did get time to expose six films.

When he came to the next double exposure, he didn't curse. He knew now what he had done. That damned chippy made me rush so, he told himself, that I used exposed films. Only he couldn't blame it on the girl. The first thing *anyone* learned was to put the black rim out so that, with a glance at the holder, it could be seen that the film had been exposed. He must have slipped them back without thinking to keep the white rim inside, the black out. The greenest amateur knew enough to be careful about that. This wasn't a mistake, made out of ignorance, that you wouldn't let happen again, once you knew.

In the dark-room, when he left it, there were only three films hanging up to dry. He had double-exposed the other three. He went right out to Mrs. Nixon and said in a hard voice:

"You can tell him right now that I double-exposed three of them."

Not giving her time to answer him, he went into the print-room and stared at the enlarger, thinking: he may not even want me to stay to make the prints. Afraid I might ball up something else on the job. He'd be a God-damned fool to think there's anything left I haven't balled up already. How would he like it, if he hadn't had a camera in his hands for a couple of years?

Presently he heard Mrs. Nixon's high heels clacking toward him. He rested his hand on the contact printer to steady himself before facing her. When he saw the embarrassment in her face, he felt no more surprise, just heaviness.

She spoke in a low voice and tried not to look at him. "Of course, Mr. Nixon isn't feeling well, so he's more upset than he might be. About the double exposures, I mean. I understand *perfectly* how it is. Even he'll recognize it when he feels better, how it takes some

time to get used to a new position, particularly after—after . . ." she halted, flushing.

"After working at something else. For three years. On a relief job," he said grimly.

"It isn't that I don't understand, but Mr. Nixon says he can't afford—he can only afford to have an operator who, well, as you said yourself, has been operating and so on, perhaps more recently." Still without looking directly at him, she held out a little envelope.

He took it from her; there were bills inside. "He makes up his mind good and quick, doesn't he?" His voice was bitter. "After only two and a half days."

"I know it must seem that way to you," she said in distress. "Really, he can't afford it. Why don't you go to a big studio, like Blye's, where they have so many operators, it wouldn't matter so much. I mean—you know what I mean."

"Sure. I know what you mean," he said levelly.

Then he moved to get his hat and coat. There wasn't any use to eat dirt trying to get it back, because he wouldn't get it back anyway. There wasn't any use in kicking about being let out after two and a half days, because he might not be any good after two and a half months. You learned a trade and thought you were pretty damned good at it and then there was no place where you could use what you had learned. Get a load of Blye's putting up with anybody for a couple of months while he learned it all over again and also had to learn not to be afraid that it wouldn't all come back to him. If you ever could learn not to be afraid of that. *What are they doing to me?* Putting me back on a relief job, putting me back to taking censuses, putting me back to waiting for the pink slip.

It wasn't just his hand shaking, it was all of him now. All right, think of the high-school kids who never get a crack at whatever trade they want to go in for. You were lucky, you had a few years at it, a while back. He made a face, trying to stop trembling. Then he held out his hands before him, as though to hypnotize them into steadiness. His fingers were stained with pyro. He had forgotten to use the remover. I'll go home with them like that, he thought, so Mildred can see them brown, once more, last time.

## A 'Nation' Divided

By Granville Hicks

**T**HE *NATION* recently celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet Union with an editorial, an article, and a book review. The article, by Maxwell S. Stewart, commented upon the industrial growth of the U.S.S.R., the rise in living standards, the progress in agriculture, "the extension of protection against the risks of modern society," the increase in democratic rights and civil liberties, and the beneficent role of the Soviet Union in world affairs. The editorial

hailed Russia as the bulwark of western civilization against the onslaught of fascist barbarism. The book review talked about starvation, torture, slave psychology, the correctness of "Trotsky's thesis of the impossibility of building socialism in one country," and the movement of the U.S.S.R. "in the direction of fascism."

To casual readers of the *Nation* this difference of opinion may seem surprising but not significant. To the

regular reader, however, it will seem very significant—and not in the least surprising. Some four years ago the book-review section seceded from the rest of the magazine, and it still exists in a state of rebellion. On the whole, the *Nation* has remained true to its traditions. It has been a liberal magazine, providing a forum for the various points of view the editors regarded as progressive. It has published articles for and against the Soviet Union, for and against the people's front in France, for and against the loyalist government in Spain, for and against the Communist Party. From our point of view, it has often been open to criticism, but it has taken the right side on many issues, and it has always tried to be fair.

The book-review section, on the other hand, has taken the wrong side on most issues, and it has not been fair. About what is the right and what the wrong side there can be infinite argument. About the lack of fairness there can be no argument at all. The bias of the *Nation's* book-review section can be proved.

Let us look, for example, at recent books on the Soviet Union. What is generally conceded to be the most important of recent studies, the Webbs' *Soviet Communism*, was given by the *Nation* to Abram Harris. Of the quality of the review, Louis Fischer, the *Nation's* own Moscow correspondent, has said all that needs saying. "He uses the review," Mr. Fischer wrote in a letter to the editors, "to air his own threadbare, shopworn, and uninteresting prejudices against the Soviet Union, which, I think, he has never seen. . . . What I miss is an evaluation of the service which the Webbs have performed in giving us a rich, comprehensive account of the workings of the Soviet system. . . . Where the Webbs fall down miserably—in their criticism of the Third International—Harris finds them 'more realistic.'"

Albert Rhys Williams's *The Soviets* and Anna Louise Strong's *The New Soviet Constitution* have not, so far as I can discover, been reviewed at all. On the other hand, when André Gide reported unfavorably on his visit to the U.S.S.R., the *Nation* could not wait for the book to be translated and published in this country, but brought out immediately a special and laudatory article by M. E. Ravage, its Paris correspondent.

And now, in this issue with the article and editorial commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Soviets, we find a three-page review by Edmund Wilson. Seven books were given to Mr. Wilson, two of them pro-Soviet, five opposed. One of the pro-Soviet books, Dr. Gantt's *Medical Review of Soviet Russia* [issued in the United States as *Russian Medicine*] is judiciously described as containing some important facts. The other, which is dismissed in a contemptuous paragraph, is Lion Feuchtwanger's *Moscow, 1937*, published four months ago. Feuchtwanger, you know, was impressed by what he saw in the U.S.S.R., and therefore his book—instead of being hailed in a special article—is belatedly and maliciously reviewed by Mr. Wilson. The five anti-Soviet books, according to Mr. Wilson, "fill in a picture as appalling as it is convincing."

Within the past year, so far as I can discover, only one book on the Soviet Union was assigned to a pro-Soviet reviewer. That was Trotsky's *The Revolution*

*Betrayed*, which was given to Louis Fischer—and also to Ben Stolberg. Repeatedly enemies of the Soviet Union have been allowed to voice their opinions, to damn books like the Webbs' and Feuchtwanger's, to praise books like André Gide's, Eugene Lyons's, and Victor Serge's. When, however, Trotsky's book is criticized by Louis Fischer, his criticism is paired with a fulsome eulogy by Stolberg!

Nor is it only with books on the Soviet Union that the bias becomes apparent. In 1936 Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, published a book called *What Is Communism?* The *Nation* assigned it to Louis M. Hacker. From any point of view, the choice was not a happy one, for Mr. Hacker, as a historian, concentrated his attention on Browder's discussion of the American past, and thus devoted most of his review to one chapter out of Browder's twenty-one. But, apart from the question of proportions and the relevance of the review, the significant point is that the literary editor of the *Nation* knew in advance that Mr. Hacker's review would be a bitter denunciation of the Communist Party and all its works.

James S. Allen's *The Negro Question in the United States* was assigned to Sterling D. Spero, whose quarrel with the position Mr. Allen takes was familiar to most well-informed persons. Maurice Thorez's *France Today* and Ralph Fox's *France Faces the Future* were reviewed by Suzanne LaFollette, who had hitherto not been known as an authority on either France or politics, but who, as a disciple, at least so far as the people's front is concerned, of Leon Trotsky, could be depended on to attack the Communist International and to question the integrity of Fox and Thorez. *Spain in Revolt*, by Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard, was given to Anita Brenner, who devoted her entire review—entitled "Let's Call It Fiction"—to attacking the authors and denouncing the people's front in Spain.

During the same period, I hasten to say, five books that are, in various ways, sympathetic to the views of the Communist Party were given favorable reviews: my *John Reed*, Spivak's *Europe Under the Terror*, Anna Rochester's *Rulers of America*, Joseph Freeman's *An American Testament*, and Angelo Herndon's *Let Me Live*, reviewed by Max Lerner, Frederick L. Schuman, George Marshall, Louis Kronenberger, and Horace Gregory. So far as I can disengage myself from the political convictions that are involved in my estimate of all the books, and the personal prejudices involved in my estimate of one, I think the reviews were, from the liberal point of view that the *Nation* is supposed to represent, more adequate than the reviews by Hacker, Spero, Miss LaFollette, and Miss Brenner. I also think it is worth pointing out that these books do not raise very sharply the issues at stake between the Communist Party and the Trotskyites. Finally, it is obvious that not one of the five reviewers can be regarded as a spokesman of the Communist Party, and some of them are, as a matter of fact, critical of its policies. However, I want it on the record that these five books received favorable reviews in the *Nation*.

Does this disprove my charge that the literary section of the *Nation* is biased? I am afraid not. It only indicates that the bias does not operate all the time—

perhaps because it would be too easily discovered if it did. I have spoken of the way books on the Soviet Union have been reviewed, books on the policies of the Communist Party in the United States, books on the people's front in France, a book in defense of the loyalist government of Spain. I have said that the *Nation* neglected two important books on the U.S.S.R., and I might add that it also failed to review Dutt's *World Politics* and William Z. Foster's *From Bryan to Stalin*.

But what reveals the bias of the literary section beyond any question is that the Communist Party is never allowed to speak for itself. It is at least four years since there appeared in the *Nation* a review by a person who could by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as the party's spokesman. A few sympathizers have reviewed for the magazine, it is true, but for the most part books far removed from the struggle over communism. Books opposed to the Communist Party have been given to reviewers opposed to the Communist Party. Who reviewed James Rorty's *Where Life Is Better?* Anita Brenner. Who reviewed Charles Rumford Walker's *American City?* James Rorty. Who reviewed Fred Beal's *Proletarian Journey?* Rorty reviewed it, and then Edmund Wilson reviewed it again. Did it occur to the literary editor that, in the interests of the forum principle, Beal's book might be given to someone who held different opinions of the Soviet Union? No, it was reviewed twice, and both times by persons who, everyone knew, would endorse Beal's attack.

When Mr. Wilson's *Travels in Two Democracies* appeared, it was conceivable that *Nation* readers might be interested in hearing the other side, but the book was reviewed by Margaret Marshall. Philip Rahv was given Céline's *Mea Culpa*, and, though he could not praise the book, he took the occasion to approve Céline's disapproval of "the present Soviet leaders." Sidney Hook disagreed with Albert Weisbord's *Conquest of Power*, but he used his review to attack "the opportunist leadership of the Communist Party."

It becomes perfectly apparent that the policy of the book section of the *Nation* is not the policy of an open forum. I can remember a time when Communists were asked to review for the *Nation*, but that has not happened since the end of 1933, when Joseph Wood Krutch became literary editor. With his arrival, the Communists went out and the anti-Communists came in. Anita Brenner attacked Hugo Gellert's *Capital*. Edna Kenton praised Tchernavin's *Escape from the Soviets*. Reinhold Niebuhr was given a page in which to praise the pamphlet, *Socialism's New Beginning*. James Burnham devoted a review of Palme Dutt's *Fascism and Social Revolution* to the thesis that "acceptance of the line of the Communist International means political blindness."

Meanwhile it became reasonably certain that any left-wing novel would be damned in the *Nation*. Cool indifference or forthright condemnation met Albert Halper's *The Foundry*, Josephine Herbst's *The Executioner Waits*, Waldo Frank's *Death and Birth of David Markand*, Edward Newhouse's *You Can't Sleep Here*, Thomas Boyd's *In Time of Peace*, Erskine Caldwell's *Kneel to the Rising Sun*, Clara Weather-

wax's *Marching, Marching!*, and Isidor Schneider's *From the Kingdom of Necessity*. Nobody argues that they are all masterpieces, but the unanimity of Mr. Krutch's reviewers is a little suspicious. Only last spring he handed three left-wing novels to James T. Farrell for exactly the kind of strong-arm job for which Mr. Farrell is notorious.

During these four years Mr. Krutch's own war against communism has been conducted in his dramatic criticism, in essays on literature, and even in political articles. No Communist has been allowed to talk back. When Mr. Krutch's series of articles, *Was Europe a Success?*, was published in book form, it was assigned, not to a Communist, but to Harry Elmer Barnes, a Scripps-Howard liberal. And Mr. Krutch has protected his friends: parts of Farrell's *A Note on Literary Criticism* had appeared in the *Nation*, and therefore the policy of the good controversy would have suggested that the book's reviewer should be chosen from the many critics Farrell attacked, but it was given to Edmund Wilson, who was chiefly concerned to add a few criticisms of the Marxists that Farrell had been unable to think of.

Dr. Krutch's anti-Communist obsession reached its height when he joined the American Committee for the Defense of Trotsky. Criticized for his action, Mr. Krutch insisted that his interest in Trotsky "was exclusively an interest in fair play." To most of us that interest had seemed quite dormant during the past decade, as one case after another of injustice failed to rouse him to protest. Nevertheless, no one suspected him of being a Trotskyite. We merely felt that he joined the Trotsky Committee for the sake of attacking the Communist Party, just as, for three years, he had been using only too eager Trotskyist reviewers to attack Communist books.

Dr. Krutch has given up the literary editorship to return to the academic life, but the situation on the magazine does not seem to have improved under his successor, Margaret Marshall. Those who were present at the second American Writers' Congress will recall a little group of individuals whose purpose in attending seemed to be to prevent the congress from accomplishing the ends for which it was convened. Chief among the disrupters were Dwight MacDonal, Mary McCarthy, Philip Rahv, and William Phillips. All of them have been contributing to the *Nation*, and it is apparent that Miss Marshall, in her new position, counts on this little coterie, in addition to the larger group of enemies of the Communist Party assembled by her predecessor.

In the relatively short time since Dr. Krutch's retirement, Rahv has been the most active, and it is interesting to trace his career. Prior to the Writers' Congress, his attacks on communism had been cautious. After the congress, reviewing Ostrovski's *The Making of a Hero*, he virtually announced his open anti-communist campaign with a characteristically cheap innuendo: "Marxists, being fond of discerning contradictions in the social process, ought to apply their analytic prowess to investigating the discrepancy between the prodigious dimensions and meanings of the October revolution and the feeble records of it recently produced

on its home grounds by writers seemingly most devoted to its progress."

Mr. Rahv's next gesture was a review, pretentious and sneering and rather childish, of a book of short stories by Leane Zugsmith. It was quite inevitable that Miss Marshall should assign him Walter Duranty's *One Life, One Kopeck* and Robert Briffault's *Europa in Limbo*, and equally inevitable that he should seize upon literary weaknesses, not unrecognized by other reviewers, to prosecute his attack on communism and the Soviet Union. To date, however, his most revealing review is that of Ilf and Petrov's *Little Golden America*, which gives the impression—wholly false, it is needless to say—that the Soviet humorists were so impressed by American machines that they failed to say a word in criticism of the capitalist system that controls those machines.

Miss Marshall's reliance upon this particular turncoat, despite his general incompetence as a literary critic and his peculiar unfitness to review books on the Soviet Union, does not promise well for her regime as literary editor. It seems possible, indeed, that, even more fully than Dr. Krutch, she will make the book section of the *Nation* an organ of the Trotskyites. I do not care whether these persons call themselves Trotskyites or not. I know that they are opposed to the Communist Party, to the Soviet Union, and to the people's front, and that they use exactly the same arguments as Trotsky uses. They are united, I suspect, by a common hatred rather than by a positive policy, but that does not alter the role they play.

It appears to me that readers of the *Nation* are being deceived. The NEW MASSES takes a definite position,

and its book-review section is edited according to a stated policy. By no means are all the contributors Communists, but it is not our intention to publish reviews by persons who are hostile to the Soviet Union or are unwilling to work in the people's front against fascism. The *Nation* has no such clear-cut policy. In the body of the magazine, as I have said, it tries to be fair. In the book section, however, it discriminates against one point of view and favors another. And this is never stated.

I presume that most readers of the *Nation* are what we call, not very precisely these days, liberals. I suspect that many of them are friendly to the Soviet Union and would not willingly aid its enemies. Almost all, certainly, are opposed to fascism and are eager to find effective ways of fighting it. They know that the people's front is the strongest barrier against fascism and at the same time a positive force for progress. I should like to convince these people that, all questions of sincerity to one side, the Trotskyites do in effect injure the Soviet Union and hamper the fight against fascism. I think that, if they happened to belong to trade unions or other organizations in which Trotskyites were active, they would see this for themselves.

But even if these liberal *Nation* readers do not share my opinions, I wonder if they really like the fare that is being served them. Do they subscribe to the *Nation* to listen to the notions of a little clique of anti-Communists, or do they want the opinions of representative authorities? Have they not the right to demand that, in its book reviews as elsewhere, the *Nation* should follow the principles it avows? And should they not, if necessary, take steps to enforce their demands?

## Poetry in 1937

By Horace Gregory

IT WOULD BE possible to view this season's poetry\* with a wearied sickly eye, to see failure everywhere. It would be possible to see nothing in E. A. Robinson's *Collected Poems* except an old man writing his "dime novels in verse," and to read in Sara Teasdale nothing but her last retreat in finding wisdom only in utter silence. One could then wish that Mr. Jeffers had not followed his long road downward, declining very like Spengler's *Decline of the West* into melo-

- \* COLLECTED POEMS, by E. A. Robinson. The Macmillan Co. \$3.  
 COLLECTED POEMS, by Sara Teasdale. The Macmillan Co. \$2.50.  
 SUCH COUNSELS YOU GAVE TO ME, by Robinson Jeffers. Random House. \$2.  
 SELECTED POEMS, by Allen Tate. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.  
 THE MAN WITH A BLUE GUITAR, by Wallace Stevens. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.  
 POEMS, 1929-1936, by Dudley Fitts. New Directions. \$2.  
 NOT ALONE LOST, by Robert McAlmon. New Directions. \$2.  
 TWELVE POETS OF THE PACIFIC, edited by Yvor Winters. New Directions. \$2.50.  
 TOMORROW'S PHOENIX, by Ruth Lechlitner. Alcestis Press. \$3.

drama, until he now sees all his men and women as less than human and far inferior to hawks, eagles, certain breeds of horses, and Pacific seascapes. One could regret that Allen Tate's preface to his selected poems is insufferably pretentious and in dubious taste. One could also complain that Mr. Stevens has taken a symbol for his art which is not inevitable and which too often remains a fanciful "blue guitar." One could say that the younger writers in this group should be far better: one could ask far more of everyone here and at the end conclude that in this year, 1937, a quarter century after the accepted date of a "poetic renaissance," American poetry has gone down the drain and the less said of it the better.

But to arrive at this conclusion would be contrary to my belief, for I believe this moment affords us time to take stock of what has happened in poetry, what is happening now, and what seems now fairly certain to happen within the next few years. Because the early hopes of 1912 were not sustained in 1930, some critics of both