

Mr. Victor Navasky, editor
The Nation
72 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10011

9/28/89

Dear Mr. Navasky,

Maybe you are not old enough to remember the Franco revolt, as I do - and it is something not mentioned in the Gallagher "review" - but I send this letter to the editor to you to tell you that once again The Nation is rewriting history. As it did in that piece by Andrew Kopkind I chided you and him for.

It was disgraceful for you then to print that lengthy unfactual and non-responsive attempt at self-justification he wrote.

It also is disgraceful now for you to blame the fascist success not on their overwhelming power but on ~~whomever~~ she means by "Communists" and Stalin.

Simple logical escapes you (plural) in these political tracts. How can "the arrival of aid" be said to "doom" the revolution that won?

The revolution in that war was Franco's, not the popular-front government's.

How could it have doomed the government, which could not have survived as long as it did without it?

It has been too many years for me to be certain of my recollection and I may not be correct but I believe that the Barcelona tragedy was because defeating Franco and his allies was not the anarchists's first priority. Gallagher quotes Goldman in one formulation of this. With Franco winning the war she told anarchist youth, "You must make ready to fight on every front that is threatening the revolution in Spain." So, they fought the government's troops.*

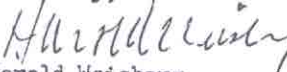
If you think I'm being unfair in what I say of that Kopkind diatribe in the guise of a response, please reread what I said and see how much - or little - of it he even mentioned.

With that and his original article and with this you mislead many people, particularly those who are not in a position to question what they read in The Nation and believe they have no reason to. I regret this very much.

Frankly, I don't see how The Nation read what Gallagher submitted without noticing that she selected from Goldman's life only those things she could misuse as a review ~~to~~ to promote her own political hates. And what she ~~did~~ omitted to do this.

Writers should and do have their rights. But editors also have responsibilities. They do owe fairness and honesty to their trusting readers.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg

* Please note that Gallagher here capitalizes the "R" in Revolution" to make it refer to the anarchist's revolution. Elsewhere it is not capitalized, as in what I quote in the letter.

Letters to the editor
The Nation
72 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10011

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701
9/28/89

Dorothy Gallagher rewrote history in her review of a biography of Anarchist Emma Goldman:

"But with the arrival of Soviet aid and increasing Communist domination of the government and the war, the revolution was doomed. ... For three years the Communists kept the war going; then Stalin, already negotiating his pact with Hitler, abandoned Spain."

That "revolution" was doomed by the open military invention of the fascist powers with their military forces, including aviation, and their supplying of the Spanish fascists who revolted to overthrow the democratic government - and ~~in~~ by the tolerance of this and their own boycotts of the legitimate democratic government by the western powers, especially the United States and Great Britain.

Whether she means the Russian, other or all Communists, it was not they who "kept the war going" on the anti-fascist side. It was the Spanish democrats and others of all anti-fascist political persuasions who risked so much and died in such great numbers, ^{fighting} in going there to preserve democratic government and freedom there.

Barcellona was a great tragedy of which Gallagher exculpates the Anarchists entirely in her defense of anarchism in the guise of a review.

You young fogies who do not remember history invent it. As Gallagher did in her representation of the Nazi-Soviet pact. It took almost no time to negotiate and the USSR negotiated it only because for years the western powers had refused to enter into an anti-Hitler pact we old fogies can remember Maxim Litvinoff devoted so many years to seeking.

You and Gallagher defame so many of the finest young people who suffered so much, so many of whom died, in what was more than an effort to preserve a free and democratic society for Spain. It was also an unsuccessful effort to prevent World War II, that awful bloodbath for which the policies of the western powers are so much to blame,

Harold Weisberg

