

# Stronger than War--

... Is the Surge of Ideas That Brings Forth Books in Every Civilized Land—and Books Abroad at the University of Oklahoma Stays on the Job

By NANCY ROYAL

ON a tranquil day in 1931 an airplane, piloted inexpertly but determinedly through the blue Italian sky, flew back and forth over Rome, leaving behind it a deluge of anti-fascist propaganda leaflets.

The plane was controlled by Lauro de Bosis, a fiery young litterateur who made up in sincerity what he lacked in discretion, and it was quite a shock to his friends a few days later when the young man "disappeared," obviously removed permanently by Mussolini and his cohorts.

The strange disappearance of Lauro de Bosis created much dissension in Rome and was not without reverberations at the University of Oklahoma, for with him disappeared also the Italian editor of *Books Abroad*, internationally known literary quarterly published by the department of modern languages in co-operation with the University Press.

Young Lauro, who had been a staff member of *Books Abroad* for only a few weeks at the time of his erasure, was the first and last resident Italian editor of the scholarly quarterly. The Italian gesture was only the first forcible manifestation of a troublous decade in store for a journal that was designed to deal impartially with the literature of all nations, with no partisan regard for political or social upheaval. *Books Abroad's* announced purpose—"to publish impartially scholarly information in English about the current literature in all languages of the world"—has guided it successfully through periods of war and economic distress.

Now in its fifteenth year, *Books Abroad* had its quiet beginning in 1927 when Roy Temple House, present editor, and several of his colleagues published a 32-page pamphlet, distributed free and concerned chiefly with publications in French and German.

"In those good old quiet days, both the French and Germans took hold very cordially, and we were deluged with books in both languages for years," Mr. House recalls.

Now, however, the output from fallen France is negligible, and Nazi Germany's chief contribution to current literature is in the realm of propaganda, often inadaptable to review.

In dealing with publications from belligerent nations, Mr. House and his entire reviewing staff—which includes contributing editors in other countries as well as this—attempt to remain strictly non-partisan.

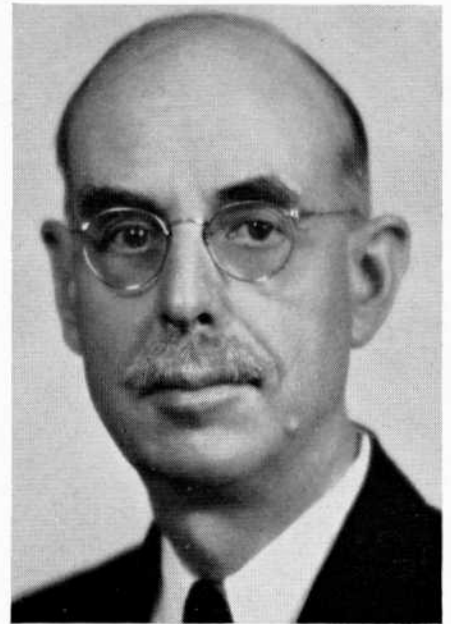
"We've tried to keep out of national and group differences," Mr. House is wont to remark somewhat wistfully, because even his dignified literary publication has felt the clash between the totalitarian states and the democracies.

Most ironically amusing of the misunderstandings came a few months ago: a French professor at a southwestern university whose sentiments were violently anti-Nazi, felt that *Books Abroad* should direct its influence against Hitler and publicly lambasted the magazine and its policies for failure to do so.

At the same time a professor of German at a nearby university accused the Oklahoma publication of being anti-German!

"There we were," Mr. House recalled, "accused of being in two camps at once, when as a matter of fact we were in neither."

After the initial Italian trouble came war in Spain, and the continued civil strife virtually disrupted Spanish publication, which languishes even today. The smashup of Spain, however, added impetus to the growth of infant publishing companies in Spanish American countries, and each week



Roy Temple House, editor of *Books Abroad*.

excellent volumes from the lusty Latin publishers are added to the Spanish language section of *Books Abroad*.

There is, however, no way of filling the gap left by the virtual cessation of French publishing, except through the limited output of French Canadian concerns and the relatively few works released by French publishers who have transferred their operations to the United States, dealing mainly with the writings of authors-in-exile. *Books Abroad* has come to recognize the letters of exile as a new branch of literary creation, defying racial classification and belonging to no country except a certain Utopian region free from the persecution lately felt as keenly by the greatest scholar as by the poorest peasant.

Roy Temple House, quiet, scholarly and industrious, has edited *Books Abroad* for the fourteen years of its existence, in addition to performing his continuous duties as head of the department of modern languages. Kenneth Kaufman, who helped found the magazine while he was on the teaching staff of Oklahoma City public schools, is now managing editor of *Books Abroad*.

The two are the chief occupants of the main office of the languages department, and each presides over a desk colorfully cluttered with brightly bound books in French and German, Spanish and Portuguese. Both welcome visitors.

Especially to Mr. House come innumerable visitors who are refugees from countries laid waste by the Nazis—Poland or Czechoslovakia, France, perhaps, or a few emissaries from England.

They pour out their stories to him in their own languages, confident of understanding and aid. Most of them are exiled scholars

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test of state high schools included Grace Ray, '20ba, '23ma, and Charles H. Brown, '33ba, '34ma, University journalism teachers.

► Cheebie Graham, '24, former Y. M. C. A. secretary and manager of the Stadium-Union campaign has moved to Bonham, Texas, to establish a primary air school there.

► Gilbert Harold, acting head of the department of finance, taught a special course on investments during August at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois.

► William H. Carson, dean of the University's College of Engineering, worked during the summer as district OPM manager in Oklahoma City for the national defense contract service. Dean Carson helped supervise the co-ordination of state industries vital in the production of defense equipment for the army and navy.

► Leonard M. Logan, '14ba, University sociology professor, has been given a year's leave of absence from the faculty to accept the appointment as assistant regional director for the Federal Security Agency, with headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Logan will travel in four states, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas, to co-ordinate fields of activity which affect national defense, including health, recreation and nutrition.

► Joseph Marshburn, University English professor, has been elected governor for this year of the Oklahoma Lions Clubs, known as District 3-A of Lions.

► George A. Van Lear, Jr., University professor of physics, was consultant during the summer for Signal Service Corporation in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

► Henry L. Kamphoefner, associate professor of architecture at the University, worked during the summer for the Bureau of Yards and Docks of the U. S. Navy Department in Washington, D. C.

► Capt. C. J. Kanaga, teacher of military science at the University, has been promoted to the rank of major.

► Arthur Hemmendinger, University physics professor, has been called into active duty in the Naval Ordnance laboratory at Washington, D. C., where he will study means of protecting ships from sea mines.

► L. B. Hoisington, head of the department of psychology, and Mrs. Hoisington have received word of the birth of a grandson, Winford Louis Hoisington, in Hawthorne, California. The parents are Mr. and Mrs. Sam Hoisington.

► Brig. Gen. Harry J. Malony, former commandant of the R. O. T. C., unit at the University, has been assigned to duty with the general staff corps, with headquarters at the Army War College in Washington, D. C.

► A. O. Weese, professor of zoology in the University, taught during the summer at the Rocky Mountain Biological laboratory at Crested Butte, Colorado.

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who knew of *Books Abroad* in happier days before it began to touch upon "the bitter bread of exile," for *Books Abroad* is an unofficial ambassador in Europe, creating intellectual good will and understanding wherever it is read.

Local residents returning from travels on the continent have said that whenever, in their journeys, they encountered a foreigner who had heard of the University of Oklahoma, they generally found that the long-distance acquaintance was based upon one of three things: the mathematical ingenuity of Russian-born N. A. Court, the supremacy of the Oklahoma School of Petroleum Engineering, or the literary prestige of *Books Abroad*.

Once President-Emeritus Bizzell, vacationing in Leipzig, strolled into a central reference center operated by the German publishers union. Expecting to see displays of nothing more than Germany's highly nationalistic literary works, Mr. Bizzell agreeably found himself standing eye-to-eye with an elaborate display of *Books Abroad*, his own University's publication in which he had taken an active interest since its inception.

And another time Bishop Francis C. Kelley of Oklahoma City found that delegates to a Catholic conclave in Rome spoke both often and highly of Oklahoma's review quarterly—much more often, as a matter of fact, than was customary in Oklahoma, the bishop reported.

*Books Abroad* is by no means unappreciated in its homeland, however. Commercial publishers and critics have high regard for the Sooner publication, and all college and public libraries of any pretension include it in their periodical list. A recent cash gift from the Oberlander Foundation of Philadelphia provided for subscriptions to the quarterly for libraries financially unable to secure it regularly.

Although *Books Abroad* was distributed free for some time after its original Vol. 1, No. 1 was released back in 1927, it was found that if it were to operate on anything approaching an efficient commercial basis, a subscription charge would be necessary. At first one dollar was levied and later, after readers had schooled themselves to absorb the shock of an increased price, a charge of two dollars per year was announced, a charge still maintained despite circulation hazards brought on by continued war in Europe and the Far East.

With its Winter, 1941, issue, *Books Abroad* came out in new format to celebrate its fifteenth birthday, flaunting a brighter, glossier cover and a streamlined mood of progress throughout. The editors made what they termed a "low bow to the past," and selected a new and more modern typeface for body material.

So *Books Abroad* goes on, surveying tolerantly a war-torn world, carrying the torch high for the literature of lost nations.

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