

READERS' FORUM

Valentine Ackland on Edward VIII's abdication—Experimentalism and revolution—Last greetings

● The king has abdicated, as you know, and England and the dominions, and India and the Irish Free State are all lost in the same dream, and all dreaming that they approve Mr. Baldwin. Yes. But there are voices. Not only a single voice, but voices, which shout out in the streets of London and the manufacturing and the rural towns, "God Save Our King!" And of these, not the smallest voice is the voice of South Wales.

And so on. So one can go on. It is not actually immediately important—although the Continental papers have courteously consented to keep up the pretense that it is. It isn't. But when there is something important to be maneuvered, this will be useful. And, I fear, useful to the fascists.

You had better remember this, so that if I survive whatever happens then, I can exult over perspicacity, which is always pleasant to do.

Generations of my family were royalists. It happened that one of my ancestors came as far as the near-by village, which is now our local telephone exchange, to rescue or attempt to rescue King Charles II, of happy memory. I feel that this particular ancestor is raising his eyebrows now. And mine also tend to rise, until I stop them. When I hear of Germany giving us a condescending pat on the back and the dominions praising our "coolness" in not protesting against a most unpopular and, many think, a most violent action on the part of the government—then my eyebrows try to rise. But it is silly of them. There is nothing to make a fuss about. Our single Communist member of Parliament is right in stating that this fuss has been most useful to, and well used by, Mr. Baldwin—who has succeeded in shifting a king who bade fair to be democratic.

Baldwin's speech in the Commons is a fine example of his worst, most telling style. It moved the House profoundly. He was sober, honest, open-hearted, sentimental, unhappy, tired. All the things we love. God damn him.

The actual facts are that Edward flouted the cabinet. He talked to Canadian soldiers (individually, not in safe groups). He made promises in Wales that Baldwin is pledged never to see performed. (Short of putting Paid to Capitalism, no one can now save South Wales.) Edward, apparently, meant that his promises should be honored. This king (now referred to by the British Broadcasting Corporation as "His Former Majesty King Edward the Eighth") meant to continue along the road he had gone as Prince of Wales. Other people meant that he should not. Fortunately for them, he loved a woman they did not love. Very good. Out he goes. "I mean to marry Mrs. Simpson, and I am willing to go. . . ."

During this brief reign various things, of varying degrees of importance, have happened. Edward broke ranks at Vimy Ridge, and actually spoke to the mutilated veterans, and, perhaps worse still, to their attendant nurses. Later, some exalted spirits among the Canadians literally broke into the Palace in London—and for some reason were not arrested as breakers of the peace, but were fed instead. Later still, the King of England visited South Wales—and nothing happened in the way of a demonstration by the king-killing Communists. Instead, His Majesty talked to the people, and entertained a most suspect character to dinner in his train dining-car: Malcolm Stuart, of Distressed Areas fame—whose recommendations definitely did not come up to the standard demanded by the cabinet who appointed him.

So the king must go. And he went. And all should now be well. Until—until. . . . But whatever happens later on, Mr. Baldwin has managed the affair with discretion and aplomb. And whatever happens later on, the Reds won't be able to use it. Or will they?

VALENTINE ACKLAND.

Workers' School Postponement

● In view of the intervening holidays, the opening of the winter term at the Workers School, 35 East 12th Street, N. Y., has been set back one week and classes will start on the week of January 11. This postponement will allow one additional week for registration for Winter Term classes.

Among the courses of special interest to NEW MASSES readers, we might mention the courses in Marxism-Leninism, Marxian Survey of Psychology, Contemporary Literature, Literary Criticism, Science and Dialectics, Research Methods, Modern Economic Theories, Trade Unionism, Labor History, etc.

A. MARKOFF, Director.

Replying to Mr. Agee

● In his review [Dec. 15] of Gertrude Stein and transition, Mr. James Agee is apparently unable to point to any value in these works that would make it necessary for Left critics to take them seriously.

Certainly the proletarian movement has made use of much that was in the early part of the century regarded as experimental. But it is the strength of proletarian art that it can take to itself only that which it can use. Under the mandate of its approach to life and the necessity to communicate, it cannot lose itself in blind alleys. It has learned from experimental art when that experimentation actually devised effective modes of expression or rediscovered

what was fine and effective in the art of remoter times. But when experimentation lapsed into cultism the health was gone out of it.

Just what has Gertrude Stein to offer? Is not her whole attempt to divorce language from meaning a cul-de-sac? And just how will a living art, based upon realities so pressing that even former Dadaists have been forced to face them, gain from the mumbo-jumbo of the latter day transitionists?

Revolution is not made in the hazy caverns of the subconscious nor by any mystic upsurge of the human spirit. This is not to deny that the dream life of man is real; but to contemplate dream states for their own sake and isolated from the rest of reality is a sickness which we cannot afford.

What the proletarian artists can learn from the methods of experimentalists, let him use by all means. But that he is brother to the Surrealist in his philosophy is ridiculous. Surely when Mr. Agee insists that both Left artists and Surrealists are revolutionaries and that "there are no valid reasons why they should be kept apart" he is on dangerous ground.

All who rebel are by no means revolutionary in our sense of the word. If the proletarian movement took to its bosom all who call themselves revolutionary, there would be no disciplined movement either in politics or the arts—only confusion and betrayal.

MYRA MARINI.

Greetings on Our Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

GREETINGS for this twenty-fifth anniversary of your predecessors and yourself—valiant fighters in the cause of liberty. Old age looks backward, youth looks forward; happy those like you who can contemplate work well done and yet be full of fruitful plans for the future.

You are serious about reality, burning with indignation about poverty, exploitation, injustice, the cruelty of war and fascism, the obsolescence of capitalism. You are keenly aware of the struggles of revolutionists to end all these and portray them with graphic enthusiasm. Your love of beauty is not an abstraction, but is exemplified in the rights of the child, the woman, the worker, the artist, to grow, to live fully, to express themselves fully. Your humor exposes affectations, hypocrisy, and inconsistencies. Nor does it spare ourselves, that our hearts may be lightened and we be saved from dullness and stodginess. Your ideals are high: peace, prosperity, freedom, and happiness for the human race.

To youth, you bring a sense of its hopeful destiny, that it is not a lost, but a found generation, capable of rebuilding America for socialism. With a rich, beautiful, self-sufficient country, abounding in vast resources and a marvelous technical system, why should youth be depressed and discouraged? "Come and take it!" says the NEW MASSES; build, O, Youth, a brave new world.

Long life and more power to you!

THE "LABOR DEFENDER"

FROM a mere youngster of only ten and a half years of life and growth in the service of the American labor movement and the cause of liberty and justice in this land of ours, warmest greetings to the NEW MASSES.

During your eventful career, you have al-

ways found time and space to aid the battles in defense of labor's prisoners and to add your lusty voice in protest and support.

Long life to you, NEW MASSES! Those who gave their liberty in freedom's cause surely join with us who are trying to win it back for them, in wishing you the brilliant and successful future which your splendid accomplishments in the past assure.—SASHA SMALL and LOUIS COLMAN, for the editorial board.

KENNETH PATCHEN

ACCEPT my sincere wish that there will be an early fulfillment of those things for which the MASSES, the *Liberator*, and the NEW MASSES have so gallantly waged war. Congratulations!

THE "WESTERN WORKER"

IT is only fitting and not surprising that the NEW MASSES has become widely accepted on the West Coast. It has recognized that on the West Coast important labor and progressive forces are uniting in opposition to entrenched reaction, and it has clearly interpreted this struggle to its readers nationally.

The staff of the *Western Worker* congratulates the NEW MASSES on the understanding it has displayed of this struggle on the West Coast as an important factor in the struggle nationally. The occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary is a milestone that will be noted here by thousands.—LAWRENCE ROSS, Editor.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
THE DEFENSE

OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

GREETINGS to the NEW MASSES on this anniversary of a long and vigorous struggle against reaction. May you continue in the forefront of the fight for liberty and justice for all.—DAVID KINKEAD, Assistant Secretary.

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Technicians and Spain

OBSERVERS recently returned from Spain report that the military situation is favorable for the loyalists. Supplies are better than they were at the beginning of the civil war, the troops have achieved discipline under fire, and the food situation is good. Morale is high, confidence in victory all-pervading. This confidence is borne out by military experts. These say that if Germany and Italy let Spain alone, the loyalists will defeat the fascists without difficulty.

Such favorable reports, however, should not blind us to the serious dangers which Spanish democracy must overcome if it is to survive and move forward. As we go to press, dispatches from Berlin report that Germany will continue to send troops to Spain and may convoy German vessels with warships. This is Hitler's reply to the warning of Great Britain and France. He holds the threat of war over Europe in order to obtain territorial and commercial concessions in the colonies, and in the long run, if he is not effectively stopped now, he will go to war. Indeed, he is already at war against Spain. Nazi assistance to Franco has become Nazi direction of the fascist campaign. Whatever may be the results of present diplomatic maneuvers, Germany would gain immeasurably by a victory in Spain.

That much has become apparent even to some politicians of Downing Street, who realize that Nazi Germany is fighting to become the first power in Europe. The realization may strengthen those sections of the British ruling class who see that their own interests at the moment require concerted action with France against Berlin's ruthless drive toward war. Meantime, the British working class is becoming more and more conscious that upon it devolves the chief responsibility for changing the pro-Nazi policy of the dominant circles of the British ruling class.

While the British governing class is trying to make up its mind that it does not pay to cut off one's nose to spite one's face, democratic forces the world over must act immediately to aid Spain in the hour of her need.

The heroic exploits of the famous International Brigade symbolize the meaning of the struggle. What we have in Spain today is not merely a civil war in one country, but the military phase of the world-wide struggle between the fascist and anti-fascist forces.

If the fascists win, international fascism will have made a tremendous step forward throughout the world, France will be surrounded by the Nazis, and war will break out with that much advantage on the side of the fascists. If the loyalists win, democracy the world over will hold a crucial

area, the forces operating against war will be strengthened, and if war breaks out anyway the anti-fascist countries will be that much better equipped to fight it.

Spain's battle is our battle. Nothing illustrates this better than the social advance now going on behind the lines. In Germany, officially at peace, the peasants are taxed and starved to support a corrupt economy and an increasing military budget. In Spain, actually at war, the peasants have been freed of the burden of rent. While the people's army is grappling with the fascist foe, the people's government is establishing libraries and schools.

This explains the enthusiasm of the Spanish people under the most arduous conditions of military conflict. They are fighting for bread, land, and liberty—and in this democratic peoples everywhere support them if only out of self-interest. The threat of fascism is against us as well as against Spain.

From various countries of the world, liberty-loving men have gone to Spain to aid in the struggle. General Kleber is there with Ludwig Renn and André Malraux and thousands of others. These aid their Spanish comrades in arms in holding Madrid with boundless heroism.

But to defeat the fascists, Spain needs technicians. War makes acute demands upon industry, and Spain has never had a large-scale industry which could meet the needs of the military emergency at short notice. Foreign technicians already in Spain are helping man factories and railways, aiding the struggle for democracy at its base, and releasing Spanish workers for the front.

It is for this purpose that there has been formed in this country the American Society for Technical Aid to Spanish Democracy with temporary headquarters at the offices of the NEW MASSES. This organization, formed by outstanding writers and trade unionists and headed by Waldo Frank, is seeking support for its project of civilian technical aid to Spain. Our readers will, we hope, assist it in every way.

Nazi Fact and Fiction

THE Nazi press boasts that the Hitler regime has led Germany out of the economic decline of "Marxist rule" and has created a flourishing economy. This legend of German prosperity has been taken up by certain American newspapers partial to the extreme Reaction. Actually, Germany's alleged economic progress is based to a large extent on the transformation of the national economy into a war economy. Many of the "peaceful" improvements have military purposes. Such is the case with the vast number of roads now being built throughout the country. These are the transport routes of the next war. The proposed plants to obtain gasoline from coal are neither necessary nor advantageous from the viewpoint of peace economy. It costs far more to produce artificial gasoline than to buy it on the world market. But the Nazis want to make their air fleet independent of uncertain foreign supplies in the next war. Here, too, is the secret of Germany's campaign for substitute materials of all kinds. That part of German production which serves war purposes is increasing; that part which serves the needs of the people is decreasing. The mass of Germans are enduring incredible hardships today so that their masters may make war upon other peoples tomorrow. Fascism is the great modern curse both for the nation which it inhabits and for the countries it threatens to invade. The most elementary laws of self-preservation require us to combat it at every point.