

# Correspondence

## Political and Labor Bail Fund

TO THE NEW MASSES:

With the lines of reaction tightening against champions of organized labor and oppressed minorities, and against opponents of war and fascism, the sponsors of the political and Labor Bail Fund began a campaign today to obtain loan deposits totaling \$100,000. This money is needed to make sure that the Fund can take care of all calls for services in the critical times which loom ahead.

"Since the Fund was established in March," said Miss Schulkind, the secretary, "it has advanced as bail sums totaling \$9,275 on behalf of 19 prisoners upon application of nine political organizations and labor unions. Not a single default has occurred.

"We provide bail for persons arrested because of their participation in a political, economic or social struggle, because of their efforts in behalf of down-trodden minorities; because of their beliefs; or because of their efforts in behalf of the working class and against war and fascism.

"In almost every case the prisoners were freed without having to serve a jail sentence. If it had not been for the Fund, most of them would have been held in jail awaiting trial."

Three types of contributions are asked by the sponsors: (1) Money lent to the Bail fund, repayable on 60 days' notice. These sums are invested in Liberty Bonds or U. S. Securities. (2) Loans or gifts to the reserve fund, which is kept as a safeguard in the event of forfeiture of bail in any single case; the reserve fund must always amount to at least 5 percent of the bail in use. (3) Gifts to the administrative fund, because no part of the other two funds can be used for this purpose.

POLITICAL AND LABOR BAIL FUND.

104 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. C.

## Lawyers in U. S. S. R.

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Having recently returned from the U.S.S.R. and looking over the Summer's issues of THE NEW MASSES, I was surprised to find a column headed "The Lawyers Are Doomed." Earl Browder states: "Certainly there will be no use for lawyers, as such, under Socialism. . . . For the lawyers, we can only promise the opportunity of re-education to become useful citizens in some other capacity. . . . It is a doomed profession."

In Moscow this fall I learned that workers are nominated and elected from the factories to serve as assistants to judges in the courts. They spend three to six months studying the Soviet laws, etc. Others further qualify themselves by study at the university under the law faculty. Those who qualify, after having served as lawyers and assistants, are nominated by the factories to function as judges. After such service, workers who wish to return to their former occupations are at liberty to do so. Others who wish to continue in the courts, if they are qualified, are permitted to continue as jurists.

From the Chief Judge of the Moscow City Court of Appeals I learned that seventy percent of the jurists today in the Soviet Union were jurists before 1917.

So that, while under Communism very likely there will be no need for lawyers, in the Building of Communism the lawyers have an important task in consolidating the gains of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

A. R. R.

## The Case of Anna Lyons

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The following brief facts will give the general background which existed in the Emergency Relief Bureau, and will throw a clearer light on the facts of Miss Anna Lyons' dismissal.

About one hundred and twenty-five thousand

heads of home-relief families were transferred to W.P.A. projects during the past ten weeks. Because of the reduction in the case load resulting from this transfer, the E.R.B. administration reduced the size of the staff by 1,300 workers. Thus jeopardizing the adequate, efficient and humane administration of relief.

Thirty thousand applications for relief were held up for two weeks because of lack of personnel and funds. This bears witness to the justice of the

A.W.P.R.A. position that a full and adequate staff be retained and that the administration's policy was unwarranted and unjustified.

Following the campaign of the Association against dismissals the administration instituted a series of intimidatory acts, such as removal of bulletin boards, limiting staff meetings, "gag memo" and now the dismissal of Miss Lyons, a leader of the A.W.P.R.A.

EXECUTIVE BOARD A. W. P. R. A.

New York City.

## Letters in Brief

To answer the conspiracy charge brought against strikers at May's Department Store and to gain support for the strikers, we are informed, the Department Store Employees Union, Local 1250, will hold a mass meeting at Odd Fellows Hall, 301 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, on Monday, Dec. 16, at 8:30 P.M. Speakers will include Heywood Broun; Ted Poston, city editor of The Amsterdam News, now on strike; Rabbi Ben Goldstein; Clarina Michelson; the Rev. David M. Cory and Sidney E. Cohn.

Paula Kapler writes, "As a musician I would like to know where are the proletarian musicians and composers?" She feels that the organization of musicians has been neglected and urges that a periodical for revolutionary musicians and music lovers be published.

Two full-time training schools, in Marxist-Leninist theory, two evening training schools and regional and sectional schools are being planned. The fund raising is in charge of A. Markoff, treasurer, Training School Commission, 35 East 12th Street, New York.

The I.L.D. writes that Edward Drolette, young American seaman who participated in the anti-Nazi demonstration on the Bremen last August, will be tried on violation of the Sullivan Law and assault on December 23. They ask that all interested in the fight against fascism and the defense of Drolette get in touch with the defense committee, 22 East 17th Street, New York.

The National Student League informs us that it has been banished from the University of Chicago campus. America's so-called most "liberal" major university withdrew recognition of the N.S.L. on grounds of "lack of cooperation"; the N.S.L. attributes the action to the administration's resentment against the N.S.L.'s recent fight for academic freedom.

Pioneer Youth, 219 West 29th Street, N. Y. C., appeals for toys, books, dolls, games and serviceable clothing for the miners' children in West Virginia.

"We no longer give away presents indiscriminately," they write. "A few days before Christmas we run a toy sale for townspeople. Nothing costs over 25 cents. Many things are cheaper. It's more self-respecting and the clubs make a little money."

The Philadelphia Workers School writes that it must move to larger and better quarters. They have launched a drive to enroll contributing members. Those interested should communicate with H. Dieter, 62 North 8th Street, Philadelphia.

The League of Women Shoppers, 258 Fifth Avenue, New York, invites support in its attempt to use its "purchasing power, collectively, to improve working conditions." The League investigates strike situations thoroughly and then, if the situation justifies it, they give their support in every possible way — by protests, meetings, speakers, picket lines, etc.

The Amsterdam News strikers in Harlem inform us that they will conduct a mass picket line this coming week. They ask for sympathizers to join in the demonstration.

Walter Ufer writes from Taos, N. M., "Every cartoon, every drawing in your December 3 number is well chosen. Gropper has more art sense, art feeling in his left-hand vest pocket than most artists get in a lifetime. . . . And Stephen Alexander is no slouch as an art critic. I consider him the best in the country."



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# REVIEW AND COMMENT

## A New Magazine

IN THE nineteen-twenties most little magazines were creedless. Their contents were not held together by a basic point of view. Like the earlier Little Review, they were simply montgomery-ward catalogs of contemporary writing. "Rebels and reactionaries rub shoulders amiably and in perfect harmony in our magazine," ran the ad of one of these journals, which published work by "youngsters or greybeards, regardless of school, influence or tradition." The Dial modeled its literary garments after the latest European fashion plates, while Broom announced itself as a "clearing house" for literature. Even the "tendency" magazines of the time—which generally championed the work of a particular school or a new generation—were very confused about fundamentals and shirked an open partisanship.

During 1933-34 a new flock of little magazines appeared. They were different in at least one important respect from most of their predecessors. They did not make a virtue of aimlessness. They followed in the tradition of THE NEW MASSES. They were openly revolutionary, left, partisan in their social outlook. These terms made up their titles and subtitles, and appeared in their manifestoes. Anvil, the first of these new magazines (if we except transition journals like Front and Left), announced that it was "going to try to present vital, vigorous material drawn from the farms, mines, mills, factories and offices of America." From the same section of the country came the lively Left Front, which called for poems and stories dealing "with the lives of the workers in the prairie farms, in the coal mines of Illinois, the iron mines of Minnesota, in the stockyards of Chicago." Partisan appeared from the Pacific Coast with an opening editorial—"Turn to the Left." From the east came the fiction magazine, Blast, and the poetry journal, Dynamo, which sought for verse that would "utter the deep social and class meaning of the turbulent days around us." Partisan Review, originally published as the organ of the New York John Reed Club, immediately took its stand against "the narrow-minded sectarian theories and practices" on the proletarian literary front.

This group of little magazines was largely the voice of a new literary generation. The young men of letters who wrote for these publications entered the literary scene just as the prosperity of the twenties was passing over the horizon. They were members of what one of them called the "depression" generation, as distinguished from the preceding "lost" generation, whose autobiography has been recorded in *Exile's Return*. The

economic difference between these two groups was characterized in *You Can't Sleep Here*, one of the first novels of the new generation:

This was not a lost generation. These young people had never found themselves. . . . We were the crisis generation who had never been absorbed into industry or the professions. . . . We had all the old problems. But we had also something new, the passing of economic security. We college and high school and public school graduates were certain of our economic future. The pile of lumber and cement under the billboards (to be used for building a shack in Hooverville) was (our) immediate economic future. The public comfort station down the block and left-over buns in the automat and hourly supervision by twirling bats were our certainties.

The literary aspects of this new generation were described by one of its literary critics, William Phillips, in an article published in Partisan Review:

The latest literary generation may be called the proletarian generation, because it is the only unified group among the younger writers, and because most of its members are related in one way or another to the labor movement. . . . Besides, this generation is coming up at a time when the air is charged with discussions about proletarian literature, when the question is the axis of most significant writing today.

These new authors have appeared chiefly from two literary centers. One group from the Midwest has become associated with the Anvil, and includes Jack Conroy, Joseph Kalar, lumbermill poet, and H. H. Lewis, rhymer of the wheatfields. The other group has centered around Partisan Review,

and includes Kenneth Fearing, Ben Field, Alfred Hayes, Edwin Rolfe, Philip Rahv and William Phillips.

However, this identification of the magazines with two geographic groups is false and misleading. For example, Nelson Algren, Meridel Le Sueur and Jack Balch, three of the best young story writers from the Midwest, are among the consistent contributors to Partisan Review, just as Saul Levitt, Harry Kermit and others, whose stories deal with New York life, are regular contributors to Anvil, while two of its three editors, Walter Snow and Clinton Simpson, are New Yorkers. The geographic antagonism in recent American letters between New York and America has seeped into proletarian literature, too. However, it is an artificial barrier, at least as far as the proletarian literary front is concerned. I do not think we have anything like a proletarian regionalism in American literature today. Although fiction writers like Jack Balch and Saul Levitt deal respectively with St. Louis and the Bronx, the underlying social motivation of both of them is the same, and it links them as members of one literary school.

Indeed, even the antagonism between generations does not seem to mean very much in proletarian literature. Instead of generations opposing each other—the familiar fathers-and-children complex in literature—the old groupings have split; more and more of their members have learned that the essential difference is not of schools or generations but of classes. Thus men of letters like James T. Farrell, Erskine Caldwell,

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