LETTERS from the MILITANTS

C.W.A. Workers Must Unite as One

Marine Park, Brooklyn, N. Y.—Down in this remote and God-forsaken part of Brooklyn, where 4,000 C. W. A. workers are herded to perform absolutely useless labor, the wage-cut axe has fallen almost without warning. From $15 they have been cut to $13.44, in spite of the fact that every worker supports a family on his "salary", and has to spend a good chunk of it just for carfare (double) and warm clothing. As one worker put it: "They're simply taking the milk away from my kids."

Along with the announcement that 1500 men are going to be laid off within a week, the C. W. A. officials are looking for any sort of excuse to give us the gate. Tracy, the field foreman, wanted a gang of men laid off whom he accused of leading a delegation to park headquarters to find out why our pay was held up. But only one man was fired, and later reinstated. Maybe the fact that 1000 men had marched down from the other side of the park to park headquarters had something to do with it....

One old worker collapsed from the cold and all of us were almost frozen stiff when we were obliged to march all the way across the fields in the face of a bitter-cold, sub-zero winter blast in order to get "checked in".

Instead of directing the single checker to come across and check us as we got off the bus, the gangs had to walk across and back again.

Still, the foremen and bosses are fearful as the devil of "agitators" and organization. Before the municipal elections, every drunken Tammany man handed out as many circulars as he wanted to. Now, when a fellow hands out C. W. A. leaflets, as happened in one case, the foremen try to grab him in order to slander him and get him locked up. Further, just before we got our cut pay-checks, the foremen, without telling us about the cut, warned us to go right home after we got it, and "not to hang around and talk to anybody"

The C. W. A. men, to protect themselves, must join up with a fighting organization. There are already two organizations in the field. This is entirely unnecessary; it will only confuse the workers and handicap any sort of campaign. C. W. A. workers must fight to make both groups unite, and they should demand: ONE ORGANIZATION, ONE FIGHT, ONE ENEMY! —G.

A "Shoppe" Under a N.R.A. Code

The Henrietta Shoppes, Inc., manufacturers and retailers of silk hose and lingerie, have approximately twenty stores in New York City. Three of four girls are employed in each retail store; during busy seasons, five or six. The fact that the firm is "operating under an NRA code," and will tolerate no attempts to change its rules and regulations is explained carefully to every girl hired. Sales girls are supposed to receive a $15 minimum for 48 hours, 35 cents an hour if they work part time, and time and two-thirds for overtime.

These employees find out in a very short time that one of the firm's most important rules is: never pay workers what they really earn. Overtime is paid at the regular rate of 35 cents per hour instead of the 58 cents called for in the NRA code that the Henrietta Shoppes were among the first to sign.

Extra Work Without Pay

Did I say overtime is paid at 35 cents per hour? I should have said the small part of overtime that is paid to the girls is paid at that rate. For a long time before Christmas, and regularly on Saturdays and busy evenings during the year, girls are allowed only 15 or 20 minutes for lunch and supper, but they are docked for two hours. They are required to work later and report earlier than "NRA hours" call for, to clean the store and rearrange stock, but are not paid for these extra hours at all. Bosses explain that "this is not really work"; it's "just fixing up the store a little". Aching bones at the end of an 11 or 12 hour day refute the bosses' conception of what "real work" is.

The most highly paid and responsible positions this concern has to offer in their retail stores are held by girls who have been with them for many years. These are the managers who in return for their "loyalty" to the firm, that is, working too many hours for too little pay without complaining; reporting "radical" workers; reporting complaints of dissatisfied workers; in other words, underpaid spies—these girls receive $18 per week. They are abused by the bosses exactly as the sales clerks are, and the pressure brought upon them is in turn placed upon the sales clerks who work under them.

"Fixing" Labor Inspectors

When the cash register is short, the deficit is deducted from the girls' salaries. But when there is an excess, the money goes to "headquarters". A proposal made by some of the girls to create a standing fund of the excesses to be used in case of shortage, was flatly turned down.

Managers are required to call the main office frequently by telephone for additional merchandise, special instructions, etc., as the stores are not equipped with telephones the managers have to stand the cost of this duty themselves.

Inspectors from the State Labor Department come in from time to time, carefully note all the infractions of the labor laws and depart. The bosses boast that the cost of keeping these investigators "quiet" isn't much. Meanwhile, washroom conditions remain disgraceful, girls continue to work more hours than "allowed by the law," for wages much less "than required by NRA."

A general undercurrent of resentment is apparent in the majority of girls, but this is less obvious than their petty bourgeois attitude toward their working conditions and employers. When the bosses on their daily rounds talk about the enormous profits they make and then, with woeful expressions on their faces, say "we wish we could do more for our employees", very few of the girls seem to be aware of the hypocritical nature of this sympathy.

Not until the girls understand that they can expect nothing helpful from their bosses will they be able to direct their resentment into an organized attempt to improve their conditions. —J. T.

A Pig-Sty of a Hospital

The original Bronx Hospital on the corner of 169th Street and Fulton Avenue, was abandoned as unfit for use not so long ago. Its new quarters across the street are spacious, modern,—and expensive to get into. The very latest scientific apparatus is installed and the private rooms are lovely to behold. Nothing was forgotten—except—the Out Patient Department.

In an old dilapidated, dirty, wooden house next to the old hospital, workers who do not make enough for food and rent, and unemployed men and women, crowd in from morning to late afternoon. This is the only quarter of the old hospital that was "forgotten"—ignored—because it is not a source of profit.

The house has two floors and a basement. The first floor is used mainly for registration, and has several small rooms labeled, "Eye Dept.", "Dental Dept.", etc. The "clinic proper", where the great majority of the patients are sent, is in the basement. Here are eight or nine little cubby-holes—none of them is larger than ten feet square—also importantly named, Department of This, That or the Other. The floor and walls are stone. Rows of wooden benches are placed in front of the departments, and patients wait to see the doctor, very often for as long as four hours. The place is too small to accomodate all the people that come. If you come early enough to get a seat on the uncomfortable benches, you are lucky. When, finally, you do get in to see a doctor, the examination is, of necessity, a superficial and hasty one.

The basement has two filthy washrooms. I have been here many times. Always, I have found the plumbing out of order, no water in the sinks, and indescribable filth. It is drafty and cold. The odors, and extreme discomfort of standing for hours on end in drafts, makes one sicker after leaving, than before entering.

The pharmacy connected with the Out Patient Department is just as ill-kept and dirty. The rows and rows of shelves have an inch of dust on them. Bottles are kept open and are not sterilized before they are filled with medicine and given to the patients.

These terrible conditions are not exclusive with the Bronx Hospital. They exist in many hospitals throughout the city. Municipal hospitals and dispensaries are especially notorious offenders—just one more consequence of capitalist profiteering—always at the expense of the workers—even to the point of endangering their lives. —J. T.

An Expulsion at High Speed

Boston.—Last January I became actively interested in the radical movement. I attended all sorts of meetings, lectures and forums of the C. P., P. P., S. L. P., L O. CPO, SP, and liberal organizations of all descriptions.

I did all the reading I could find time for and soon found myself wavering between the C. P. and the Left Opposition. I leaned in the direction of the C. P. and hoped and wished that it was the right organization because it was the official party, it was a member of the Comintern and it has the backing of the S. U.

No Answer to Questions

At the beginning of June when the German events were still fresh. I asked the Boston District Organizer questions on the united front, socialism in one country and several others. He didn't answer them very satisfactorily and as he was busy there wasn't much discussion. But I did ask him for some anti-Trotskyist literature and some of Stalin's works, which he promised to give me.

The following week I attended a meeting of the Dorchester unit. I again asked for anti-Trotskyist literature or the names of some books or pamphlets on the subject. I was still very much unclear on the question of Trotskyism. But with a friend of mine, the comrade from the section and three others from Chelsea, we formed a unit.

Member of Section Committee

I was made a member of the unit buro and the section committee. I was one of the most active members of the unit, which as a whole was a very inactive unit as all the units were.

In the meantime, I kept pestering our unit organizer and the district literature agent for anti-Trotskyist literature but they couldn't even refer me to any names of pamphlets or books.

On Monday, Nov. 13, there was a section membership meeting in Roxbury. At this meeting the D. O. in his talk said that Trotsky was against the theory of building socialism in one country and that Stalin was in favor of it.

I read a quotation from Stalin's "Foundations of Leninism" (the first edition) in which he unmistakably declares that socialism cannot be built in a single country taken by itself.

Becomes A "Counter-Revolutionist".

I asked for an explanation of this quotation. Weiss the D. O. got up and attacked Trotsky, not his theory or his ideas but his personality and then he sailed into me. He said that I was a counter-revolutionist and everything else under the sun.

After Weiss made his speech, I was given an opportunity to **defend myself,** when all I had done was to question a statement of his. I asked him to answer my question first and then take up the question of my activities. I asked why there had been nothing wrong with me until I had asked this queston.

Weiss then called for a vote to expel me for counter-revolutionary activities, saying that I had been sent into the league to undermine it. I was expelled by a show of hands. —DAVID UDELL.

The Jew-Baiters in Chicago

To the Editor:

Your articles in the **Militant** by Geo. Clarke on the Fascist Silver Shirts are very good but incomplete.

The Chicago Fascist link with the Silver Shirts is the professional patriot Harry Jung, who runs the patriotic racket called the American Vigilant Intelligence Federation with free rent offices in the Tribune Tower Building of Chicago. Jung is the Chicago anti-Jew leader and he holds secret Fascist meetings on anti-Jewism at the Chicago Union League Club. One of his backers is the young moron Clement Studebaker, whose father was a utility magnate. Also the Ku Klux Klan has or did have its office in Jung's office. You have to have the password to get to Jung's office. He is organizing Fascist units, members of which are sworn to secrecy, undying hatred of all Jews, and each member is assigned a code number.

Investigate this racket and expose it, as it is one of the worst in the country.

Fraternally,
R. L.

Chicago, Ill.

Hotel Scab Agencies Fall Through

Sixth Avenue's blood sucking employment agencies were sadly disappointed when the expected rush of applicants for striking hotel and restaurant positions did not materialize. Personnel managers of hotels who interviewed job-seekers at the different Sixth Avenue agencies, despite their pleas and promises of no fees for the jobs and sleeping accomodations in the hotels could get only a few men.

Fearful of the results that hiring of scabs might have, many of the agencies are now pretending that they are not supplying them. The Hotel bosses have set up their own employment agency on West 57th St,. with little or no success.

Arrangements have been made with steamship companies to rush cooks and waiters to various hotels as soon as a boat docks. In this way Japanese workers have been supplied to the Hotel Chatham. Colleges and universities in New York City and vicinity have been sending students to the struck shops to work after school hours. Parole and probation officers are sending jobless ex-convicts to work as scabs. The paroled men are afraid to refuse this dirty work out of fear of being send back to jail as "parole violators". —A. S.

Fired by the C.W.A. But Not Hired!

After a two-and-a-half month wait for a CWA job, I suddenly received a special delivery Saturday, February 3rd to report for assignment the following Monday. I was told on Monday to report at the Municipal Building in Brooklyn the next day. There I was told to report at Prospect Park for work a day later. At Prospect Park I had to wait several hours. While waiting, I overheard the supervisor telephoning for police. He was telling the cop at the other end of the wire that he wanted police to keep order as discharged CWA workers had already arived and many more were expected. The workers were expected to protest their dismissal.

Later that afternoon I was handed a sealed envelope to deliver to the Park Department in Manhattan. When I got to Manhattan I found out that I was "discharged". In other words, I was fired before I was hired. I went to the Central Bureau which had sent me the special delivery letter to get an explanation. "No funds; project held up" was the reply they gave me, and are giving thousands of others.

The capitalist press now reports that CWA workers are being fired for loafing. First capitalism makes a "loafer" out of you by throwing you out of work; then it refuses you unemployment insurance. Finally it gives you a lousy, fake job; and then it fires you for "loafing".

—J. H.

569 Subs!

Before we say another word about the sub drive we want to apologize to the Minneapolis Branch. In last week's listing we omitted the sixty Club Plan subs sent in by the Branch. That, of course, also affected the total. The sixty subs are included in the listing below.

Besides the sixty Minneapolis subs we omitted we received, since the last issue went to press, 257 **new Club Plan subs.** The odd figure is accounted for by the fact that one **Militant** Builder brought in five of the Club Plan subs. The total now stands at 669.

The New York Local took another long step toward realizing its goal of four hundred new subs by adding 112 to its total which now stands at 316. The Kansas City Branch shot in 48; the Minneapolis Branch added 28 to its total; Pittsburgh added 20. The record follows:

New York Local	316
Minneapolis Branch	88
Kansas City Branch	48
Pittsburgh Branch	32
Youngstown Branch	12
D. O'Dwyer	12
D. L	8
J. Ruby	8
G. Papcun	8
M. Hurwitz	5
M. Steinbach	4
M. McLeod	4
L. Goodman	4
St. Louis Branch	4
L. Murphy	4
M. Koehler	4
C. Genfan	4
R. Carlson	4
Total	**569**

This astounding record was made in less than two weeks. Our contention is that the Club Plan has not begun to exhaust its possibilities. Literally everybody can pitch into the work of spreading and building the **Militant** through the Club Plan. Take the first step now. Fill out the blank below and become a **Militant** Builder.

Build the Militant! Help circulate a Marxian paper for workers! Order for Club Plan half year sub cards for one dollar! Use the blank below!

THE MILITANT
126 East 16th Street, New York City, N. Y.

Enclosed please find $.....for.....(four is the minimum) Club Plan half year sub cards.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

The Unpleasant Task of O. Piatnitsky and How Lenin Is Used to "Help" Him

I was just reading O. Piatnitsky's pamphlet, **The Present Situation in Germany,** published by the Communist International. This piece of apologetics is pretty sickening, especially the impudent way in which Piatnitsky talks down to the suffering workers of Germany. But I want to point out one thing in particular:

This pamphlet has the unpleasant task of explaining away the collapse of the C. P. of Germany in the face of Hitler's attack. It has to answer the questions: Why was no better defensive struggle put up by the German proletariat? Why did not the C. P. lead in organizing such a struggle? Why did not the C. P. force the S. P. D. into a united front? Instead of answering them, however, it concentrates on another question: why did not the C. P. make a revolution in Germany last year?

Now it is indisputable that, in the last analysis, German capitalism's willingness to use Fascism to preserve itself could be answered only by a proletarian seizure of power. This, however, need not necessarily have occurred in any given month of last year. It is conceivable that, had the C. P. and the working class put up a better fight, the balance of forces which prevailed under Schleicher might have been shifted in favor of the working class. In other words, Fascism would not have been immediately crushed, but would have been held off from power for a period by means of mass struggle falling short of the seizure of power by the proletariat. The seizure of power might have occurred at a somewhat later date when, as a result of that mass struggle and partial victory, the ranks of the class had been further consolidated and the enemy further weakened.

Ignores Real Issue

All this Piatnitsky ignores. Pointing to the historically indisputable axiom that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can stave off Fascism whenever the latter threatens, he argues that a revolutionary situation did not exist in Germany, that therefore power could not be seized, and that therefore Hitler could not be stopped. Hence the C. P. was right **to do nothing.** And in case you don't believe it, he warns, the ECCI has said it and you'd better believe!

All this is fishy enough, but the worst is yet to come. How does Piatnitsky prove that there was no revolutionary situation in Germany? Partly by referring to facts about the concrete situation, facts pulled out of their context, twisted, fabricated, misinterpreted. But largely by quoting from Lenin. And it is to one of these quotations that I wish to refer. Piatnitsky opens Lenin's pamphlet, **"Left" Communism**—and quites Lenin's definition of a revolutionary situation in the following way:

"For revolution it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand the necessity for revolution, and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling class be in a state of government crisis, which attracts even the most backward masses into politics..weakens the government and facilitates its rapid overthrow by the revolutionaries."

How Piatnitsky "Edits" Lenin

This seems clear: a majority of the workers must be for revolutionary struggle even to the death; the government crisis must do two things: (a) draw even the most backward into politics, and (b) weaken the government and facilitate its overthrow. But why the three dots toward the end of the quotation? Was Lenin so long-winded that a big chunk of his definition had to be dropped? No. Here is the last part of the passage without omitting thirty-seven little words Piatnitsky overlooked:

"The ruling class (must) be in a state of government crisis, which attracts even the most backward masses into politics. It is a sign of every real revolution, this rapid tenfold, or even hundredfold, increase in the number of representatives of the toiling and oppressed masses, heretofore apathetic, **who are able to carry on a political fight** which weakens the government and facilitates its overthrow by the revolutionists." (**"Left" Communism,** Toiler edition, page 66).

So it is not the crisis which weakens the government, but the struggles of the once-apathetic masses "who are able to carry on a political fight" because of the existence of a crisis. Now the point about the three dots becomes clear. If a revolutionary situation did not exist, it was just because these masses were not carrying on such a fight. And whose fault was that if not the vanguard's, the C. P.'s? Piatnitsky's whole pamphlet being written in order to avoid this question, naturally he does not hesitate to amputate Lenin a little bit lest the rottenness of his bureaucratic argument become suddenly apparent.

The alternative theory is that Piatnitsky couldn't find room in this 64-page pamphlet with its closely packed type for thirty-seven additional words by Lenin out of the middle of a sentence.

—HARRY STRANG.

Pioneer Publishers

THE SOVIET UNION AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

By LEON TROTSKY

During the last few weeks the Pioneer Publishers tried hard to publish comrade Trotsky's new pamphlet on the class nature of the Soviet Union. In spite of great financial difficulties, we finally succeeded in bringing it out. We are, however, in great debt. Branches and individual comrades should rush their orders without delay. Cash with order will be of great help.

* * * *

IMPORTANT OFFER

The Pioneer Publishers, besides publishing Marxian books, is endeavoring to supply the militants with Marxian literature and important books of an informative character at very low prices.

This time we have succeeded in getting two very important books which every worker should have. We offer two big volumes ROSA LUXEMBURG'S LETTERS, a beautifully bound book with Rosa's portrait, and THE LETTERS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI, cloth bound, BOTH volumes for ONLY $1.50. For certificate holders, $1.25. Add 15c for postage.

We are glad to inform our numerous inquirers, that we have on hand Lenin's book IMPERIALISM and STATE AND REVOLUTION in one cloth volume for 75c. Branches and certificate holders—60c.

* * * *

Buy a PIONEER PUBLISHERS CERTIFICATE. It's only $5 and entitle you to 40% discount on our publications and to a 20% reduction on any book published by other publishers.

Our School in Brooklyn

The Brooklyn branch of the International Workers School announces the opening of a lecture course entitled "The Present and Future of American Communism" to be given at the Militant Hall, 154 Watkins St. The first lecture will be given by Arne Swabeck, secretary of the Communist League of America, on Monday, February 12, 8:00 P. M. The subject of his lecture is "What the Communist movement looks like today". The lectures will be given every Monday evening. The second lecture will be on "The Communist Party-working class vanguard or brake on the revolutionary movement"

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by

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Organize Jewish Club in Brownsville

Some time ago, a number of Jewish workers took up the question of organizing a Jewish club in Brownsville. The need for a Jewish club that would base itself on the principles of the class struggle and at the same time be free of all mechanical party control, grew up as a result of the widespread expulsion and discrimination against anyone who dared as much as show a dissenting voice against bureaucratism.

Steps were immediately taken to organize such a broad Jewish club. Now after a short period of existence, the club has a membership of more than 20 and about that many more sympathizers who will undoubtedly join very shortly. A constitution provides that the club base itself upon the general principles of the class struggle. It will support all phases of the revolutionary struggle of the working class such as strikes, demonstrations and the defense of political prisoners regardless of the political views they hold. Every member will have perfect freedom of expression and adherence to whatever tendency in the labor movement he or she wishes. The club makes it a strict rule to bar from membership any person who is disclosed upon investigation to be or to have been a scab, or strike-breaker. The constitution further provides for election to the executive committee every six months, initiation to be 25c and 25c monthly dues, with five cents for unemployed. The name of the organization has been chosen to be "October Club of Brownsville" and has its headquarters at 154 Watkins St., and meets regularly every Wednesday.

The "October Club" has a variety of cultural and educational activity as well. Sometime ago a lecture was held under its auspices with Jacob Berlin reporting on the condition of the labor and Jewish movements in Europe after Hitler's coming to power. An enthusiastic audience was moved to long and heated discussion following it. Now for this coming Wed., January 12, the club is arranging a lecture on Democracy in the Trade Unions and the Situation in Local 9, I. L. G. W. U." with Sylvia Bleeker, long active trade unionist, lecturing. All workers are invited to attend. Admission is free and questions and discussion will follow.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS SCHOOL

(Winter Term)

The International Workers School is about to enter its third year of Marxist education for the revolutionary workers of New York City. It has issued its announcement of courses for the Winter of 1934 which extends from February 18th to April 31st The following classes are listed:

1. **FUNDAMENTALS OF COMMUNISM** **Martin Abern**
(Based on the "Communist Manifesto")
Wednesdays—8 p. m. to 10 p.m.—Beginning February 21st.

2. **THE YOUTH MOVEMENT** **Joseph Carter**
Sunday—2 P. M. to 4 p. m.—Beginning February 18th.

3. **SURVEY OF AMERICAN TRADE UNION STRATEGY AND TACTICS** **Arne Swabeck**
Wednesdays—8 p. m. to 10 p.m.—Beginning February 21st.

4. **ELEMENTARY ENGLISH FOR FOREIGN SPEAKING WORKERS** **S. Blake**
Fridays—8 p. m. to 9:30 p. m.—Beginning February 2nd

5. **THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN BOLSHEVIK PARTY** **J. Wright**
Fridays—8 p. m. to 10 p. m.—Beginning February 23rd.

REGISTRATION: The registration fee for each course is $1.50. Arangements can be made for payments at convenient intervals. Individual sessions are 20 cents each. Those workers wishing to register for one or more courses can do so either by mail or by coming to the office of the International Workers School, 126 E. 16th St., N. Y. C. The office is open for the registering of prospective students all day long and every evening.

Registrants can secure complete outlines for the courses at ten cents per copy.