

# NEWS & LETTERS

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## WORKER'S JOURNAL

### Taxation Without Representation

By CHARLES DENBY

Many workers in the plant where I work look to their vacation as one of the biggest days of all the days we spend in the joint. Our shop differs in this way from some others in the city by giving their employees a vacation check for the amount of time a worker spent in employment. But actually if you want time off you have to get it from management. If he should refuse, you still have to continue to work, while in other plants workers are forced to take time away from the shop.

#### THEY TAX OUR VACATION PAY

Every year in June we receive our vacation checks. In the past we received it with our regular weekly pay in one check. Many of the old checks were supposed to be voided if the amount was more than \$150. When they paid our vacation with our weekly earnings combined, the checks were more than \$150. Workers felt the company paid it in this form to sock them heavier on income taxes. Some felt that if we got two separate checks the taxes would be less.

This year we got separate checks on separate days. The taxes were the same although some workers felt it was more than before. I never before saw so many workers angry about their tax deduction. Some said that it should not be taxable as it was a gift to workers for their number of years' service. A preacher said it was like charity, or at least the union could have worked out an agreement to that effect.

#### "IN LIEU OF" IS THE TRICK

Some were so angry that they felt we all should go to the union hall and protest. Another said it was no use, that the officers will say: We got the vacation pay for you, and that is more than you would have otherwise.

A worker said: "This is the catch. Here on the stub receipt it does not say vacation check. It says: This check is your payment in lieu of vacation. These words, "in lieu of," are the trick to get 18 or 20 per cent of it for taxes."

Some one else yelled: "I believe you are correct. There is something fishy. This is a two-way pay. According to my earnings every week they bounce me \$12.50; in two weeks it is \$25. But from this check they took \$31.18, \$6 more than my regular two weeks earnings. Here is the way they manage it. If the company had given us two separate vacation checks they could only get \$25, or \$12.50 from each check by combining them. But the way they deducted, it is as if we made all that money in one week. Say, if you make \$173 in one week, 18% of that amount for taxes would be \$31."

Everyone began to say that everybody is after the working people's neck. Everyone has his club or bag of tricks waiting for the little earnings of labor—the company, the union leaders, the churches and preachers. They all have a plan to live easy from the labor of the working woman and man.

#### OVERTAXING THE WORKER

A woman worker said that the Government could not tax the salaries of the union representatives because their salaries come from the dues of the workers and we have paid taxes on that money once already. If they tax the union officials' money too, then the money is being taxed twice. It is utterly unfair for money to be taxed more than once. She wondered how soon would the workers organize themselves and start some resistance against such taxation.

"We can't continue forever," she said, "to let everyone take from us and not do anything about what we are supposed to have in financial gains. Somebody is always waiting to take it away. They will continue to do so until we as a working force stop it. Overtaxing the workers has meant the downfall of other countries."

Read . . .  
EDITORIALS  
ON  
AUTO  
WILDCATS  
. . . page 4

CONTENTS

Coal and Its People	P. 2
Labor	P. 3
Editorials	P. 4
Negro	P. 6
Youth	P. 7
Women	P. 7

## White and Negro Southerners Change Relations in the South

Dixieland is changing. The striking changes are taking place as a result of what Southern workers, white and Negro, are doing against the old system of the South. A Negro worker who returned there for his first visit in three years, reported to NEWS &

### RIDING THROUGH GEORGIA

I stopped at a filling station in a small town in Georgia. The attendant was a young white fellow. When he filled my tank he started a conversation with me. He said, "Oh, you're from Detroit." I said, "Yes. But I was born in Alabama."

He said, "Well, I was too I bet you can't guess where I was born. In the little town where Joe Louis was born. Man, am I glad I come from the town of the best champion of the world. He was nice, but who was really nice was his mother. She was the most wonderful woman I ever met."

In talking, I mentioned she passed. This seemed to strike him in the bones. He said, "You don't mean it."

I said, "Yes, I thought practically everybody knew it. It was in all the papers and on the radio."

He said, "Somehow I didn't hear it. I don't think some of the people back home heard it but I'll sure write and tell them. I think she was one of the greatest women that ever lived. You'll never know how I feel about it."

### AN INTERESTING QUESTION

## Who's Buying The New Cars?

Roy said: "It is the poor man buying the new cars."

Chris said: "Even if the poor man can't afford it, he buys a new car, even if he'll lose it when he gets laid off. Some of the men get big cars and their payments run as high as a hundred a month."

I said: "You guys think it is the poor man because he stands out so much when he buys a new car. I think the middle class people buy new cars because of the war threat and scarcity, especially during the earlier part of the year."

Eddie said: "It looks like here in Detroit more colored are buying new cars."

Mary said: "It's only when the wife and man both work that they can afford a new car."

We ask our readers:  
What do you think?

### LETTERS:

"I was amazed to see the great changes since I was there last. Changes in the attitudes and relations of whites to Negroes. Just take the restrooms in filling stations as an example. Last time I was there, they always had signs WHITE and COLORED. I didn't see these signs this time. I am sure they are still in some places, but gradual changes and feelings of human relations was what was so important to me.

### LABOR NOT DOCILE

"Southern leaders have in the past insisted," he writes, "that the South would take care of its own problem. On that basis they have resisted all changes in the Southern system, blaming it as due to 'Northern interference' or 'Government interference with states' rights.' Now they are ones who advertise in Northern big business journals that the strikes are just an incident and begging the North still to establish its plants in the South where they can find a cheap and contented labor force. But this point carries no weight at all in the face of the lively strike wave.

### THE UGLY WORD

"On the other hand," our reporter writes, "you no longer hear whites, at the slightest sign of hostility, yell out the word N---r. The word is almost passing away. I remember an older man told me out on the farm, that he doesn't hear it often now, but in his childhood days it was strange when you didn't hear a white man use the word. He said that there is one white man back on a little plantation who still uses the word very harshly to Negroes.

"What is important is that we have reached the point of saying that there is still one person who uses the word

I think you'll still find that for years. The history of prejudice in the United States, especially in the South, is rooted so deep in some people that it will take years to root it out and wash it away. But there are whites now who will combat it along with Negroes."

### NOT FROM THE TOP

No, changes in the South are not coming from on top, and are not being brought to the South from the North. The new changes are arising from the conflict in the heart of Dixie itself. The prejudices with their deep historical roots that were planted by the Southern plantocracy is being wrecked and destroyed. The young Southern whites who are breaking away from the so-called Southern way of life are returned GI's and white workers who are working side by side with Negroes, seeing and understanding their interests as workers are the same.

### CHANGES FROM BELOW

"Slowly emerging is a new South, a new human way of life," concludes our reporter. "In the recent telephone and railroad strikes, white workers established new relations with Negroes while showing a hostile relation against the company. This does not mean that 'the Negro problem' is solved. Not by a long way. The official Southern leaders are making an all out effort to clamp down the lid not alone on the Negroes but on the working people as a whole. The inevitable conflict between the two will continue to an exploding point not between the North and the South, but within the confines of the South itself, between the working force and their rulers and leaders who are desparately trying to hold on to the old way of life. Every easing of racial relation only intensifies the general crisis."

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## Can Factory

From the Freeway you see it  
like Sing Sing, like a jail-  
house,  
(There's a hell of a noise break-  
ing out inside.)  
It's got a water tank on top,  
(Its walls are grey, the build-  
ing's walls)  
And a flag flies on top,  
And the thing roars like a big  
diesel truck going nowhere.  
And the fumes vary in kind  
from room to room,  
And in degree from bad to  
worse.

Before 7 A. M. we straggle  
through the gate,  
Hands in our pockets against  
the cold,  
Weighted down by history and  
our lunch bucket.

From the Freeway you see it  
like a jailhouse  
And pass it by if you're lucky  
And got money in your sock  
Or a cushy job bulling the pub-  
lic  
Or a paycheck for producing  
nothing.

Five hundred of us, though,  
make the turns  
Through East L.A.'s poor houses,  
past the Mexican cafes  
And the new brick ware-  
houses . . . .  
We snake our cars into the park-  
ing lots  
and leave 'em angled parallel  
in predetermined rows,  
And go inside to the rush and  
boom and stomp and rattle  
and roar.

Oh, what bank do you preside  
over, Mister,  
And Doctor, what hospital do  
you operate in,  
And Bib Time Operator, where  
do you lie?  
Ours is the prestige of hoarse  
voices,  
The subtlety of a shout above  
machinery running,  
The nicety of bolting down a  
five ton press.  
When you shout in his ear, you  
cannot shout face to face,  
But mouth to ear, the noise is  
such.  
"But man, this isn't noisy at all  
'longside a nail mill."

He worked in one once where  
nails are made for whose  
coffin,  
And what can we can in our  
cans—our souls perhaps?

In stores we look at filled cans.  
We look for evidence of our  
lives on cans  
Printed with our trademark  
And the numbered designation  
of our plant,  
And show the can to wife or  
friend  
And say, "I helped make this."

We look in vain for ourselves or  
any factory hand  
In movies or on TV,  
And strain the soap operas  
through our ears  
And wonder at the profusion of  
professional men  
In our national dream  
And wonder why.

Oh say if you see  
Can you, under God,  
The can factory?

So many boys were raised to be  
presidents  
(the odds against it are great,—  
there's only one every four  
years, figure it out for your-  
self out of 160 million.)  
So many girls were raised on  
dreams of grandeur  
Ground out by tired fairies  
Who didn't want to be factory  
hands or fathers.

## "With Liberty & Justice For All"

Have you ever talked  
about McCarthyism? Are you  
against racial and religious  
discrimination? Do you think  
that the discriminatory im-  
migration laws are unjust  
and should be changed? Have  
you ever used words like "re-  
actionary" or "progressive"  
or spoken out against "co-  
lonialism?"

If so, watch out. Accord-  
ing to a recent booklet pub-  
lished by the First Army  
Hdqs. in New York, the use  
of these words marks you as  
a "Communist."

This crude and utterly stu-  
pid booklet created such a  
disturbance, even editors of  
the very proper New York  
Times expanded themselves  
in an editorial against it,  
saying they did not know  
whether to laugh or cry. No  
doubt it is embarrassing for  
the big shot journalists who  
use these words all the time.  
But their crocodile tears can-  
not hide the fact that it is the  
crudity of the performance,  
not the purpose for which it  
was issued, that brought a-  
bout the concurrence of the  
New York Times with the  
objections of the American  
Civil Liberties Union protes-  
tations against the pamphlet.  
The purpose is the same: to  
stamp out opposition. Wheth-  
er this is done by crude  
pamphlets or sophisticated  
laws makes no essential dif-  
ference. The totalitarianism  
on both sides of the iron  
curtain is showing all over  
the place.

In fact, the Army itself  
finally withdrew the pam-  
phlet on the grounds that it did  
not serve the purpose for  
which it was intended. Inso-  
far as it made American free-  
dom of thought and press  
a laughing stock here and  
abroad, this will not be  
changed by the withdrawal  
of the pamphlet.

The real alarm is that the  
booklet appeared at all. That  
is an indication of how far  
the leaders of this country  
have gone along the road of  
totalitarianism. The project  
is not dead. The book-burn-  
ing which the State Dept.  
indulged in, in various Euro-  
pean capitals, when McCar-  
thy's influence was at its  
highest, was not applied to  
this pro-McCarthy pamphlet.

They have the grandeur now;  
The piercing gaze of the guys  
in overalls  
Impatient with clothes,  
Anxious for flesh.  
They have the grandeur of the  
kids at home  
Crying after the shift ends,  
Waiting to be fed.  
They have the grandeur  
Of news sheets full of racing  
news  
And Cholly Fickerfocker  
And apoplectic millionaires  
Who are afraid of the factory  
wife  
And the guys she works with  
And the millions like them.

This is one factor of many.  
If there are heroes here,  
Where are their songs, their  
ballads, their sagas?

Continental Can  
Los Angeles, California

## COAL AND ITS PEOPLE

### TIME TO DO SOMETHING

Pursglove, W. Va. — I  
had stopped in a local beer  
garden to have a couple of  
beers and shoot the breeze  
with some of the men who  
hang out there. There were  
several men who work in the  
same mine that I do and a  
general bull session was in  
progress. As is usually the  
case, the talk was about the  
mine.

#### PIN MACHINE OPERATOR

A pin machine operator  
was giving out his opinions  
about his work, the men, his  
machine and the company.  
Now a pin machine operator,  
like other men working on a  
section, is essential to the  
production cycle. But he is  
different in that the work he  
does has to do primarily with  
safety. He is supposed to  
make the top safe for all the  
men to work under. In the  
pinning method, this is done  
by drilling holes into the top  
through several layers of  
rock and coal. After drilling  
each hole, a steel pin about  
seven feet long is inserted  
into the hole and tightened  
up. At the tip of the pin is  
an expansion shell which,  
when rotated, expands and  
makes itself fast in a hard  
layer of rock at the top. At  
the bottom end of the pin is  
a steel plate about seven  
inches square. When the pin  
is tightened the effect is to  
bind the different layers of  
rock and coal together, pro-  
viding protection from roof  
falls.

#### MACHINE MESSED UP

The pin machine operator  
was talking about his ma-  
chine. It was messed up. It  
wasn't generating enough  
pressure to tighten the pins.  
It was tightening up to 40  
pounds pressure, whereas at  
least 100 pounds pressure is  
required.

"You just might as well  
have no pins in that top at  
all as to have those things in  
there," he said. "I've report-  
ed it to both my boss and  
mechanic. Now the mechan-  
ics have worked on it trying  
to get it right. They've  
checked it over, but it's still  
no good. From the things  
they've done that I know  
about, there's only one thing  
left. And that's the motor  
for the hydraulic head. They  
need a new one. The mechanic  
told me they don't even have  
one to put on it. My boss  
has tried to tell me that it's  
all right, but what does he  
know about it? He doesn't  
run that machine, I do. And  
any man who has worked on  
a pin machine for any time  
at all knows when it is work-  
ing right or not. You can feel  
it when you handle the levers  
and you can see the pins  
when you're tightening them  
up. I can tell just by looking  
at them they're not right.  
Anyone could tell it by look-  
ing at those pins. They're  
practically hanging loose.

#### MEN IN DANGER

"Now I don't care about  
the machine," he went on,

"That thing can be covered  
up every day of the week as  
far as I'm concerned. But  
there are men working under  
that top every day. Not only  
men on my crew, but men on  
all three shifts work on that  
section and have to be under  
that top. That's what I'm  
thinking about. I have to be  
there too. And it's my job to  
make it safe. But you can't  
do it in the shape that ma-  
chine is in.

"If those pins aren't in  
tight and that top starts to  
come in, you can't tell how  
far it will fall, and all it has  
to do is get a start some  
place. I know that, but do  
you think they'll shut the

machine down? Oh, no! That  
might make them lose a little  
coal. So it's easy to see that  
the thing that is important  
to them is the coal. They  
don't think about the men.  
There are plenty of them  
walking the road. If they kill  
a couple today, they'll just  
hire some more tomorrow  
and that will be that.

#### TIME TO TALK

"A lot of men are afraid  
to say anything about it.  
Some of them have been off  
work for a while and think  
the company will give them  
a rough time if they say any-  
thing. The only thing I can  
say is that if they don't start  
doing something about it  
when things like this come  
up, a lot of the men are go-  
ing to have plenty of time to  
think about it. Either in a  
hospital or a cemetery."

### A Fall Is Pinned

Fairmont, W. Va.—There  
had been a big roof fall on  
my section in one of the  
headings we were working.  
The fall was cleaned up, and  
my boss asked me to work  
on an off-day to pin the top  
where it had fallen in. Even  
though there had been a fall,  
it could easily be seen that  
the top was still very bad  
and could fall in some more  
at any time.

#### MADE SAFE TO WORK

When I got to the area I  
was supposed to pin, I look-  
ed it over pretty well. I  
wasn't going to go into the  
place cold and start pinning  
it. There had to be some  
posts and cribbing put up to  
hold it while I was working  
before I'd even begin to con-  
sider working there. I put  
these up, and when I was sat-  
isfied that there was a rea-  
sonable amount of protection  
for myself, I started to pin.  
You couldn't use the regular  
pinning machine to work, it  
had fallen in too high, so I  
was using the stopper (an  
air compression drill) to drill  
the holes for the pins.

#### SLATE GIVES WAY

I was getting along pretty  
well and my boss was there  
to kind of check what I was  
doing. When I started to  
drill a hole near the lip of the  
fall, I figured that I just  
about had the job whipped.  
And that's when it happened.

There was a big piece of  
slate that was loose, and  
when I started to drill into  
it, the vibration from the  
drilling broke it free and it  
started to come down. Luck-  
ily, I was drilling the hole in  
at an angle, so when it start-  
ed to fall, the stopper acted  
as a kind of prop to hold the  
slate up.

#### MINER AND BOSS

When the boss saw the  
slate start to fall, he yelled  
at me to pull the stopper out.  
He was thinking about the  
machine, but I had more  
sense than to pay any atten-  
tion to what he was yelling.  
If I would have tried to pull  
the stopper out, the whole  
piece of slate would have  
landed right on top of me,

and I didn't go for that idea  
at all.

From where he was watch-  
ing, he was perfectly safe.  
And being a boss, he'd natu-  
rally think only about the  
machine. But from where I  
was, I was anything but safe.  
I was pretty close to being  
crushed if I made a false  
move. And I had to move  
fast. When I saw the slate  
start to give, I left the stop-  
per stand right where it was,  
swung around it and got  
under some protective crib-  
bing. From this point, I stuck  
my leg out and turned off  
the stopper switch with my  
foot. With the pressure off  
the drill, the slate fell. Since  
the stopper had been angled,  
the slate fell away from it,  
too. The company's "preci-  
ous" machine wasn't hurt,  
but what was a lot more im-  
portant to me, I was still  
around to talk about what  
happened.

#### I DID MY JOB

After I had put the last pin  
in, the boss told me that  
since I was finishing pinning  
that all I had to do was take  
out the cribbing and posts I  
had put up and that would  
finish everything up very  
nicely. I looked at him for a  
couple of seconds and told  
him that if anyone was go-  
ing to knock them out, I  
was going to be him. I had  
been asked to come out to  
put the pins in and so far as  
I was concerned, my work  
was done—with no thanks to  
him. He knew I meant what  
I said, and if he liked it or  
not, he was the one who took  
them out.

They want us to fight  
where they say. What were  
we supposed to fight for?  
When I can go down and stay  
at the Hotel Morgan and ride  
on the same seats down  
South, then I'll say O.K. But  
don't ask me to fight when  
they segregate you right in  
the army.

Negro Miner  
Scotts Run, W. Va.

LABOR

# Workers Strike at General Motors Fisher Body Plant After UAW and GM Reach Agreement

An unrest that plagued every General Motors plant, burst out in a series of strikes as soon as Reuther and the company ended negotiations on their new contract. It was immediately recognized that their new agreement didn't touch on the real issues we were facing in the factory.

The Fisher Body Livonia plant was among those who walked out. The necessity to take strike action was believed to be the only means to get the company seriously to negotiate on a long list of grievances that dated back a year. After discussing it about a week, the initiative was taken by a small group of skilled men. They were joined on the picket line by the rest of the workers.

### STRIKE AGAINST GRIEVANCES

After walking the picket line for a few hours, the local union officers called an emergency meeting in a park near the plant. All of those

who were on the picket line, except for a few who guarded the gate, attended the meeting. It was a long and noisy one. The main issues brought up were changes in the local contract, abuses by foremen, safety and sanitation changes and underhanded methods by supervision to get more production.

The local bargaining committee made a list of the grievances to be presented to the company. They asked us to go back to work while they negotiated but were answered by a series of boos. We went back to picket.

Mr. Henderson, an International Representative of the CIO came to the plant gate and pleaded with us to go back in the plants and let our officers settle things peacefully for us. One of the women shouted: "Go back to your office and leave us alone. We have to keep this line going. We'll settle this one ourselves."

### "DOING IT OURSELVES"

The following Sunday, a local meeting was called. The platform was filled with international and local officers. One by one they were booed down when they tried to speak. Workers repeatedly shouted: "These are local issues and we don't want outside help. You know these conditions existed before we went on strike but you never did a thing about it. Now we are doing it ourselves."

The rest of the meeting concerned itself with local grievances which the leadership called "personal" grievances. The chairman would say of each of them: "When you get back to the plant write up the grievance." But we weren't going to wait to get back to the plant before we told our grievances.

## QUITTING IS LIKE STRIKING

Los Angeles — Yesterday they posted a notice saying that they were cutting down on our overtime. Since other shops are working overtime, nearly everyone was talking of quitting and going to one of the other shops. During the morning break, some men went out and bought papers so they could get an idea of where jobs were open. The men exchanged addresses with their friends and made arrangements to go out together next morning to look for other work.

When the boss got wind of the plans of the men he took the notice down off the board. Later they passed around the word that overtime would continue. Not another word was said.

Later that day, during the afternoon break, the men were joking about being troublemakers. One man said, "We aren't really troublemakers. When we let the boss know that everyone was going to quit, we were just saving them some real trouble."

The man at the bench next to mine said, "Some guys think they have protection only in a large union shop. But as far as I am concerned there is just as much protection in a small shop. I can always protect myself by quitting. That's my way of striking against these guys when there's plenty of work to be found."

### SIGNS OF THE TIMES

When Reuther was negotiating with Ford and General Motors, an enterprising Chrysler dealer in New York City put this sign in his window:

**IMMEDIATE DELIVERY GUARANTEED. BUY A CHRYSLER. BEAT THE STRIKE.**

## Workers Change Race Relations Down South

Birmingham, Ala. — A steel worker in Birmingham said that every worker in the city was ready to come out in support of the strikers during the recent telephone and railroad strikes they had there.

He said there wasn't any personal feeling about whites or Negroes among the workers. Even with the bombing and wrecking of some of the homes, only one Negro's home was bombed and he was a scab.

### NO DIFFERENCE

I asked him how he felt about it and he said, "He should have been bombed along with all the other scabs. No difference. On the day that we did come out for four hours it appeared to me that we were living in a different world. The attitude of these whites in regard to us. Planning what we were going to do and how."

He said it appeared that the labor leaders got nervous and rushed to get the workers to go back in and not close down everything in support of the strike.

He said there were many disappointed workers there because he was one and he could tell me of many others who told him they felt just like him in regard to supporting the strike. "It was the first time in all my life," he said, "that the whole relations of Negro worker to white worker, white worker to Negro worker, has taken on a new form. A new understanding."

### SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

Birmingham, Alabama, as I have known it, was one of the most prejudiced cities anywhere in the South. The economic situation, the development of an understanding of trade unionism, have brought the level of one worker's salary up to the level of the other one. As a whole, this has done a lot in regard to the understanding of workers, organizing together and supporting each other. This works against the business of the leaders down there driving a wedge between them and keeping a wedge driven. This has helped bring on the faith and understanding of the new South.

## WORKERS' NEEDS CREATE NEW LEADERS

By Jerry Kegg

The rank and file worker no longer looks toward his union officials for leadership. His leaders are the workers who play the most active role during a dispute with the company. They are the ones who recognize bad working conditions and take the lead in doing something about it. I have seen it happen many times in the factory where I am now working.

### CONDITIONS GETTING WORSE

Working conditions have been gradually getting worse here. It was of little use appealing to the union. Too many grievances were lost in negotiations. Everyone knew what had to be done. For one week the general topic was, "We will have to go on strike."

Last Monday, a small group of workers walked out of the plant. It was hours before the news traveled through the plant. We were furious because our committeeman didn't let us know about it. This group of workers formed a picket line and were joined one hundred percent by the other workers.

### NEW LEADERS

We walked the picket line for three days. An electrician and a tool maker became spokesmen for the strikers and took the lead in planning strategy. They handled every detail from picket captains to getting blankets for the pickets when the rains came.

When the bargaining committee met with the company, they had to bargain on grievances of all the workers and not the original few who took the initiative to walk out.

When we go back into the plant we will recognize the electricians and tool makers as our leaders. They will remain leaders until a new situation arises, drawing new leaders from the ranks.

### A CORRECTION

A serious typographical error appeared in the last sentence of Jerry Kegg's column, printed in the June 24th issue of NEWS & LETTERS. The sentence should have read:

**"The only thing that remains, of the past attitude toward the CIO in the factory, is the strong sense of organization every worker knows is necessary in order to fight both the company and our own union bosses."**

One woman made the following motions: 1) that we resume the picket line while the bargaining committee goes back to settle the workers' grievances; 2) that a special meeting be called to tell us of the results of the negotiations and that we vote then. The motions passed unanimously. The meeting ended on that note.

### HOW UNION GOT VOTE

The officers had claimed that if we go back to picketing, the company wouldn't negotiate. But while we were out picketing the bargaining committee did negotiate. Two days later the company and the union officials came to an agreement on a few minor issues. They came to tell us on the picket line that there would be a meeting. There was no other way for those not on the picket line to know of the meeting except if they were up at 6 o'clock in the morning and heard a radio announcement. The union held a rump meeting. They brought people by car who they knew were going to vote for them. It was a planned thing. That's how they got the vote and we went back to work.

## Little Geese Lay Golden Eggs

There once upon a time was a feeling, and that time was not so long ago, that the only proper manner of eliminating weeds from the master's cotton fields was to employ large groups of Negroes and poor whites to chop the cotton.

Now, scientific research, being what it is, has developed a new angle on that one. In Bakersfield, California the money saving owner of a cotton farm has found that goslings (little geese) eat up all the weeds leaving the cotton plants strictly alone. This year the geese saved him \$1,500 in labor. Next year—who knows?

### Civil Defense

The men at work were discussing how people will react if there is an A-Bomb attack on their city. An older worker predicted that there would be a lot of panic. Several of the young veterans in the shop disagreed. They said some people will panic but the majority have had some military training and will keep their heads.

Veteran  
Los Angeles, Calif.



"If you can't afford a month's fishing trip this summer, it's your own fault. You shoulda planned your budget better."

## EDITORIALS

## THE GULF BETWEEN LEADERS AND RANKS

With the signing of union contracts at Ford and GM, Chrysler settlement is a matter of course. Contracts between the auto workers and their employers appear to be settled for the next three years.

However, whether peace and uninterrupted production will prevail is another matter. The contracts that were signed were agreements between the auto corporations and the heads of the union rather than with the auto workers.

Such was also the case when the five-year agreements were negotiated in 1950 and the two-and three-year agreements before that in 1948.

It may not have been obvious that this was the situation. It appeared that workers were satisfied with the agreements in 1948 and 1950. A second look at the rights of management that were written into the contracts, show that they were not only at variance with the workers' needs and interests, but were the rights that workers were in daily conflict over.

The recent and current series of wildcat strikes that have been taking place in GM from one end of the country to the other make it quite clear that the auto workers are far from satisfied with the settlements.

The ease with which Walter Reuther eliminated any and all serious opposition within the union once he came into control of the UAW, and the almost total absence of organized opposition, makes it appear that Reuther is in firm control of the union. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Never in the ten years that Reuther has held the presidency of the union has there been a wider gulf between him and the workers he leads or as widespread and deep going dissatisfaction as exists at the moment amongst the workers.

The situation at the moment is somewhat similar to the one that existed in the auto union between 1943-45. There were opposition caucuses, but they were in general agreement and R. J. Thomas, the president of the union, seemed to be in solid control.

Except for scattered workers, there was no one who expressed the dissatisfaction of the workers in that period. Then the workers wildcatted. Leaders attempted to squash the wildcats. It was on this storm that Reuther rode to power at the war's end.

The GM wildcats at the present time are the signs of another such storm brewing. That there is wholesale and profound dissatisfaction in the auto plants is no doubt.

Of all the auto workers, GM workers have been the quietest, until the present situation. It has been a long time since there have been such serious stirrings. Time in which GM was able to gain control and crack down on any attempt of the workers to improve their condition on the jobs.

That the dramatic expression of the workers' dissatisfaction with their conditions of work and pay has now taken place at GM is an infallible sign the American working class is about to take the high road to a new future in which workers have control over their work, their lives and in society in general.

—J.Z.

## TIME TO PLAN THEIR OWN LIVES

Everywhere there is talk about the way the unions are operating today that is different from the old days and old ways of unionism. Now it is strictly from the top and by outside professors, engineers, intellectuals with Ph. D. degrees. One daily newspaper admitted that in the early days of the trade union movement such types would have been laughed at by every union member.

It is true that the basic principle of unionism was the strength of workers and their struggles against management for social, economic and political gains. The main and most successful weapon in the old days was strike action, closing down shops, stopping the flow of production. Today the leaders of the unions and their retinue of professors are hoping to break the workers away from those conceptions, hoping to say to the workers and the American people that any gains made today come from knowledge, the leaders' highly educated understanding of various subjects and not because of the conflict in production.

The leaders have plans that need three to five years to work them out according to the contracts being signed.

## WORKERS &amp; GAW

It isn't an annual wage, as an annual wage would be 52 weeks. It is just a few dollars added to your compensation. I would rather have 52 weeks at old rates, as in '54 I was off more than nine months.

Chrysler Worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

It would have been easy to ask for a 30-hour week and settle for a 35-hour week. We get a lot of overtime but we don't like it any more than you do. We fought so long for eight hours and we seem to be going backwards. What is the use if you make more money by working longer hours and prices go up?

Skilled Worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

What good will be all this so-called 20c package? It will be just a good excuse to raise prices way above what we are getting in our pay checks, about 6c raise, and they'll raise prices as though we are getting 20c.

Ford Worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

Behind the GAW is a feeling of contempt by both the company and the union for the workers. What the GAW boils down to, it's a raise, but they are putting the money in a trust fund for the workers. They feel, if they give the worker a raise, he will just go in a beer garden and spend it. Then when he is out of work, he

will want to go on the welfare. This way, they feel they are saving the worker's money for him.

Ex-Committeeman  
Detroit

\* \* \*

Reuther and the companies want to give the worker an illusion of security. There seems to be a logical development. Industrial unions are getting to be more like craft unions. The old AFL unions used to have a policy of protecting their own. But they proved to be bankrupt. By making a tiny minority feel secure, the CIO is heading for the same fate.

Production Worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

These fringe benefits are to keep you on the job. All they are doing now is to keep you working on the job. With a raise a worker could afford to take off.

Chrysler Worker  
Detroit.

\* \* \*

I haven't found one worker yet that goes along with it. Each and every one is more willing to fight for the six-hour day.

Tool & Die Worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

Younger women are saying, with GAW they'll be out of work. The company has been preparing for quite a while, breaking down the classifications. Now they have lumped a whole lot of classifications together. Last week a woman with 29 years

seniority was put to work on the line. The company is hoping she will quit.

Housewife & Auto  
Worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

What should we do now that the company is moving a lot of jobs to different factories where they can get it done cheaper and faster? A lot of union leaders blame it all on the men for getting it done too fast and then sitting around, doubling up, wildcatting, and for just killing the job.

Just a Worker  
Highland Park

\* \* \*

I guess it isn't just the auto workers that are restless. They're having their troubles in England, too.

GM Woman Worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

## WAR &amp; PEACE

The little Communists in Russia are just the same as the little guys here. The big-shot Communists give the orders. Like our big-shots here. The little guys in Russia don't have any more to say about it than we do here. That's coming out from a lot of people now. I read an article by a woman about what was going on in Russia, in the papers. The way she told it, they were just like here.

J. R., Miner  
West Virginia

\* \* \*

Just look at our everyday language: Peace equals cold war. The only possible peace that capitalism on both sides of the iron curtain can hope for, is a shooting war.

Reader  
San Francisco

\* \* \*

Your article on the East German revolt (June 24, 1955) brought to mind that I first heard of the June 17th revolt while in Western Germany. At first reports it didn't sound like much. Just an orderly Communist-led demonstration. But then "Stars and Stripes" gave a surprisingly vivid account of the goings on. A reporter told of different persons stepping up out of the crowd to speak their mind. One worker was quoted as saying that if he wasn't back in the same place the following day, everyone should know it was because the police had gotten him.

The revolt then appeared to me to be the genuine article. The G.I.'s first reaction was, "What are they doing to us? I've just got a number of months before I 'Z I' (return to the States) and they're going to start a war." The Germans I talked with were proud of what the East Berliners had done. They were pessimistic too. What

But the workers' revolt against management and the union contract over conditions of production continues as it did in the early days of unionism. The workers are revolting against the leaders' plans.

These Ph.D.'s and union heads must come to the conclusion that workers don't know what is good for them. But workers all over know that these professors and union heads are interested first in their own welfare. Second is the interest of saving and building a stable productive system. This can best be done by speeding up workers' production and having less of a labor force. The conflict is there, on the production line.

The workers are not shouting for GAW and all the other fringe benefits as they did in the old days over union demands when these called for strike action. Nor can the excitement be compared with what they feel when they win a wildcat over production and force the company to back down. The reason is simple. Today when workers take these actions, leading union representatives rush to support, not them, but the company which is trying to crush this sort of action by workers.

The union heads have found their friends among the professors who have never spent one hour in production with workers. These they see as the planners for the future peaceful existence of the American workers, while they pacify management by not listening to what the workers want.

The workers are rejecting these planners in every way, by wildcats, by voting against the contract, or refraining to vote at all because they do not like the contract but they see no alternative. The majority of the workers are not excited about GAW. Their concern is not with GAW but with conditions of production and hours of labor so that they themselves have time to plan their own lives.

—C. D.

# Views

## Notes from a Diary TWO WORLDS

### THE REVOLT IN THE SLAVE LABOR CAMPS IN VORKUTA

Today marks the second anniversary of the most unprecedented strike in the world — the revolt in Russian slave labor camps in Vorkuta. The outstanding part of the strike is that it ever took place at all. No one on inside or outside of the Kremlin, the seat of Russian Government in Moscow—nor even the prisoners themselves who were to organize this strike—thought such a thing possible in their wildest dreams. Yet, a few short weeks after the East German revolt on June 17, 1953, these same prisoners were inspired to strike out on their own.

### MYTH OF INVINCIBILITY DESTROYED

Nothing so shows the uncertainty and insecurity of these totalitarian rulers, armed to the teeth and with all the power and terror in their hands, as the caution with which the Government at first dealt with the strike. They sent a commission, headed by General Derevianko, to fly down to the camp. When he tried to harangue the prisoners and failed, the commission returned to Moscow with the demands of the prisoners for a review of all their cases and the removal of the barbed wires. In the end, the Kremlin did what the Tsar had done back in 1912: they opened fire on the unarmed strikers and killed some 200. But they could not put up what the strikers had destroyed: the myth of invincibility.

These prisoners without any rights had dared to strike. They held out for weeks, shaking the Kremlin to its very foundations. Despite total censorship, the workers in Leningrad knew at once of the strike. A few months after, students from the Leningrad Mining Institute, working in the pits in Vorkuta, told the prisoners how everyone had talked of the strike in Leningrad: "We soon got to know you were on strike. The drop in coal was noticeable at once. We don't have any reserves. There's just the plan, that's all. And everyone knows how vulnerable plans are. It destroyed the myth that the system was unassailable."

### THE SILENCE OF "THE WEST"

A meeting "at the summit" is being ballyhooed now and a meeting, of the Big Four Ministers, took place then. The upshot of it was, that they achieved as total a silence on the question of the revolt during that conference in West Berlin as in Moscow. Dr. Joseph Scholmer tells us that story in a most remarkable book called *Vorkuta*.

Dr. Scholmer was one of thousands of slave laborers released during the Big Four Ministers Conference in 1953. He has this to say of the Western "experts" on Russia:

"When I first mentioned the word, 'civil war' to these people they were appalled. The possibility of a rising lay outside their realm of comprehension. They had no idea that there were resistance groups in the camps. . . .

"I talked to all sorts of people in the first few weeks after my return from the Soviet Union. It seemed to me that the man in the street had the best idea of what was going on. The 'experts' seemed to understand nothing."

### ON BOTH SIDES OF THE IRON CURTAIN

It was not for lack of understanding that the Western rulers acted as they did. Quite the contrary. I remember that when Stalin died, one worker in Flint said: "What is the use of all this talk against Russia when Eisenhower sends the Russian leaders his sympathy?"

Over at the other end of the world from Flint, in the Russian slave labor camps, the same disgust with Western leaders swept the Russian resistance movement. For years there have been underground resistance groups, mainly Ukrainian. Prior to June 17th, all the preparations for resistance to the totalitarian rulers were based on the eventuality of war and looked to the Western rulers. When Stalin died in March, 1953, hope spread through the camps. But all that came from the Eisenhowers and Churchills were condolences to the Russian leaders who continued the Stalin regime. Gloom spread throughout the slave labor camps until the June 17th revolt in East Germany showed that liberation can be achieved only by the workers themselves. The Russian political prisoners followed up with their revolt.

The strike in July, 1953, could not have occurred without the previous underground formation of resistance groups within the camps. But the strike as it occurred was entirely different from the action planned when they looked to "the West." June 17th had changed all that.

The sabotage and treachery of the West seemed to astound some. But one of the Russian resistance leaders put it in a nutshell:

"Those radio stations are controlled by the various governments, aren't they? Well, on June 17 they had to ask the government officials what they were to do. And the government officials have a professed dislike of popular uprisings, wherever they take place."

fore it. And I would like to ask the Detroit readers to make themselves available for proof-reading.

Mrs. B. Leslie  
Los Angeles

\* \* \*

The paper is the best I have seen. Nowhere else in the United States can people speak as freely about the things that matter most to them. Nowhere else is there a paper expressing the hidden voice of the American people. I don't care too much for the appearance of the first page or for the many printing errors, but these, no doubt, will be corrected . . .

The only serious criticism I have is that nowhere in the first issue can be found an article dealing with the origins and circumstances surrounding the publication of this new paper.

Skilled Worker  
Los Angeles

\* \* \*

It seems that NEWS & LETTERS is going to bring things out more. It will give more encouragement to working people.

Aircraft Worker  
Los Angeles

\* \* \*

It's super enough for big congratulations. We were a bit unhappy about the typos, especially those on the front page, though.

Two Readers  
West Virginia

\* \* \*

We shall be glad to see the new paper, and if there is anything of interest we can send from our side, we shall do so.

You ask: "What kind of paper do you want?" I know the question is addressed to your American friends, but I may as well say that I should like to see articles and letters that give a personal message, where one has the feeling that they come from real people, and not shadows called by the magical word, "worker." We take it for granted that the writers are workers, and it is extremely tiresome to see the word repeated fifty - thousand times—it makes one feel the contributors are very self-conscious and apologetic about it, although they pretend it to be otherwise. Why the hell shouldn't workers write, read, discuss, create things, have feelings? The majority of mankind consists of workers, and these things belong to mankind.

A. C.  
Whittington, ENGLAND

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Irish. We were all good neighbors and we got along just fine. Never any trouble. There wouldn't be any trouble between white and colored if the big shots didn't stir it up. They get good jobs for themselves out of the trouble.

Cab Driver  
New York City

\* \* \*

The American Negro who wrote about being treated worse than Japanese prisoners may not be so correct about them. As I recall, there never were any prisoners from Japan in the United States. They may have been those of Japanese ancestry who had lived the greater portion of their lives and called America their home, who had been gathered as security risks; and then many of them were Japanese Americans, Americans like you, who were unjustly accused of being "risks." Among all those gathered by the government, they weren't able to find any saboteurs, and after many, many years they were released, with no grounds for detaining.

Japanese-American  
Michigan

\* \* \*

### YOUTH

Ever since the Santana kid shot and killed another kid in a gang fight here in New York, the newspapers and police department have gone all out against "teenagers". Every day the front pages or lead stories are about some kids rounded up for this or that. Recently it has been for unlawful assembly. Look a little further in the papers and you see articles where once in court they have no charges against these kids because of lack of evidence. But the newspapers had their sensational stories, under the cover of doing social work. Throughout the city there is a tension over "teenagers," gangs, etc. One mother I know of, whose son is in a gang that recently got into trouble, is solving her problem by moving her whole family to another city.

I know that this paper is not just for writing against other newspapers but somewhere in print youth have to have a chance to show up what these dailies are doing.

A. T.  
New York

\* \* \*

### ABOUT NEWS & LETTERS

Today I received the first issue of NEWS & LETTERS. I'm very excited about it. The typos (typographical errors) didn't bother me as much as I expected they would. They made me conscious, however, of the tremendous job that the Detroit editing committee has be-

od could come of it? I don't feel they grasped the full picture. I don't believe they understood that the East German workers' revolt could hearten people the world over, on both sides of the Iron Curtain. They identified themselves closely with the Berliners and dwelled upon how the offenders would be punished. They felt the U.S. might help with troops, that that would mean that the purpose of the revolt would degenerate into a Russian - U.S. war and they weren't for fighting anyone's battles for them.

J. T.  
New York

\* \* \*

### CONTROVERSY

That J. J. C. (Readers' Views, June 24) who says there is nothing attractive about a policy that bitterly attacks our government sounds like one of those super-patriots. You don't have to disrespect all authority in order to be critical of a government. If something's wrong, it's wrong, no matter whose government it is. Being a big wheel doesn't mean you're right.

Another Ex-GI  
West Virginia

\* \* \*

I just wonder if J.J.C. likes? That's criticizing somebody. Doesn't he disagree with any of the ideas some of those who are for "government?" What would a person like that say out a McCarthy? I don't see violence either. But as far as words go, I don't think you can go too far in bitterness. Sure, there's bitterness, and plenty of reasons for it.

Reader  
West Virginia

\* \* \*

### NEGRO AMERICANS

People are just too scared. A Negro sees a white mix-up with them, he's suspicious. He lets some other white tell him the whites who mix with Communists. If the Negro people weren't afraid, we would walk into any restaurant and eat in peace. Nothing could stop it, if they weren't afraid.

Housewife  
Pursglove, W. Va.

\* \* \*

There are syndicates on both sides of the big parties. They want to keep the white and colored separate, they can't organize. Who can't see that? It's not the common man that's causing the separation, it's the big shots.

White Miner  
Morgantown, W. Va.

\* \* \*

I grew up in Hell's Kitchen 35 years ago when it was the toughest neighborhood in the city. There were all kinds living on that block: white, colored, Italians, Jews,

## NEGRO NEWS

From Day  
To Day

By ETHEL DUNBAR

The other day I saw on TV a show on how the colored people are struggling to keep white people from taking all that they can to support their families. It was about white people cheating Negro vets out of homes.

To me it shows how this world has changed since World War II. Things of the nature they showed on TV have been happening for years and years, but no one but the colored people did something about it or talked about it. Now the resistance and the fight of the colored people, and the support some whites have given them, as was shown in Texas, is shown on TV.

What a great change the colored people have made since the old days of 1900. They have learned to go out and make some kind of headway for themselves without having a white man for boss. But still some white men try to go around, make a living off the colored people. But he finds it a little hard to do now. So he turns to some leader Uncle Tom Negro for some help, like putting him in the front to face the Negro people with some kind of phoney make-up to get all the money he can out of them.

But the Negro people fight back to keep what belongs to them, just as they're doing today in Texas.

The struggle of the Negro people is forcing every issue, concerning Negroes and other minorities, to the forefront with all other national and international questions.

## If Enough People Want It

I always thought of New York as the land of enchantment. I've never been there, but I thought Negro people and white people mixed there, and could do what they wanted. I always heard that even if they wanted to get married, they could.

Not like south of the Mason-Dixon line. There was a report right on the radio recently about a law they've passed in Hagerstown, Maryland, to keep mixed marriages stopped. They said if they persisted the people involved could get up to ten years in jail.

Even where they don't have laws like that, it's pretty hard. I know of one colored woman who was against her son marrying a white woman. She didn't have anything against her, but she said that even if they thought they could be happy, the other whites would make it

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## "COLORED RISKS"

Detroit — I called up an F. S. Insurance salesman to give him a customer for auto insurance. He asked if my friend was a "colored risk." The salesman said the company tries to keep rates down by not taking bad risks. He said that they don't discriminate as they do, insure colored professional people. He said other colored people cost the company \$1.65 for every dollar of premium they collect.

I told him my friend had two cars and wanted complete coverage on both, and that I had known him close to 10 years, and that he was a good risk, and that the insurance companies have a central clearing agency to check on all applications. He said he would call my friend up. It is over two weeks and, as yet, no call.

I am still continuing my insurance because of the cheaper rates, but one of my friends says I should discontinue it. My wife says there is nothing I can do about it. Another friend says Negroes can't boycott this company as they don't insure them. Pretty soon, as times get tougher or competition keener, they'll be begging for all customers.

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hard on the woman. That's what happened lots of times when the colored soldiers would marry white women overseas. They got along fine, and the whites over there were real friendly to them, but once they brought their wives over here, the whites here influenced them differently.

They couldn't make any law work, though, if the majority of the people felt they wanted to mix. But if only one or two feel that way it's different. If everybody felt the same way, they couldn't throw everybody in jail.

That's how it is with everything. There's nobody stronger than the president, but even a president can be impeached, if enough people wanted it.

—Housewife  
West Virginia

## Negro Struggle Is More Than Gripes

San Francisco—It is true that race dominates the thinking, attitudes and actions of the Negro more than any other group in America. But it isn't just a pure and simple form of griping about the limitations and inconveniences that the white world heaps upon the Negro that counts. What counts is the positive reaction to this, in words and deeds, by the Negro people.

We know that for more than several hundred years the Negro people have carried on a consistent struggle to achieve the ideals of "American Humanism." We know, too, that now it is no longer possible to achieve this ideal in any 19th century sense, both American capitalism and the Negro have undergone a radical change. Also, it should be noted that the Negro people on three occasions have brought the American Constitution to the attention of the nation for a fundamental scrutiny in terms of its human ideals. These are only symptoms of the everyday problems that each and every Negro meets and attempts to solve.

## HOW IT TAKES PLACE

Here is something that happened in San Francisco that illustrates what I am talking about: Across the bay, in Marin County, there is a very large housing project where most of the tenants are Negroes. This project was built during World War II to accommodate shipyard workers. Many of them were recruited in the South by Kaiser and other shipbuilders during the war. Marin County has always been, and is still, a place for white suburbanites who commute to the city.

Now the government wants to get rid of this project and sell the land. Many of the whites saw this as an opportunity to get rid of Marin City—the housing project. These people fought to have the land sold to private contractors for the development of upper middle-class homes selling for \$25,000 to \$30,000 and up. The Negroes thought otherwise.

## NEGROES ORGANIZE

They organized themselves into a group to buy the land. They engaged their own contractor with specifications that they would perform most of the labor in building of homes for themselves. This caused consternation among many of the white suburbanites in Marin County. The fight has gone on for more than a year, aired in City Council meetings and over the radio. People have been forced to choose sides.

The contractor engaged by the Negroes withdrew because of what he considered excessive abuse and threats from certain quarters. But the fight still goes on. The tactics of the Negroes are simple and direct. They say to the supervisors of Marin County and to the members of the City Council of Sausalito: **Are you going to agree that we can live here, or not? We intend to stay here.** In a talk with a resident of Marin City, he told me that he had planned to move but since this fight has come up he intends to stay to see it through.

The government has decided to sell the land to Marin County. However, whatever may happen in the future, the Negroes are there to stay.

## BEHIND THE GRIPES

It is this positive constructive fight behind the gripes that we must get at. Griping after all is a form of frustration. In positive, constructive action, a people feel their power, humanity and capabilities. Even in defeat they have added something to themselves and other people. Neither are the strictly personal, human things submerged in such a struggle. I got to know the Marin resident pretty well, his family, where he works, what happens on his job, why he came North, etc. More and more, I believe that the Negro is concerned with his positive relationship to people and things instead of any general gripe about the race question.

## INDIGNANT HEART

By Matthew Ward

(Editor's Note: This serial has been specially prepared for NEWS & LETTERS and begins in this issue.)

I.  
CHILDHOOD IN THE  
SOUTH

I was born in Tennessee in the southeast part of the state. I lived on one of the largest cotton plantations in the county with about two hundred or three hundred tenant renters and halfers. This is a halfer: a man is working, and makes six, eight or ten bales of cotton. Everything is divided equally between him and the landlord. Out of his half the halfer has to pay for tools, stocks and rent of the land. He practically never comes out with anything. He's always owing the landlord.

The Berger plantation was divided into sections called Barnes Place, Field Place, Old Gardner and Gaines Place. Berger was the complete boss of the county. What he said, that was it. In fact, he was the only man some whites have said, who ever put a fence across a public highway. Everybody had to get out and open and close the gate as they drove past his place. It was said that he was the wealthiest landowner in the state at that time. My father was one of the renters on Field Place when I was born.

My grandmother and her husband were renters too. Grandmother wasn't able to tell me how she got on the Berger plantation but she had been a slave. She could remember her mother screaming when she was sold off as a girl of twelve. That was in Georgia. She often used to tell us incidents of her life in slavery. On some places Negroes could have

churches. But five or ten years before the Civil War began they weren't allowed to hold meetings. They couldn't visit other plantations without a pass. My grandmother said that they used to slip out in the woods. The men would walk around the edge of the woods to keep lookout. She said that many people used to slip away and escape from the meetings. I don't know if she meant the Underground Railroad.

There was an old oak tree in her yard with wooden pegs all up in it. We hadn't any idea what they were for. It was a whipping ground. During slavery the whites took a woman, pegged her dress over her head and whipped her.

I remember asking my grandmother, "Where is the whipping ground for men?"

She said, "Any place."

Our house was one room with a shed for the kitchen. There were a lot of log cabins. Mud was dabbled between the logs to close up the spaces. The houses didn't have a ceiling. The women would take magazines and newspapers and glue made of flour and cover the walls and up under the rafters to keep out the rain and cold. Roofs were tin and a few houses had shingles. Most of the kitchens had dirt floors. Five to seven kids lived together in one room. Many of the children didn't have beds, just quilts on the floor. In winter it was cold and they had to pack up in bed.

All of us worked in the field. My mother, father, three boys and one girl. Before daylight the men were in the field. The women were in the house cooking food to take to the men, washing, milking and cleaning. After they finished work in the house they came to work in the field.

(To Be Continued)

# YOUTH

## Working For Independence

By ANGELA TERRANO

I have been thinking lately about the recent gang killings here in New York and the terrific ganging up of the police and the press against "youths" and "teenagers." The picking up of innocent people for "unlawful assembly" and the anguish caused in families when this happens.

There was a picture in the paper the other day of a father hitting his son who was picked up for "unlawful assembly" and saying something like "what are you trying to do to me," and a cop grinning from ear to ear. The kid was picked up for being a youth and the father must have felt that his whole life and reputation were falling apart. I guess a lot of grown-ups would feel sorry for the father but there was that youth caught between the two of them. You see more and more of this kind of thing in the papers lately, since the gang fight where

a kid, his last name is Santana, shot and killed another rival gang kid. The papers played this up big especially since Santana's parents are from Puerto Rico, and also he's no arista (honor society) student in school.

### WHO IS TO JUDGE?

The kid that was killed was played up as the good boy and his father became a great social worker. While Santana's parents were shown as indifferent and ignorant. A friend of mine wrote to me: "I followed the Santana case very carefully and the thing that got me boiling was a TV showing of the mothers walking out crying and shielding their faces and the commentator saying, 'These mothers who are now crying are the very ones who never answered any letters from the school authorities who warned them time and again their sons need psychiatric care.' Imagine a Puerto Rican mother

believing the school authorities and welcoming 'psychiatric treatment for their children.'

I was very surprised when one of the lawyers really began fighting the hysteria of the press and showed that Santana is neither better nor worse than the kid that was killed.

### WHAT DO YOUTH WANT?

A lot of people have told me, and I have repeated, that these things won't be solved until youth can say and rule their own lives and have a say in the family and in school. I know this is true but I feel something is missing because it still seems to be a mystery why kids find themselves in gangs, fighting each other. I hope in future issues News & Letters will have stories and articles written by these kids telling what they want out of life.

## Vacation Work For Boys

Los Angeles—The attendance officer at the junior high school I used to go to is very cruel and nasty to boys. He has a completely different attitude toward girls. He likes them.

I talked to a boy who merely walked into his office to get an absence card for being absent one day. This teacher thought he was a boy who had been asked to come down to his office for punishment. He picked the boy up by the back of the neck called him a little punk, and kicked him so he slid across the room. Then he picked up the boy and started banging him against the wall.

Right after that another teacher walked in and said, "That's not the boy you wanted." The attendance officer just said, "I'm sorry," to the boy, gave him an absence card and sent him back to class.

I've seen him beat up quite a few boys. Some boys that used to go to this school

were so mad at him that after graduation they went back to school and beat this teacher up. They ripped his shirt off while he stood there. Two of the four boys got caught and were put in jail. They were soon released, however, and told to stay around town. I think they were supposed to go to court.

But the boys decided they wanted to take a trip outside of the city. Somehow the cops found out that they were not staying around town. Instead of putting them in jail the cops are having the boys work their offense off.

For example, there's a drive-in where all the kids hang out. There's a plot of earth on that drive-in and the cops are having the boys dig up the earth planting shrubbery. They're getting paid ten cents an hour for that. It's very embarrassing because all their friends go in and out of the drive-in while they are working outside.

# W O M E N

## Soldiers Talk About Women

Our company was quartered on high ground that looked down on one of the bloodiest beaches of World War II.

We were sitting around with a case of beer one Saturday evening just as the sun was going down and the moon was coming up. It was so sentimental it hurt. One of the boys had got a "Dear John" letter and was about to cry. "How about that," he said. "We had such big plans. I sent her money to put away every month. She couldn't wait."

Somebody asked, "How about your dough?"

"She gave it back," he said. "But what do I care about the dough? She just messed me up."

Then Lover said, "Today you are a man, kid. You got to learn. They're all untrue. Even the best of them will two-time you. Me, I love them all because I don't trust them."

George got mad and yelled, "Shut your filthy mouth, Lover. What are you trying to do to the kid? I love my wife and she loves me. We don't have to trust each other. We're not suspicious."

Lover needed him. "How do you know what she's doing tonight, George?"

George said, "All I have to know is that she's well and gettin' along."

"Scared of the truth?" George grabbed Lover and we thought he was going to beat him with a beer bottle. Then he let go and said, "This damn war gets into everything. Have a party on me." He shoved his beer into the middle and walked away.

## Housework As A Job

West Virginia — My husband used to try to keep me from going out any place at first. But I have too much Irish in me for that to work. Let anybody tell me not to do something, and it's for sure I'll do it right then.

That was one of the reasons I went to work. I got a job in a shop first, but it was too hard on the children having to get them up to take them some place while I worked. That's one of the main reasons I was glad when I finally got work doing housework.

I don't like housework. But it's not so bad doing somebody else's as it is doing your own. I'll work like a dog doing somebody else's house, but I hate having to come home and do my own.

For one thing, when you do somebody else's, it's a job, and you know when you're finished it's done. When you have your own, it's never done. You can clean and clean, and it's messed up as soon as you're finished any-

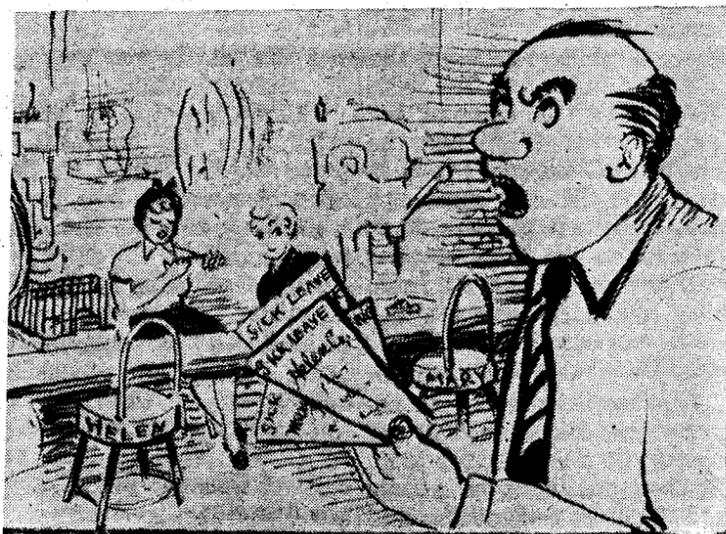
way. And when you do somebody else's you know they appreciate it. I think they know once it's clean, they have to keep it clean. There won't be anybody there to clean it up again until the next time. At home it's not like that.

I used to work like a slave trying to keep my home spotless. It worried me if it wasn't. I'd scrub the floors everytime they got a speck on them. And keep all the boards and window-sills wiped shining. But after a while, I got so I didn't care. If I had kept on like that, I think I'd have gotten a nervous breakdown. Now, as long as the food is good, and the clothes are clean, I just don't worry about whether the rest of the house is a little messed up. You just can't.

—Housewife.

### A WOMAN DRIVER

One who drives like a man and gets blamed for it.



"Why is it that MY women have to take a sick leave when THEIR children get out of school?"

## Just A Housewife

By Mrs. Martha Hunt

Our children want us to attend PTA meetings and many mothers do, of course. But I have known many women who refused to join or have anything to do with them.

I remember when I was a little girl in school how much I wanted my mother to come to the school like the other children's mothers did. But my mother had to work to support us so she never came. So I knew how my child felt when he first asked me to come to a PTA meeting. I went for his sake.

### FORCING A FIT

The meeting was poorly attended. The main speaker was a child psychologist who spoke with such "authority" that I was uncomfortable and felt that she was analyzing the mothers as well as the children. I hate being analyzed and having my reasons for doing things picked apart. There was a panel discussion after her speech which several mothers and teachers took part in. I noticed that the mothers on the panel all wanted their children to fit a precise pattern of behavior. It was rigid and unnatural.

Finally, they asked the women in the audience if they had any constructive criticism of the school or teachers. No one said anything. But I decided to find out why women stayed away from the PTA, so I raised my hand.

### SCHOOLS NOT PRISONS

This is what I said. "I don't like the fact that when my little boy brings his lunch to school, he has to stay in one room and be treated like a virtual prisoner while he

is eating. Two older girls are in charge of about 30 little children. They can only stay in the room 20 minutes and they have to spend that time eating. They are not allowed to talk to each other and the girls in charge even force them to eat what they do not want if there is any food left in their bags. The girls scream at them and even slap them to enforce these rules.

"I was shocked to see this. I don't think a school should be run like a prison."

When I finished, the principal took the floor. He felt personally injured by my words and said that there were very good reasons for the rules and that none of them could be changed. The PTA president really went to town on me though, in defense of the school. That's what finished me with them.

### ZONES OR QUOTAS?

I live in a colored housing project. There are different suburban high schools in this vicinity. Some of the homes in this area are restricted. We are in the center of these high schools and, according to location, our children should be able to go to any of them, but there doesn't seem to be any consistent zoning or qualification procedure.

Sometimes I hear that the school board determines if your child is eligible and sometimes I hear it is how close you live to the particular school, or that there are different quotas. How does this work or what can we do about it?

Colored Chrysler Worker  
Detroit

## Experiences and Expectations

There has been a widespread sentiment amongst many skilled workers in auto that if they were in the AFL they could considerably improve their conditions. There has also been a widespread sentiment amongst others of them that if they could separate themselves from the production workers and create their own special committees and organizations within the union they would thereby better themselves.

However, with all their activity over the recent years they have been little satisfied with the meager results of that activity.

There is hardly a skilled worker who doesn't realize that without the production workers they would still be without a union. It will likewise be borne upon them one day that without the production workers the skilled workers can do little to improve their conditions whether they remain within the auto union or a union of their own.

The real bright spot in the whole situation is that the struggle of the skilled workers may set in motion the production workers.

A situation in the auto union that has been developing for a long time appears to be coming to a head.

Even before the signatures were dry on the three-year agreements that Reuther signed with the auto barons, skilled workers went out on wildcat strikes in protest against the agreements. At the moment they are back to work.

GM skilled workers in Flint have been recently meeting also in protest to the Ford settlement. They are demanding bargaining rights separate from the production workers. Some are even threatening to leave the UAW, to set up independent unions or seek affiliation with the AFL.

For years skilled workers have had their own organization within the union to gain for themselves, apart from the production workers, seniority provisions, special raises and special job conditions. Even though, in comparison to production workers, they have won more favorable jobs and seniority conditions and wage increases, they have been deeply dissatisfied with their status and progress.

Skilled workers will have difficult enough time overcoming Reuther, let alone achieving any meaningful improvement in their conditions of work.

—STEFAN

## A DOCTOR SPEAKS

BY M.D.

### THE SOCIAL NATURE OF ILLNESS—Part I

Much of what I write in this column is concerned with a total concept of disease as it has arisen out of man's activity in the environment created by modern industrial communities.

At first, disease was seen chiefly as the result of a direct injury from the outside. To a large extent we have been successful in the treatment of this type of sickness. We have attained skill in the treatment of tissue injury brought on by firearms, automobiles, falls and other accidents—injury not only to the body surface, to skin and bone, but to most vital internal organs, like the brain, the heart and the stomach.

Industrial illness, not only accidental injuries, but disturbances to the body resulting from contact with irritating and poisonous gases, liquids or solids, also is being taken care of much better than in the past. Results are excellent when medical intelligence and competence are permitted free activity by factory management.

Another group of diseases no longer feared, are those related to food deficiencies such as, Scurvy, Pellagra and Ricketts. We now have a better understanding of nutrition and the needs of the living organism for vitamins, proteins and minerals. But we sometimes lack the facilities to use this knowledge.

The largest group of diseases caused by outside agents are those resulting from the action of parasitic bacteria and viruses. For centuries, epidemics in various parts of the world brought illness and death to thousands of people. The plagues of Bubonic disease, Smallpox, Typhus, Yellow Fever, Cholera and others are in the past. We now have sufficient information on the activity of these germs to control most of them.

It is also becoming clear that some of these parasites are good for us. Certain types continue to live in our intestines and their chemical activity produces elements necessary for our own health. But we still have a great deal to learn about them. It may be, that even when we seem well we may still not have attained maximum good health. During periods of body tension and stress, certain viruses, which live with us always, seem to be stimulated to produce poisons which lead to disease.

There is another form of illness not directly connected with outside agents and which is not so easily recognized as the old-time plagues. But it is widespread today and can be much more damaging. This group of diseases will be discussed in the next issue of the paper.

## BLACKOUT IN NEW YORK

Miami Beach is a land of golden sunshine, golden girls and golden hotels which charge upwards of \$60 a day.

It is also a land that has been known to have laws prohibiting Negroes from being on the streets at night.

It is also a land which has been known to pay its restaurant help \$10 a week in the very same hotels whose guests pay 20 times that for the privilege of staying there.

Since early April these hotel and restaurant workers have been on strike against their conditions of work.

The big New York papers always find space to give to Florida's beauty contests. Yet scarcely a line have they given to this Florida strike.

Two weeks ago, the waiters in New York's "fabulous" restaurants walked off the

## THE DEVIL'S MERRY-GO-ROUND

Thousands of young men and women, each month, run away from the Communist misery of East Germany in an effort to find a better life for themselves in the Bonn Republic of West Germany. In May alone, almost 13,000 East Germans crossed the border and registered with the authorities for "political asylum" in the West. In April, the figure was about 11,000. If so many register, it is safe to guess that there are many who do not register and others who are caught in the attempt by the East German guards at the border.

They do not flee to the West in order to support Adenauer's politics or the politics of the Social Democrats. They flee to escape the regimentation and forced labor of Communist Germany. One out of every three who escape are young men running away from forced military duty in the East Zone's "People's Police."

When they reach the West zone, however, their hopes are rudely shattered. There is no room for them to develop as free human beings. Instead of forced labor they find unemployment or subsistence relief. Instead of the misery of regimentation they find the hopelessness of no place to go and nothing to do. Out of every 100 young men and women who cross over to the West, 15 risk re-crossing the border to return to the East. They do this in spite of the danger that they will be caught and sentenced to brutal terms in a Communist slave labor camp. They don't go back to the East because they prefer Communism. They go back because the West has nothing better to offer them as human beings.

Whether they cross or re-cross, they cannot look to the East or to the West for help. All they can count on is their own feelings and needs, and the feelings and needs of people like them.

# WORLD OUTLOOK

job for an hour in support of the Miami Beach strikers. The papers ignored that too.

Is this the freedom of the press they protect?

## THE GUN NO LONGER SWINGS SO FREELY ON THE HIP

The government of Kenya, the British colony in East Africa, announced that July 10 is the deadline for members of the Mau Mau to surrender without penalty. At the same time a British Royal Commission recommended that there be reforms in East Africa removing racial barriers and permitting native Africans to use the choice agricultural lands which for 40 years only the white settlers were permitted to cultivate.

It wasn't so long ago—September 3, 1953 to be exact—that a young white woman lawyer from England swaggered into a Kenya courtroom to prosecute 81 Kikuyus accused of "Mau Mau murders." To show her contempt for the natives, she packed a .45 revolver on her hip, cowboy-style, swinging from a leather cartridge belt. Not even the most cynical lawyer will pretend that such arrogant behavior in court, on the part of a prosecuting attorney, has anything to do with justice.

Neither such conceit nor the ruthless terror that went with it could defeat the natives determined to win their freedom.

The handful of European settlers ruthlessly drove the Africans from their lands into the forests which could not support them. For 40 years the natives suffered

and died, protested to the Crown and tried to better their own conditions. But it is only after some three years of Civil War, declared by the government of the settlers, that the Royal Commission finally issues its "humanitarian" recommendations.

And still the settlers resist. They want peace from the war they started, but they want it on terms where things remain as they were.

## "NATURAL RIGHT" TO TRAVEL

The U.S. Court of Appeals has ruled against the State Dept. in the case of Max Shachtman, Chairman of the Independent Socialist League. The group was arbitrarily put on the subversive list by the Attorney General over six years ago.

Three and one-half years ago, Mr. Shachtman applied for a passport to travel abroad. The passport division of the State Dept. has denied him that right.

The Courts have now ruled that the basic "natural right" of travel cannot be arbitrarily denied without due process of law. This does not grant Max Shachtman the right to travel, but only opens the road to a review of the case. It took three and one-half years of legal battle to get that slight a wedge into the arbitrary rulings of the State Department. Is that wedge sufficient actually to exercise that "natural right" or is it only a means of shifting the abrogation of our rights from an administrative department to a judicial one?

## Life In the Committees

Below we print excerpts from a letter written during the preliminary discussions as to what kind of paper News & Letters would be:

"When the President established a new 'peace agency' and all the papers spoke of it, a woman worker said: 'What is peace to me if I have that boss on my back all the time?' It is quite clear that the only peace which matters to her is that achieved by a total reorganization of society beginning with production. What I am getting at is this sense of the totality of the modern crisis, the totality of the reorganization of social relations, and the totally new concepts of communication.

"That's how I came to consider also the question of name for the paper. In America, journalism has played a striking role in the total reorganization of relations. The new passions in Colonial America were seen in the committees of correspondence. The first regular newspaper in the Colonies was called BOSTON NEWS-LETTER. This is true not only of Colonial but of modern America.

"It is certainly true that the workers in all mass pro-

duction industries talked about a new form of organization long before the CIO emerged. I remember especially vividly the story a miner's wife told me about what she called the civil war in West Virginia during the 1920's between the miners and the mine operators. And many stories a miner told me about the struggles of the miners against Lewis and Green and the other leaders for just such a form of industrial organization that Lewis became famous for building.

The same is true of steel. As a radical, I thought I knew everything about it because I knew about the 1919 strike and then the strikes of 1937. As if the 20 years between them was just a blank! In truth that period is filled with local rank and file strikes against both the company and their own craft union.

"Old radicals thought that what was necessary was a paper 'for' the workers and they did start such papers. But what is needed is a paper not 'for' the workers, but by them. In that way, workers revolt cannot appear as an explosion but as the new society developing out of their daily lives."