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WORKER'S JOURNAL

By CHARLES DENBY

New Lay-Offs in Auto

For a number of weeks now, the papers, radio and TV newscasters have reported lay-offs and cut-backs in auto production.

These cut-backs and lay-offs have been and are the number one problem on the agenda of workers' conversation in and out of the shops.

One old timer, Mac, said, "It makes me feel we are headed into a depression like the one of the early 30's." He said, "I never worry when I hear of cut-backs in these other shops, but when General Motors and Ford join in, boys, times are fixing to get bad."

WORKING YOURSELF OUT OF A JOB

Another old-timer, Jim, blames the union for going along with the company on speed-ups, high production standards and, as he put it, "Running wild with overtime. When one worker produces two weeks work in one week, is the union used to say, you are only working yourself out of a job. But now they are quiet and give the company the right to fire a worker if he or she continuously refuses overtime, or refuses to try his darndest to keep up with production standards regardless of how fast it is."

Some believe that the Guaranteed Annual Wage is the big factor. It is supposed to go into effect in June. Many feel that the company is getting as many workers as possible off the payroll before that time and is trying to stabilize production with as few workers as possible.

SHORT WEEK'S PAY

Chrysler sent home part of its working force, Wednesday of last week and ordered them to return Monday. On Monday, after four hours of work, the whole of production was sent home and ordered to return Wednesday. Many workers, thus, will get a three-day pay next week and three-and-a-half days, the week following.

A worker said, "I would like to see that guy in Washington who says the average auto worker takes home 75 bucks a week."

Every worker made a solid point about the lay-offs and cut-backs. That is not all. The fear of insecurity is clouding their eyes as a dark cloud. All the talk by these big rich people about the high standard of living of American workers, all this talk about prosperity and about security, is just a lot of hog wash to the average worker.

DEEPER IN DEBT

The big majority of workers are in debt up to the nose. The worker knows that he must work every day, eight hours a day and five days a week to continue to exist. And, as the Tennessee Ernie record says, he only gets another day older and deeper in debt. Not only to the company store is he in debt, he is in debt to all the stores and all the salesmen.

There are other workers who cannot go along with the theory that we are headed into a depression. They do believe the working people of America will not suffer as they did in the 30's. As a young worker said, "We know too well how to organize ourselves. We know who is our opposition. We know what to do. They have forced us to learn. There will be no more hungry kids of workers, no more soup lines nor setting workers and families in the cold streets as they did before."

A LESSON LEARNED

"I don't know what this lay-off is all about. I know this: My kids and many other workers' children are going to have a place to sleep and eat. I also know that several months ago I carried \$85 and \$95 home for six days work. Now, I am carrying from \$45 for three days, to \$65 for five days.

"So what the hell was the use of making us work overtime at all? They say workers never learn. But if we are headed into a depression, they will soon find out just how much workers have learned and how well they have educated us."

The American Economy in Human Terms

The first weeks of the new year have begun with the big four in the auto industry—General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, American Motors—competing with each other as to who could lay off more workers. Thus far some 25,000 have been laid off, about half of them in the Detroit area. Dealers are already discounting 1956 models. Yet this is not model change-over time. It is the beginning of the year when production is supposed to be at its height.

It is not hard to puncture the ballyhoo about our great, our unprecedented, our endless prosperity. It was clear long before the old year was out that this record year of production did not mean full employment. This was true not only of auto, but of all

basic industry, including steel.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN COAL

For the year just ended, there was a sharp rise in coal production—the first substantial increase since 1951. Due to automation, this "full" production was made possible with many fewer miners at work. In 1955, employed miners were down to 225,000. In 1947, there were 425,000 employed miners.

WHAT BOOM?

The depression jitters are not limited to the working people who are the ones to suffer. In the railroad industry, even management is worried. They had a rise in income as compared with last year, but their rate of profit was "only" 4.3 per cent as compared to ten per cent in other major manufacturing industries. Railroad tycoons were asking "What boom?" And remembering the day the stock market crashed in 1929, they asked, "When is Black Tuesday coming?"

At the end of World War II, steel was the bottleneck. Now it is railroads. Tomorrow it will be housing and auto.

AUTOMATION AND CRISES

It is true that workers cannot "buy back" the products they produced, whether that be clothes or autos, refrigerators or homes. They never can. That is why buying on credit is at its highest. Installment buying is, in itself, a weakness of the economy and a foreboding of crisis.

But the chief cause of capitalist crisis is its very method of production. Where the worker is reduced to an appendage of a machine, the machine becomes ever more important. Capitalists no sooner introduce a new machine when it becomes obsolete by the latest inventions and demands that the former machine be scrapped. This, the capitalists do not do unless compelled. Despite the age of mechanization and super-mechanization, there has been little basic change in the capital structure of this country in the last 50 years.

This is to say, in terms of automation, most of the industrial plant is, as of this very moment of high production, already obsolete. But the capitalists will not junk their old plants and develop automation to its fullest extent without being guaranteed their precious high rate of profit. That, fundamentally, (Continued on Back Page)



A Report -- and Appeal -- to Our Readers

Dear Reader:

News & Letters was made possible by a small group of workers and intellectuals who met together in the spring of 1955 and pledged themselves to put out such a paper for six months. This pledge has been kept.

We went to press for the first time on June 17, 1955, with a full account of the wildcat strikes then covering this country, especially in the auto industry. Such information appeared nowhere else except in the conversations workers had with each other.

The very same issue also commemorated the second anniversary of the popular uprising by East German workers against the Communist tyranny over them.

In all, we have published 14 issues to date. In each issue, we have brought the words and deeds of the people who are the foundation and the heart of America.

Now, the continuation of the paper is in danger. That is why this appeal for help is being made here.

Practically all of the work is done on a voluntary basis. What must be paid for is kept at an absolute minimum. With all the economies, this is a picture of what each issue of News & Letters costs:

Printing	\$250.00
Postage	60.00
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Rent	30.00
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Your help is needed. How much can you give? Can you contribute a single substantial sum of money—\$50 or \$100 or more? Or, can you make a regular contribution of \$1 or \$5 or \$10 a month?

How many new subscriptions can you buy for your friends, or encourage your friends to buy for themselves, at \$2.50 a year (26 issues)?

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A DOCTOR SPEAKS

BY M.D.

CANCER WITHIN AND WITHOUT

On one and the same day, I was startled to hear the same question from two patients, whose problems appeared worlds apart. One was a woman of 55 with an extensive and inoperable cancer of the stomach. The other was a patient of about 35—a former inmate of a Nazi concentration camp, who, in addition to being subjected to all sorts of brutality, had been deliberately sterilized by the X-ray destruction of her ovaries.

"WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO ME?"

I listened as each one, in pain, agitated and miserable, described the innocent life she had led, minding her own affairs, harming no one; and heard the question for which there was no answer: "Why did this have to happen to me?"

Later, as I thought over the question, it came home to me how closely Cancer resembled Totalitarianism; and how each can grow only through devouring the innocent.

Cells are the smallest units in which life, as we know it, exists. Masses of cells, specialized to do different work, form the tissues and organs which make up the human body; and groups of human beings living together form our society. Each cell, as well as each specialized mass of cells, has a certain responsible living relationship to the others. It recognizes and respects the others' integrity.

CANCER

The question of why Cancer cells appear and are able to make their wild successful invasion across the boundary of the normal cells has not yet been answered. It is believed however, that the fault lies not in the cell—but in the environment in which the cell lives—in the chemical and physical properties of the fluid which nourishes it. Certain provoking substances appear, which drive the cell into a type of biological insanity that ends only in suicide of the whole body.

There is much research going on now toward finding and correcting this disturbance in the environment of the microscopic cell.

TOTALITARIANISM

Seen in its entirety, Totalitarianism is a cancer of greater proportions. It also arises out of abnormal living conditions of groups of people and it too leads to the destruction of man as an individual.

Since the world wars and the revolutions and economic upheavals that have followed, the lives of masses of men have been seriously disturbed. Groupings and divisions among people, which in the past have served to maintain what seemed the normal form of human society, are giving way. This is seen in Europe, in Asia, in Africa and is also appearing here in the United States. Membership in a particular race or nation or class is no longer sufficient.

THE SEARCH

In the loneliness, the isolation, the frustration of human beings all around us, can be seen the effects of a diseased environment and of a society that is no longer able to maintain the health of its members:

The world has entered a period of questioning and re-evaluation of our way of living. No one can escape it—not even we in the United States. Millions of people will have to make the choice: to follow leaders who offer us totalitarianism—the remedy which "heals" by destroying man as an individual; or to preserve and strengthen individuality by reaching for a new kind of freedom; one that will be born through using our yet-unrealized capacity for universality—for understanding the whole—to bring the world outside of us into harmony and unity with our internal feelings.

A NEW JERSEY SCIENTIST WRITES:

"I'm all for the paper. Here's \$25."

**Do Your Friends Read
NEWS & LETTERS**

COAL AND ITS PEOPLE

THE GRIPPLED HALFBACKS, OR — THE BOSS CARRIES THE BALL

PURSGLOVE, W. Va. — My boss, like most bosses, is the kind of guy who knows everything. Not only does he know everything, he is convinced that if he is not around to tell the men what to do, they won't be able to do hardly anything at all. The result is that he is constantly telling us what to do. All during the shift it's: "Do this, go over and get that, put this here, put that there. No, don't do it that way, do it this way." On and on he goes. The only thing that can be tired about him, after a shift of work, is his jaws.

MEN KNOW JOBS

It could all be kind of funny looking at it from an outsider's point of view. But for us who have to take it, it isn't funny; it makes us mad as hell. In the first place, most of the men on my crew have been working at their jobs for many years. They know their jobs forwards, backwards, inside and out and sideways. They know how best the work can be organized and carried out with the least amount of strain on everyone.

It is not so with the boss around. He seems to have that special knack that most people don't have—that of being able to find the hardest way to do something, and insisting that it be done that way.

MANY EXPLOSIONS

With a situation like this existing, it is a foregone conclusion that the men on the crew would rebel often.

A common situation is one involving digging up the bottom in order to lay a smooth bed of ties for rails to be spiked to. There is a slight roll where the rails are to be laid. Just beyond this roll, the pavement starts to climb gradually. The best thing to do is to let this roll alone and fill in where there will be a gap when the rails start to climb. It is also the easiest way. But not for the boss.

A miner in England, Wales and Scotland, from his own experiences, has a pretty good idea of what's happening to the miner in West Virginia, Alabama and Pennsylvania.

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"Dig it up," he says. And you've got to dig it up—he's the boss.

It can be pointed out that if this is dug up, there will be a lot more digging to do further up ahead, digging that is not necessary. "I'm the boss here; we'll do it my way," he says. That's what gets you. "We'll do it" means that he sits and watches us sweat while we dig. That bottom can be real rough. It is slate that is often harder than concrete and too many times requires digging out a rock four or five feet square and several inches thick. This is no easy job.

After digging, pulling, hammering and levering for a while one of the men will suddenly curse and fling whatever he may be working with to the ground. Then the boss is jumped. "What's the matter with you? This is crazy. Here we are working like jackasses for nothing. For nothing! And just because you say. You say! All the time you say. It's always easy to say, but it's not so easy to do. And we've got to do it, not you."

Does this anger make any difference to the boss? Oh no, not him. All he knows is that he is boss and we have to do, without questioning or thinking, just what he says. "I told you I'm the boss and we're going to do it my way."

Automation and Unemployment in Coal

PITTSBURGH, Pa. — Automation has brought about absolutely phenomenal unemployment in the mines. To hide this, annual statistics this year quote the rise in productivity in the past few years, but they quote employment figures for an entire half century. Thus, they did not state that from 1947 to 1955 there has been a drop of employed miners from 425,000 to 225,000. They said instead, that from 1905 to 1955 there was a drop from 600,000 to 225,000. The point, however, is that the drop is as great in the years after World War II as in the entire 40-year space before then.

Even this does not tell the whole story since the statistics lump the new mechanized mines with those which are still operated by the hand methods of ten years ago. If the new mechanized mines were separated from those that are hand-operated, it could be seen that the mechanized mine operates with a mere 20 per cent of its former labor force and has greatly increased production.

SIXTEEN TONS

The currently popular song shows that 16 tons production for a man in a single day was something big in those days. Today, a Colmo will dig 16 tons in less than

DAYS OF FREEDOM

The boss became ill and was off for several days. Working those days was real pleasure. There was one telling anyone what to do. We just did the work it was required. What we couldn't do, another could, we all pitched in and helped if there was something particularly hard to do. We worked hard, only it didn't really seem like work. There was something of a holiday spirit among us. We laughed and joked and kidded around something that never happens with the boss around.

Those days proved what we had known all along—that we could do our work more easily, more efficiently and with a better frame of mind if left to our own means. All that we had to do was to be where the work was to be done. The rest we took care of. Not only did we take care of it, we did it with plenty of time to spare. We organized it that way. With the boss around, getting done with time to spare is accidental.

Unfortunately, the boss recovered from his illness. He was like one of the men said: "When he gets back, he's really going to pour it on us, showing us we can't get along without him." Unhappy days have come back again.

an hour. The track crew that were formerly employed are gone. Conveyors carry the loads for miles underground and over the hills, the tipples.

Open pit or strip mining has advanced from a small part of production to a major part. Huge mechanical shovels, with a bucket bigger than the average miner's house, take a bite of 500 to 100 tons in each scoop. The trucks that haul it away have increased their capacity to 50 tons per load. One huge shovel can keep a whole fleet of these trucks running a day long.

When the overburden is too thick, or the coal seam too thin, huge drills three to four feet in diameter drill into the coal seam at a rapid rate, adding to the productivity of the mine.

Only the bigger mines are able to use these modern machines effectively. Thousands of smaller mines still operate on the old basis of drilling, shooting and hand loading of cars. Despite the 50 per cent drop in manpower over the last ten years, if these smaller mines were to be taken out of the statistics it could be seen that the drop is actually closer to 80 per cent.

LABOR

Ford Workers Held Nervous About 1956

LOS ANGELES — Henry Ford II recently announced at the Ford Motor Company is going to invest another half billion dollars for expansion in 1956. In announcing this he said, "Time and again the nervous Nellies have cried out that we are moving ahead too fast, that we are building productive capacity far greater than we can absorb and that the surplus must break down the market. It seems to me that with reasonable and sound planning we can hardly build too fast. Just to keep from losing ground, we've got to move ahead."

Ford's own factory help must be included among these "nervous Nellies" because they too are asking each other: who are going to buy all these millions of new cars? They know that with all of Ford's "reasonable and sound planning," Ford does not and evidently can not plan to pay his own workers enough to buy any substantial amount of the millions of new 1956 cars. They also know that those who bought all those new cars in 1955 are going to take years to pay for them and aren't going to be in the market of '56's.

It is these two factors: tremendous expansion by industry as if they are expecting new markets to open up in the moon while at the same time industry creates a limited market right here on the earth that is making nervous Nellies out of the American workers.

—Ford Worker

Nut Head Says—



"You gotta expect a leveling off in 1956. Of course unemployment'll go up a little, but the country's over-all economy won't decline."

How We Beat the Boss

DETROIT. — It was mid-winter, and we were trying to get more pay for working outside in the yard. We loaded the stock into the box cars whether it rained, snowed or sweltered.

I was steward then, and we all signed a petition for more money. The committee-men and supervision all laughed at us, but we all came late one hour on a planned date.

I was called up to the office and threatened, but I told them, it wasn't against the union contract to come late, and it wasn't a wildcat if we all took off tomorrow to go fishing. The Labor Relations men said it was too cold to go fishing. I said, "It is too cold to load the box cars, but we do it."

Later that day, we were called in and told of our raise.

Lay-Offs and Short Weeks at Chrysler

DETROIT. — In previous years, when it came to lay-offs (or "reduction in force" as the company calls it), supervision has always started with low seniority workers. Workers who have six months to a year seniority would get laid off several days before workers with two years. Then, in a week, other workers with more seniority.

But the lay-off we had today stunned many old workers. They laid off back to 1950. Workers with five years were laid off along with workers with three months. And this is only the first day of cut-back. It will last from one to two weeks. If they continue at this rate and pace, they will soon have to close the place down.

That is what put the old workers, with ten and 15 years seniority, on a wonder. They asked where is all the prosperity that is awaiting around the corner. One worker said it seemed to him more like starvation is awaiting around the corner.

DETROIT — For the second time in a week, workers were sent home at one of the Chrysler plants after a half-day's work.

No one seemed to know definitely what it was all about. Many workers rushed to the union hall to find out what the score was but none of the officers were in. Many felt the officers were hiding because they didn't want to face us.

There has been a short pay check for the past three weeks. Workers were sent home and told to stay out

two and three days. Today, the company began by asking how many workers would like to take the rest of the week off (two days) and come in next week. No worker "volunteered" for that, so they sent the entire department home.

IN AND OUT

Only several days previous, there was a lay-off. After being home for one day, some workers got telegrams to report back to work the following day. They came in, worked a half-day and were laid off again.

These workers were angry. They said if they had not been called back they could have drawn a week's compensation pay which would have been more than a day-and-a-half pay.

Some went into the superintendent's office and raised a rough house about it, but they could not find a committeeman to report it to.

Many of the workers are fed up with this type of action by the company. Some say the company and union officers are going to have to tell them frankly what it is all about.

As one worker said, "All of us know they have made too dam many automobiles, but we must make some of them in the office tell us and all the workers that is what is wrong."

Floating Around From Job to Job

LOS ANGELES.—One of the strangest things about floating around from one small machine shop to the next, going wherever there is work, is that after you have worked them for awhile you continually meet guys you worked with before. Or if you haven't worked with them you can always exchange experiences about bosses you know or about workers you know.

Some enterprising soul has even started a job shop newsletter for skilled workers. A guy signs up for \$4 a year. He is given a number. Every month he is sent a post card which he fills out telling where he is working, how much he is getting paid, and whether or not they are hiring. All this information is printed in a mimeographed newsletter appearing monthly.

If you know a guy's number you can keep track of where he is working. If you need a job you know where to look. Even if you are moving out of town the newsletter can help you because many workers, subscribing to this service, have moved all over the country and continue to send monthly information.

Arguing About Unions in A Non-Union Shop

By Angela Terrano

Getting the union into a non-union shop at one time meant something to practically every one working in such a shop. It seems more complicated now.

I find myself working in a non-union shop today. One of these huge corporations that have kept up with all the union benefits and raises, they sometimes outdo themselves to be better than the union shops.

ORGANIZING DRIVE

The union would like to get into this place. In fact, I'm told, they have been trying for at least 15 years.

The women I work with started working in factories around 16 or so and have ten to 15 years experience. Women, who at one time were strong for the union, now, for the moment at least, see no reason to fight for the union.

The union puts out leaflets promising higher wages, etc., but says nothing about production or doing away with the incentive system. All they say is that they will work it so that you will get your rate. Everyone knows that if the company gives you a raise the next step is to raise the quota. But the union is silent on that.

Two of the women I know, are not company girls. None the less, they have spoken out on the company's side. We were having an argument about unions and one was telling me that wherever she has worked, as soon as they got the union in, they were laid off "and the union does not do anything about that." They used to work nine hours a day, six days a week. As soon as the union came in, she said, overtime was cut. That's why she didn't want the union.

This overtime business is funny. People want it to pay their bills and buy some things. But sometimes you can't see beyond your own nose. Why should some be working overtime when there are so many people out of work? Let the company hire more workers if they need more production.

COMPANY PROPAGANDA

I know that these women are talking this way because they have been discouraged and know that the union has come to be just a dues-collecting agency in some shops. They fear that is what will happen here. But I also know that the company is spending lots of money trying to impress us with the fact that we have it better now than if the union came in. They are trying too hard.

I find it hard to believe that this billion-dollar corporation's main interest is our welfare and not their money and power. It is not the union, as it is set up now, that they fear. They fear people getting together, talking over and fixing up their problems for themselves.

CHRYSLER WILDCATS AFTER FOREMAN INSULTS NEGRO WORKER

LOS ANGELES — We went home today at noon for a day and a half. It was a protest strike. There are several reasons for it.

A worker was fired on Thursday. On Friday there was a lot of build-up about the Thursday firing. A foreman told a Negro worker, "You black b—d, get back to work." The worker hit the foreman. The Negro was fired and the foreman kept.

After the fight about 400 men in the body department were sent home by the company. It was because the company was afraid there was going to be a riot and there was the beginnings of one with the facing off of men.

There was confusion but everyone worked Monday. Tuesday morning the steward told the men to leave at noon and not to punch out. The reason given was that the union had demanded that the foreman be fired—because prejudice was involved; and also because the com-

pany had worked men in the night shift on Friday night for ten hours after sending four hundred men home on the day shift.

At noon, Tuesday, all Chrysler walked out without punching out and was told by the union not to return until Thursday.

(Note: The Los Angeles Times report of the wildcat (Jan. 18) described it merely as "an emotional protest over the discharge of two workers for assertedly using obscene language.")

(The Times reported the two firings as follows: "... one for assertedly using obscene language; the other... for striking a foreman after 300 workers in the body shop failed to report for work after lunch..." The report failed to state why the worker hit the foreman.

(In all, about 4000 Chrysler assembly workers were involved in this wildcat.)

AFTER THE WILDCAT

After the strike was over

at Chrysler on Thursday, we just went back to work. They hired one of the men back and not the other one. I don't know which one, but the union said it was satisfied.

The union disclaimed the whole thing and said it was an unauthorized strike. One local paper quoted the union as saying the company has a double standard system with one set of standards for the workers and another for the foremen. Another paper said that the union didn't know what happened and had just assumed that the men had all gone fishing.

One guy said it was a stupid strike because no one knew what was happening, and the union will have trouble getting the men out again.

This is the second strike I've been in here, where I only had rumors to go on—the union just kept quiet. I'd say 90 per cent of the workers didn't know what was going on.

EDITORIALS

A GASP OF FEAR

The statements of Milam and Bryant, in the recent *Look Magazine* article, admitting the murder of Emmett Till, were as shocking, to many people, as the murder itself when it happened last summer.

It was not that the majority of the American people had any doubt that the boy was murdered by Milam and his half-brother, Bryant. But before the clouds could clear and remove the shadow from the minds of the Negroes, Milam began his boasting.

It is not enough to say American democracy should bow its head in shame. Anyone who says he or she has a feeling for human justice or human rights should bow the head in shame.

They say the law does not provide for a second trial of a person once he has been set free. Milam is not free. If he felt free he could not have committed such a crime. His acquittal is definite proof that the American people are not free.

What is sickening in relation to this case and other such brutal murders and lynchings of Southern Negroes, is that the government, on the other hand, is spending thousands and thousands of dollars sending leading Negroes all over Europe to sell democracy. It is puzzling what their answer can be to the Europeans when asked about their democracy in America. One will have to wonder, can they give a true answer, a true picture, beyond their individual personality?

If we were free, it would be of no need to keep the boats and planes clustered with Negroes going all over to sell democracy. It would be less expensive to send them to the Southern part of the United States, and especially to Mississippi.

Attorney General Brownell boasted over TV about the recent capture of the Brinks robbery gang. The Brinks robbery took place six years ago. But he can not utter a word to 16 millions of Negroes as to what the FBI has done in relation to bringing a white to justice, when the crime was committed not even six months ago, by the white against Negroes. Every Negro knows this: This type of case is closed forever as soon as the crime is committed.

Bryant, Milam and the people of America will forever live in a gasp of fear as long as murder, lynching and terror can happen to the Negroes by a small minority of whites, who can walk out of a court and, in several months boast a confession of murder to the world.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND LABOR BUREAUCRACY

The case of James Kutcher, a veteran who lost both his legs in World War II, has finally aroused nationwide attention. James Kutcher was fired from his job as a government clerk at the end of World War II because of his admitted membership in the Socialist Workers Party. The Eisenhower Administration continued the persecution of Kutcher—begun under the Truman Administration—and tried to evict his aged parents, whose sole support he is, from a federal housing project. The most recent attack on Kutcher took the form of an attempt to deprive him of his government pension for war service. It was this totalitarian persecution that finally aroused the nation's press, but it failed to move the labor bureaucracy.

The recently merged AFL-CIO is the biggest labor organization that this country has even seen. Kutcher's case, though the most glaring and most Moscow-like, is by no means the only one. The various laws against so-called subversive organizations have been used primarily against the workingclass, including those unions that do not meet the approval of the government.

George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, has had plenty of time to make speeches against the Russian tyranny, but none at all either about the murders in Mississippi or the deprivation of the civil rights of people like Kutcher.

The cowardly actions of the labor bureaucracy are responsible for the state of civil rights in this country which is worse than in any other industrially advanced country, with the sole exception of totalitarian Russia.

If that were not so, the Administration would never dare to be so ceaseless in their persecution. The aroused press helped Kutcher win a temporary reprieve and his pension was—so far—reinstated to him. But the "rules of the game," laid down by the Veterans Administration in its persecution, the fact that they refused to abide by any law of the court, that they took to defining "treason" by administrative edict as anyone who disagrees with them, that they refused to reveal the stoop pigeons, gives little reason for celebration.

The American workers need not be told about the oppression of the Russian workers. They know about that. What they need to see is their elected leadership showing some principle, yes and guts, on the question of their rights in this country.

CHRYSLER WILDCATS

As soon as the strike at Chrysler took place we were aware of it at GM. But the newspaper articles that came out had nothing on the fact that it was against discrimination, they simply said it was "highly emotional."

Skilled Worker
Los Angeles

What amazes me is that the union doesn't even care whether the men know what's going on or not, that the men have to rely on rumors to find out what a strike called by the union is all about. It seems almost like a conspiracy by the union to me.

Professional
Los Angeles

We all went home early the other day because the hi-lo drivers had a wildcat. When that department goes out the whole plant has to shut down. I don't know exactly why they walked out. The union doesn't tell us things like that and the company sure doesn't either. I was planning, the next day, to ask one of my friends in the hi-lo department what happened, but when I went back to work the next day it was also the first day of the lay-offs which gave us something else to talk about.

Chrysler Worker
Detroit
● See Stories
on page 3

Strikes, in 1955, were big, frequent and brief, the U.S. Labor Department has revealed. The year brought a total of 4,200 strikes—20 per cent more than in 1954. And 2,750,000 workers were involved—an 80 per cent jump over 1954. But actual working time lost was lower in 1955 than in most post war years. Labor Department spokesmen said the big jump in the number of strikers last year was "substantially" due to the brief walkouts in auto and steel industries.

Student
Los Angeles

LAY-OFFS

In my shop and all over the city they're talking about the lay-offs. The pressure is terrific and workers are wondering if it will go on as in 1929 and 1930. Some are too young to remember how it was then but they've heard plenty about it. As soon as they lay off the probationary workers, the seniority workers start worrying who is next. Some say they will lay off back to 1947. If they do that they won't have enough workers for any kind of production except the very lowest since most auto workers have been hired in since the end

of the war, in 1946 and especially 1947.

Auto Body Worker
Detroit

The lay-offs and rumors about new lay-offs are flying thick and fast in my plant. Seventeen of the guys I hired in with were laid off. I'm probably the next to go. The only way you find out what's going on is when other workers tell you, that is, until management tells you that you are laid off. One worker in my shop works all by himself surrounded on all sides by very big equipment. He seems to be isolated, but he knows all about what's going on. I get most of my reliable information from him. I don't know how he does it. There's a lot of moving around in supervision too, many of them are moving up, but that's always posted. Just the news of what's happening to the workers isn't posted.

Iron Worker
Detroit

We had a lay-off of 300 men at the South Gate GM plant last Friday. It was supposed to be a 600 man lay-off but at the last minute they changed their minds. There seems to be less of a cut-back in auto here on the West Coast than I hear is going on back East. The cut-back is not yet hitting any men with seniority, that is, men who have passed their three months' probationary period. But, out of a total working force of about 5,000 at the South Gate GM plant, 1,700 are still on probation. The turnover here is tremendous. Over a hundred men must quit or be fired each week. There are hundreds of men at the employment office each morning. A lot of them are hired.

Auto Worker
Los Angeles

Just a few weeks ago the forecasters were predicting cut-backs but they said it would only affect overtime and not production. Look at it now.

Plymouth Worker
Detroit

LEADERS & RANKS

In *Worker's Journal*, (Jan. 6), Charles Denby tells of a shop steward who was appointed by the committeemen instead of being elected by the workers. This business of appointing union officials is one of the really bad features of the American union movement today, along with the tendency to elect committeemen for a year or two-year tour of duty. Appointments and long terms in office remove the union officials from the control of the

workers they are supposed to represent.

Ford Worker
Los Angeles

Beefs about long-time union jobs have come up in my shop many times. By and large the men would like to be able to review the question of union posts each week or each month. They figure this way: if the company doesn't like a man's work they can fire him anytime they please. They would like that kind of strict control over their own union representatives.

Auto Worker
Los Angeles

The rank and file at our local UAW union meetings frequently ask what has happened to the 25 million dollars that was collected for a strike fund? There is a strong feeling that this money, not used because of the very short strike last Spring, is now being misused by the bureaucrats. I overheard one body shop man say that the next time a big fund is raised, he wants to make sure that there is some rank and file control over the use of the money.

Auto Worker
Los Angeles

Some guys think that all the problems in the union would be solved if only everyone would attend the union meetings. One guy who's looking for position and power in the union—he was some big shot in another union, but since he's come here he's nothing—suggested that the union fine each member a dollar for every union meeting missed.

The union officials argued with him that it was illegal to do that unless the union had been fining the membership before the passage of the Taft-Hartley Law. Then one official said, "What would we do if all 3,000 men on each shift came here, where would we put them?"

Union Member
Los Angeles

I was reading a union newspaper article complaining about the men not letting the union know what is going on. They quoted the statement the men have to sign when they join the union, which is almost like signing their lives away, and yet, in reality it's the union leadership who keep their membership uniformed.

Housewife
Los Angeles

Views

I would like to be honest with you. It's not that I want to change News & Letters. Some people like to read it. It isn't that it's not the truth. I know it isn't only about the Negro, it's about working people. You get a lot of this stuff in union papers and all kinds of Negro papers. I don't see what good it does.

Look at all the noise they made about the Till case and look where we are: the same place. The only thing I can see about the South—and I'd be willing to give my money for it—if somebody would organize to take these people out of there.

You wouldn't believe it, you would cry, really cry, if you would see how the people on some of the farms of Mississippi and Alabama have to live. Such poverty. How can you go to school when you pick cotton from sun-up to sun-down six days a week? How can anyone learn?

You can't change these white people in the South. You talk about the Civil War freeing the slaves. Down South it's worse for some people. Worse, you wouldn't believe it, than before freeing the slave. It makes no difference to them.

I know there are some good white people. It's bad for a Christian man to speak that way, but I sure hate those Mississippians. They tell me to hate the Russians. Then did you see the write-up in Life about the Negro musicians in Russia and how wonderful they treated those people? They treated those Negro actresses like they were human beings. I can't hate those Russians but I sure hate those Mississippians and the South.

But where will this writing get us? I don't even like to read it. I'd like to keep my kids away from it if I could. I can tell you this country better look out what it's doing in the South.

Rubber Worker
Los Angeles

● SEE

"Why Print a Paper,"
by Charles Denby—page 6

ETHEL DUNBAR

Ethel Dunbar's column (Jan. 6), is a wonderful answer to a neighbor to whom I once gave *Indignant Heart* to read. She was furious after reading just the first chapter and said that it couldn't possibly be true, that it was all lies. She said she had been raised in Kentucky and had had a colored Mammy all her life and that she knew colored people and they didn't fight back like that. She thought of them all as Uncle Tom

types. This column explains something to her that I couldn't.

Martha Hunt
Los Angeles

* * *

What is so tremendous about Ethel Dunbar's column in No. 13 is that it deals with art, sports, movies and what type of education these media give the people as a whole. It deals with the fact that Negro people are human beings and not like the comedians who portray Negroes as some white people like to see them.

Professional
Los Angeles

* * *

NEGRO AMERICANS

If a Negro goes into a Southern court he's automatically lost. I had a case happen to me in Georgia. A white woman ran into my car and a white man was ready to testify for me that it was her fault. When we got to court, the judge dismissed the case and bawled my witness out for siding with a Negro against his own race, especially a white woman.

Auto Worker
Detroit

* * *

For people who live on planet Mars I hereby nominate President Eisenhower. His State of the Union message of January 6th contained such profundities as: "It is disturbing that in some localities allegations persist that Negro citizens are deprived of the right to vote. . . ." He came up with such revolutionary solutions as proposing a "Commission to investigate the allegations." On second thought I do believe the Martians know more about our planet than the President and I do not see why their intelligence need be insulted. Let's send him down to live in Mississippi instead.

Science Fiction Fan
Chicago

* * *

MIDDLE-EAST CRISIS

Many thanks to you for the information on the crisis of the Middle East (Dec. 23). I am just a housewife, but the world's crisis worries me. I watch every spark, no matter from what corner of the globe it comes. This time it is Arabs and Jews. Your explanation on this subject gave me a better view on the whole picture.

Housewife
New York

* * *

I have read your article with a feeling of nausea and utter amazement. I do not remember when I last read so much bilge in one article. . . . It is not a class question at all. . . . All

Jews in Israel . . . are nationalistic and stand solidly behind their government, in spite of all the bickering, strikes, demonstrations, etc. . . . The bit about the Histadrut not admitting Arab workers is really funny. The Histadrut would have welcomed Arab workers with open arms . . . if only the Arabs would have anything to do with it. However, as it was and is one of the principal tools of Zionist policy, the Arabs boycotted it and tried to build their own organizations. Your last statement: "The (Jewish) rank and file, so rebellious against the economic policies of its General Federation of Labor, are also against the anti-Arab policies of the Histadrut," is a plain lie, probably due to wishful thinking on the part of the person who wrote the article.

A. R., Surrey
England

* * *

Many thousands of Arab workers did join the Palestine Workers' Brotherhood in the years before the establishment of the State of Israel. This Brotherhood is the Arab organization of the Histadrut referred to in your article. As the article said, these Arab workers were segregated in a separate Arab organization with little influence inside the Histadrut. However, they did join, in spite of those who claim that the Arab workers boycotted any cooperation with Jewish workers. It was the Histadrut bureaucracy which alienated them just as it is now alienating the Jewish rank and file.

Reader
Los Angeles

* * *

People who have just returned from Israel told me that there are many Jewish workers in Israel who know by bitter experience the truth of what you have written about the situation in the Middle East and the problems of Jewish labor with the bureaucratic leaders of the Israel Labor Federation. There seem to be many Jewish workers who wish desperately to cooperate with Arab workers instead of getting into a war which would further inflame national feelings and solve nothing.

Housewife
Los Angeles

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Notes from a Diary

TWO WORLDS

A LITTLE BIT MAD

I received a letter from a new subscriber named Bea. Bea told me that a neighbor of hers, whom I shall call Rita, had suddenly become "a little bit mad." Bea explained that she was writing to me about it because it was evidently induced by her friend's shock that she, Bea, had subscribed to News & Letters.

It seems that Rita had been a radical once but had never admitted it to Bea until that moment, last week, when she came to visit and saw Bea reading the paper. There and then she became "a little bit mad," suddenly calling Bea "stupid" for not recognizing that the paper was "old stuff, old, radical stuff" and for not realizing that she was "being taken."

The torrent of words was abusive enough against "the leadership" but Rita hadn't pointed to anything concrete that Bea could bite into and she didn't know where it was that she was "being taken."

"NEW" PROGRAMS WITH OLD CONCLUSIONS

Bea's letter goes on to say that her husband had told her about a certain type who is well-known, in the factory, to everyone who has ever so much as attended a trade union meeting. There is always the busybody, the caucus builder, the one with an elaborate "new" program that has but one old conclusion: Vote for me. When and if you do—and he gets into office—he not only is no different from all other bureaucrats, he is positively faceless.

"But," Bea concludes, "I never thought our little back fence chats also contained that type. Where exactly would Rita want to lead me as opposed to where you are 'leading'?" She doesn't belong to anything that I know about. It is true she talks a lot about 'personality' and she no doubt has one, but if she ran in any popularity contest, she certainly wouldn't win in her own neighborhood. The main reason I am writing this to you is that perhaps you can tell me something about the why of her bitterness and why is it she thinks that everything in your paper is 'old' but everything she says is 'new'?"

THE BITTER EX-RADICAL

Now I don't know Rita so I cannot tell Bea anything about her as an individual, whether faceless or with a personality. But as a social type, I can truthfully tell Bea a lot. There is no set fixture anywhere in the labor movement more familiar than the ex-radical. The population as a whole seems more familiar with the ex-radical who turns stool pigeon, than with the one who is no turncoat; who can, in fact, not part with some of the ideas of the labor movement. He will even go to a meeting of the group he once belonged to, as a way of self-expression, to show his "independence." And to prey upon any newcomers who may not yet have found themselves at home in the gulf that seems to separate the perspectives of a new society from the routine of running a meeting.

The totality of the world crisis is such that the ex-radical cannot accept the world as it is. But he knows not how a new one will emerge. As a result, he is as jumpy as a grasshopper. Even his smile distinguishes him from the ordinary citizens of his community: It is the unhappiest in the world as if a bludgeon rather than a human impulse parted those lips.

I know of one such who did not even attend meetings. He expended all his enormous energies in letter writing. He invariably began with great indignation at the stupidities of the ordinary mortal, or the magazine, or whatever it was he was addressing. At the end he said, piously if not modestly, that he was writing on the one subject he knows well, but even if it were something he knows nothing about, etc., etc.

His open admission that he knows nothing about some subject is well-oiled hypocrisy to show that even where he knows nothing and the one he addresses knows everything, he is still the superior man.

"THE FRENZY OF SELF-CONCEIT"

The great German philosopher, Hegel, analyzed the development of this type through the ages and periods of historic development. Types such as Rita, develop from being "an alienated soul," that is, unable to find themselves in the new world, to where the madness between the real and the unreal, send them into "a frenzy of self-conceit."

"The heart-throb for the welfare of mankind passes therefore into the rage of frantic self-conceit, into the fury of consciousness to preserve itself from destruction."

Yet these people exert a vampire-like grip on the few who associate with them and put up with their "self-willed impotence" which they hide in "a giddy whirl of self-perpetuating disorder."

Hegel called this type "the alienated type of mind," who, because he has nothing positive to give, produces a spiritual reign of terror bent as he is in "a rage and fury of destruction."

If dishes didn't fly in Bea's house when she refused to cancel her subscription, then Rita has not yet given her "the full treatment."

NEGRO NEWS

The Way of The World

By Ethel Dunbar

I have just read a report where the NAACP branch, here in Detroit, stated that it raised more money in 1955 than in any previous year in its history.

It is a Negro organization and the majority of Negroes are glad to learn of the success of their organization. Especially if it is doing so for the benefit and improvement of the colored race.

MONEY FOR WHAT?

Practically everyone knows that the overwhelming amount came from the contributions of the Negro people for the support of the Till lynch case. They said it was a \$24,658 increase over 1954. They also reported that during the height of the Till case, that people here had made contributions of over \$27,000.

The leaders of the NAACP also told the people of Detroit not to give any money to other churches or organizations on the Till case because these others only want to exploit it. But when I read this financial statement, it seemed clear that the NAACP did the exploiting of the case. They made a mockery of it.

That is some of the shameful part of it. They stated that the Diggs Enterprises gave and raised \$8,000 or more for the case. Congressman Diggs, Jr. said that the Negro people were matching them in giving money. But it was the Diggs' name and nothing the people of every day life did, that figured with the NAACP.

COVER UP

They try to cover up by saying they have 13,000 members. They had about 25,000 members here during the war and they could not raise the amount of money that they proclaim having raised in 1955. They also have held a record of from ten to 13,000 members for five or six years and never such an amount was raised.

The national office soon announced that they could do nothing in the case after they had collected all they could from the public.

The biggest disgrace to the NAACP was when they made the statement that they had broken off with Mrs. Bradley, Till's mother, because she understood that the NAACP was only interested in what money they could get out of it for themselves.

IT HURTS WORSE

Many Negroes know that the Communists would do this. But when your own organization, your own people, your own Negro leaders play the same role with our problems, it hurts worse than when the Communists or some white organization takes advantage of you and exploits you for their own gains as the NAACP did with the Till case.

WHY PRINT A PAPER?

A rubber worker has told about his feelings and thoughts about this paper. News & Letters, and has also expressed his views of the Negro situation in the South, especially Mississippi. (See "Reader's Views," page 5.)

He has said that News & Letters tells the truth, but he asks what good does it do to write about these things: how can writing about them change them?

THE NEED

There is need for a paper like News & Letters. The union papers and the Negro papers pretend to write about the same things, but the rank and file cannot and do not write and express themselves in those papers.

During the great sit-down strike, here in Detroit, in the 1930's, the daily paper meant more to me than anything else because it told what the workers were doing.

It is not the paper or the articles about the South that burns a person up. It is the continuous, vicious, inhuman crimes against the colored people and the whites who commit them always go free.

HIDDEN FACTS

The worker seems to be very pleased with the article in Life where American Negro musicians were accepted as human in Russia. One means of exposing many of the hidden facts is through publication in a newspaper or magazine.

A weekly paper published in Greenville, Mississippi, by Hodding Carter (who, I presume, is white), called the Delta Democrat Times, has criticized the white Citizens Councils.

A Negro paper, called The Eagle Eye, published weekly in Mississippi, also attacks the white Citizens Councils. But it also criticizes the State for every unjustified statement and ac-

tion it makes which encourages the White Councils. There's the difference.

It is not enough to say, "What good is it? The Negroes in Montgomery, Alabama, stopped riding the city buses, defying segregation. The working Negroes and the young Negroes are in the front, doing it themselves. Printing a paper that tells about these actions isn't only words—it becomes part of the actions.

When Negro leaders are forced to stop politicking with the problem and life of the colored people, something will be done. When labor leaders are forced to stop politicking with the problem and life of the working people, something will be done.

RECOGNIZES THE TRUTH

We cannot say that moving all the colored people from the South would solve their problem. They will have to have homes and jobs wherever they go. The North and West cannot afford this for all of them. The South is home for many of these people. The old way of life in these Southern States is fading away at a rapid pace because of the determination of Negroes to keep fighting to be accepted fully as human beings.

The reaction and terror of the South is their last hope to try and save their old way of life. The Negroes are not asking or seeking any compromises at all. They are in the front putting pressure on the United States government and the Southern States to open up and remove the iron curtain of discrimination and segregation from their faces.

News & Letters recognizes the truth of this and writes about it.

—Charles Denby

This White World

DETROIT—I live in a mixed neighborhood. I was coming home pretty late one night—it was a few weeks after the Till murder—and I saw my neighbor about a block ahead of me. He was also on his way home. He turned the corner and by the time I caught up with him he was in an angry argument with two Negro boys about 16 or 17 years old. They were yelling at each other with the worst insults you can think of.

I was afraid there was going to be trouble. I didn't pay any attention to what was being said, I just grabbed my neighbor's arm and shoved him into the vestibule of his house. He was so angry he was shaking.

"I was just walking home," he said, "minding my own

business, when those boys came up and started to curse me. I never saw them before in my life."

I tried to calm him down. I said, "Take it easy. They must be hurting inside about that Mississippi murder and they're taking it out on you."

He said, "Why me? I never did anything in my life to harm a Negro. If it was an angel in heaven came down and talked to me the way those boys did, I'd have to stand up to him." He started to yell at me. "Why do I have to pay for what's happening in Mississippi?"

His wife came to the door to see what the noise was about and I left. The two boys were already out of sight. If that had been during the day time or a more crowded street, a riot could have started just like that.

A Reader Writes About 'Eagle Eye'

To: News & Letters
Dear Editor:

I think you would like to know about The Eagle Eye, a weekly paper from Mississippi that bombards segregation and discrimination. For example, here are some extracts from the issue of January 7, 1956:

"Jan. 1, 1956: The Grand Old State of Miss. is still America's Hell Hole No. 1. Its leadership is worse than Hell and after Jan. 13, 1956, when J. P. Coleman, Governor-elect, takes the reins of this State, The Eagle Eye predicts a law which will prohibit the grim reaper from issuing the death summons to the Miss. superior race, the white hoodlum, but it will be all right to serve the death summons on the Negro. As all know, Coleman's views represent the demagogue element politicians in Miss."

* * *

"Jan. 3, 1956: The notorious Miss. Citizens Council, in the opinion of The Eagle Eye, a baby of Murder, Inc., is now under investigation by the Federal Government. One thing is certain about this Council, its sole purpose is to murder and lynch innocent Negroes who will stand up for their Constitutional rights. The United States Government is to be congratulated for its stand if the Daily Press reports are true..."

* * *

"Jan. 5, 1956: Thousands upon thousands of Negroes were remembered through

the efforts of Miss. greatest humanitarian who would have been without food or clothing this Christmas. Because the Miss. white delta white farmers just completely took everything which the tenants made on their farms during 1955... If it had not been for Dr. T. R. M. Howard, children in that area would have been left wanting on Christmas morning, not mentioning the adults who were given clothing, and if it had not been for Dr. Howard's efforts would have been without garments to hide their body. Dr. Howard is not running, and for the information of the Miss. white man, Howard will be in a better position now to help Miss. and to relieve the economic pressure on helpless Negroes, while the Executive Department of the State of Miss. is giving its full endorsement to the notorious Citizens Council..."

* * *

"Jan. 7, 1956: The biggest lie for 1955: was the report by Tuskegee Institute that race relations in the south were good was nothing but cheap publicity on the part of those who are only interested in getting into the pockets of the southern white hoodlums. Evidently those who made this report had not visited the State of Miss. where Negroes are being lynched, murdered, robbed, cheated and swindled by the Miss. peckerwoods. This is true J. P. Coleman."

—Interested Reader
Los Angeles

INDIGNANT HEART

By Matthew Ward

(Editor's Note: INDIGNANT HEART was first published in 1952. This serial has been specially prepared for NEWS & LETTERS. Here is the thirteenth installment.)

When Christine and I lived in Memphis, I got a job in a machine supply company. There were seventy-five to eighty Negroes, and the same number of whites, working there. The machine shop was very clean where only whites worked, except for one Negro who lifted, and transferred heavy material. The rest of us worked in the foundry or the yard. After a week's work we got our pay. The old foreman, Mike, would get in the company truck and draw a sack of money out of the bank. Our pay was eleven dollars and seventy-five cents. We worked from six a.m. to seven p.m. six days a week. The Negroes would go into the building near the foundry to have their checks cashed. I always went home and gave mine to my wife, but Christine had trouble cashing the checks, so one time I went to the foreman. He took the check of a man in front of me, looked at it, looked in a book, said, "Okay," and gave him some money. He took my check and looked in the book. Then

he looked at me mean and hard and threw it back.

"You don't owe me nothing."

A fellow asked me: "You don't owe him nothing?" Then he told me I'd better owe him something or I wouldn't have my job much longer. "All of us have to borrow whether we want to or not. We have to give him twenty-five cents on each dollar. We don't have to pay the full amount as long as we work here. But every week we have to give him the interest."

That made me sick; I never thought I'd have to pay anybody anything to keep my job. I worried all week. I started talking with the foreman and asked him if I could borrow two dollars. That meant fifty cents interest each week. I didn't use the two dollars but kept them for two months. It made me sick every week I cashed my check when he'd give me eleven dollars and twenty-five cents. Sometimes he wouldn't lend to workers unless they borrowed large amounts like six dollars or more.

... (To Be Continued) ...

YOUTH

Russian Pupils Burn Records, Annoy "Pravda"

Russian youth is so little interested in what schools have to teach them, that the Russian totalitarian state machine has as many decrees to enforce "school discipline" as it has anti-labor legislation to enforce factory discipline. The school "record book" parallels the work book record of the factory worker. It has become the symbol of bureaucratic state rule and its destruction, the symbol of liberation.

The Russian leaders must depend on the Young Communist League to help enforce school discipline. The October 18, 1955 issue of Pravda, the official organ of the Russian Communist Party, carries a story that shows, however, that the YCL itself is taking an active part in the rebellion against authority.

REMEMBER THE AGREEMENT

It seems that in the secondary school No. 6, in the city of Lvov, ninth grade pupil, named Povalyayev, in saying good-bye to her classmates, said, "Remember the agreement!"

"Don't worry," they replied.

Six hours later six of them met again at the school and headed for the teacher's room. The room was locked

but they broke down the door. They seized five class record books and hastily left the building.

The Pravda story continues: "An hour later the children can be seen at the remains of a fire back of some buildings. The light wind blows bits of black ash on them, which is all that remains of the class record books.

"Well, we've our 2's," says Povalyayev proudly, kicking vigorously at the charred covers of the record books. A cloud of sparks sweeps upward."

In horror, the Pravda story concludes: "Oddly enough the stealing of class record books was instigated by YCL members."

The participants in this escapade were expelled from school. We do not know what fate awaits them after that, but since capital punishment holds even for youth of 12 in Russia, the youth may have chosen to "volunteer" to go to the wastelands of Siberia in Khrushchev's fantastic scheme of transforming nature by decree.

One child in every six who graduates from elementary school does not enter high school.

"What Makes Kids Act That Way?"

I liked the picture, "Rebel Without a Cause," because I thought there was a positive part of it—the part where Dean attempts to get the kid with the gun out of the observatory, and does get him out. I had the feeling that if they let Dean handle his own problems he could have solved them, but Hollywood couldn't have ended the movie there. It would have been unreal—in real life the cops would have shot the kid like they did in the movie.

I asked a kid at work who saw the picture what he thought made kids act that way today. I told him that when I was a kid the big wheels were the Student Council Presidents, etc. If someone yelled or whistled to annoy the teacher then, it was considered the thing to do. But in this movie when Dean mooed like a cow, the gang came down on him for stealing their thunder.

My friend said the leather jacket gangs, which he used to belong to, are like that. They had the monopoly on wisecracks and nobody else could make any, or the gang would be down on him. He said they're the big wheels in school today. He said he liked the picture and he thought it was true.

Thinking It Out

By Robert Ellery

After working in a UAW shop less than three months, I was just caught in a lay-off. The same day I was laid off, the union raked off its initiation fee and dues from my pay check. Since I worked for such a short time I had no seniority and no assurance of getting called back. You can't get any protection from the union until you're in the shop for three months, but you're supposed to start paying dues after the first month.

I knew I had no chance of getting my money back and I was angry about it. I told several workers what had happened and they all agreed it was a shame and wondered why things were that way. One old timer said things would be different if the younger guys took an interest in the union.

WHAT DO YOUNG WORKERS THINK?

I've thought about what he said since. Just what do young workers think of the union? A young worker's life is a series of hirings and lay-offs. (This is more true of the unskilled workers and less true of the skilled workers.) Sometimes it seems as if you're being taxed for

working in a union shop. They take your money but they don't offer you any help. Everyone knows how important the unions were in fighting the bosses. But now they seem to be fighting the workers, too. They've become very respectable, like another branch of the government. They have, on the payroll, experts and authorities on all subjects — paid by the sweat of trade unionists. But they desire to show the world that they are striving to be "impartial". This attitude pervades the thinking of the stewards in the shop, who are always eager to explain, to the complaining worker, what the company point of view is. They begin to think they're umpires instead of worker's representatives.

I know my experiences are not unique, and that young workers who did not participate in the struggles during the formation of the unions and have no fine experiences to remember, must be even more fed up with the union than the older workers.

Half of the students who enter high school drop out before they graduate—most of them from the ninth or tenth grade.

WOMEN

Just A Housewife

By Mrs. Martha Hunt

This year, my family met, as it has done for more than 30 years, at my aunt Maria's home on Christmas Eve for our family Christmas party. Thirty of us came from all directions and as far as 100 miles away.

My aunt Maria has always assumed the responsibility for the party. It's meant a lot of work for her. There are always two turkeys to be cooked for the tremendous feast we have. Aunt Maria also has taken the responsibility of caring for my grandmother who is now past 90.

PIONEER WOMAN

The parties used to center around my Grandmother, as well as aunt Maria, who is a very popular and much loved woman, because Grandma is the oldest relative of us all. Besides that, we are all very proud of her because we know she had been a real pioneer woman.

After Grandpa gave up his job as a railroad detective (after helping catch one of the James brothers), he brought her across the country in a covered wagon and she had her seven babies in one state after another. Her oldest daughter, who is my mother, was born in Missouri and her youngest daughter was born in Arizona just before they reached California.

She had four daughters and three sons. The girls all married and had families and so did the sons who were outdoor men like their dad and made their living at hunting and training animals.

I remember when I was a little girl, Grandma told me once how Grandpa had tried to sink an oil well in Oklahoma and how she got covered with oil when it blew in. This is only one of many exciting stories she's told me of her life.

FAMILY HERITAGE

Proud as I am of belonging to a family with such a fine heritage, our Christmas parties are never entirely perfect. There's always a few who drink too much Christmas Eve and impose on Maria's hospitality and there is always someone who thinks he's better than all the rest of us so he starts an argument to prove it.

But these are little things compared to the wonderful spirit my aunts bring to the party.

For me, the reason it seems so wonderful is because I remember the love and warmth I received as a child from all these people and I'm grateful that I can bring my children now so they can share this Christmas spirit, too.



"I'm going to get my husband to subscribe. I want him to read the Women's page."

Women Caught in a Trap

WEST VIRGINIA — There are so many women who don't have a penny to call their own. One of my neighbors is in that state. Her husband never gives her any money — not even to buy groceries with. He goes to the store himself and signs a check for their groceries—but he won't let her sign any checks, or have any money in her pocket. He even puts every obstacle in her way to

keep her from making money for herself.

She sometimes manages to get a little money by selling things that other people give her—like clothes or old furniture. But she has to do it without him knowing about it. She is really stuck because she has a big family—and a tiny baby—and can't get out of the trap.

That's why I consider myself so fortunate in comparison. My husband may object and complain—but my family is grown and, whether he likes it or not, I can get out to make a little money for myself. I don't make much—but I do manage to get out.

SAME WITH GRANDMA

My grandmother had the same problem we do—only it was worse. She had eleven children—and it was unheard of for her to go out to get any money on her own. In those days, most of the women didn't have any money—the men felt they earned it; and they spent it; and would not let a woman handle it. But a woman couldn't think of getting a job on her own.

Today, when a woman is in that position, there is some chance for her to get out and work on her own. Even when a family makes it almost impossible, there is still that chance.

After-Christmas Pains

LOS ANGELES — When I told my neighbor that I intended to write an article on "After Xmas Pains" her remark was, "By the time I'm finished paying the bill for this Christmas, it will be time for next Christmas. I hope it doesn't come too soon." That sums up the way I think about the whole thing.

NO-MONEY BLUES

Christmas is supposed to be a time of brotherly love. Well, from what I can observe from others and from my own experience this is what happens. You look over your bills, estimate how much money you have on hand, make a list of all those you have to buy gifts for and go about in a morose and dejected mood for the rest of the day.

TO A LOAN COMPANY

If you're not so smart you

go to a loan company and then buy presents. You feel pretty good and brotherly love dominates the atmosphere once again. A week or so later the bill comes and brotherly love flies out the window. The comedians on TV jeer at you and the advertisements tell of how much cheaper things are now after Christmas.

At Christmas time I always feel a little sad that I grew up. When I was a little girl, I'd make my mother a pin holder, my father a paper book-mark, my sister a bottle of perfume (made of her old perfume and alcohol) and my brother a paper wallet. Everyone thought I was wonderful and so did I.

Now I am looking at my spanking new payment book and wondering whatever happened to Santa Claus.

The American Economy in Human Terms

(Continued from page 1)
is the basic cause of the present crisis.

It is true that most of basic industry has introduced some automation — ten per cent is the best estimate. The only place where automation goes on unhampered is where the government underwrites the profits either through cost-plus contracts or through get-rich-quick amortization because of "national defense." That means industries producing the implements of war — guided missiles, jet planes, atomic weapons. This is true not only of production under the state capitalist regime of Russia but in "free enterprise" America where the government intervenes only when necessary for "national defense."

FREE ENTERPRISE OR STATE CONTROLLED: THE CHANGES ARE FOR THE WORSE

The results of this stage of production are the same the world over and they are all for the worse:

1) Unemployment is the steadiest feature of this stage of production. What are called "pockets" of unemployment characterize the distress areas of New England, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma. They also characterize automatized production in the prosperity areas.

2) Income is now counted, not by "the head of the family," since the wife, too, works because she must. Income statistics are in terms of the family as a unit.

3) The eight-hour working day has been turned into a mockery: you either work ten hours when production is high or you don't work at all a full week.

4) Inflation is something your paycheck never catches up with. There is supposed to have been a rise in income of ten per cent since the end of World War II. But since 1948, there has been a 12 per cent rise in prices in the United States. When you add to the rise in price, the rise in the number in the family — (somehow statisticians never speak of rise in population in the same breath as rise in income)—you can see that there has been no real rise in income for the average American.

5) The agricultural crisis characterized "advanced countries as much as "backward areas." Capitalism, free enterprise or state owned, seems incapable of solving it.

IN HUMAN TERMS
The capitalists felt safer with the Republicans and so they worked to elect Eisenhower. At the end of World War II, the biggest merger movement in American industry occurred, bigger than in previous periods, including the Depression. This has been climaxed this year by the bank merger movement which is the highest in 25 years. It all boils down to the fact that the overwhelming wealth of America is now in the hands of five, just five, banks: Bank of America,

controlling the West Coast; Chase Manhattan Bank, First National City Bank, Bankers Trust Company, all in New York; and the First National Bank in Chicago.

Yet neither this, nor the Big Business Braintrusts working for the Eisenhower Administration, can do anything to stem the crisis. They can only deepen it.

As for the leaders of the recently merged AFL-CIO, they are too busy playing politics to pay serious attention either to the great mass of the unorganized or to the youth who do not constitute their dues-paying membership. Let's therefore look at the boom again in human terms.

ONE-THIRD OF A NATION

There were some 700,000 fewer workers in "prosperous" 1955 than in 1953 just before the recession began. Labor productivity was higher and that is why production was high. There are two factors which make employment seem to be "full." One is that the displaced person is the one who was not hired. This year's graduates had to choose between the army or unemployment. Next semester's graduates have no jobs waiting for them. Whether men find employment in service industries or become unemployed, the truth is that basic industry is doing with fewer workers in relationship to the amount of production.

This leaves out of the picture the section of the economy everyone admits is in crisis—farming. The truth is that even here we speak two different languages—human and money. The big shots, the bureaucrats in and out of government, who talk of the crisis in farming are concerned with prices and surplus of the top ten per cent or, at best, the middle farmer. But not a single one of these planners has even bothered to come up with a "program" for the million farmers who cannot make ends meet at all. But it is this million, the majority of whom are in the South where conditions for labor are also poorest, for whom there is no hope at all under capitalism.

The truth is that if you look at the real, not the inflated, income of the average American, you will find that one-third of the nation is still ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed.

The rank and file of the people do not mean to face the coming crisis lying down. That is why even the most rabid sellers of the "American way of life" have to admit that in these times of highest prosperity there is also the greatest uncertainty. "Global insecurity" is the new phrase for it and so it is.

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WORLD OUTLOOK

THE CURE THAT KILLS

As long ago as last fall, as these columns reported (Sept. 7, 1955), Britain's Tory government was whispering about creating a dose of "healthy unemployment" in order to discipline the British workers.

Now, they're shouting about it in open headlines. They're considering a wave of unemployment to "discourage" wage demands and to "encourage" the workers to work harder or be fired.

This is Anthony Eden's role at home and now he's come to Washington to discuss his role in the cold-war world.

POLITICS & DEFIANCE IN KENYA

More than 10,000 Mau Mau, according to British sources, have been killed since the civil war in Kenya began over three years ago. This does not count the uncounted thousands who were starved and beaten to death inside and outside of concentration camps.

When the Emergency in Kenya was declared in October 1952, the Government outlawed the Kenya African Union whose program was self-government for African people. Last June, the Government announced that, for the first time since the Emergency, Africans would once again be permitted to take part in public political activity.

However, national parties for Africans were strictly prohibited and the Government announced that it would tolerate only local organizations.

In Nairobi recently, more than a thousand Africans met and openly founded a new national organization in a direct challenge to the Government's order. The new organization is called the Kenya Africa National Congress.

AS OTHERS SEE US

Some months back, a funny note appeared in an English paper:

"Having had inadequate time to change the other day and, finding myself in a light tweed jacket in the grand circle, I was forced to don dark glasses and pretend to be an American in order to avoid the baleful glances of the company."

This is obviously a ridiculous idea of what Am-

ericans are like. But the fact is, there appears to be in Europe only the haziest idea of what Americans and America are like.

It seems that only a few hundred Englishmen were able to visit America last summer when a million Americans visited Europe. One of the few visiting Englishmen was Kenneth Lindsay, who decided to let his countrymen share his understanding of America in a recent article in *The Listener*, a British magazine.

Mr. Lindsay crossed and re-crossed the continent between New York and Oregon. This is what he saw:

"... In the United States seven out of ten 17-year-olds are in high school, and in the State of California one out of two between the ages of 18 and 20 attend some institution of higher learning. There are more Negro students in universities than the total number of students in British universities. Most of the taxi-drivers and waitresses, where I have been teaching, are also students, some working for their doctorate of philosophy."

Each eye sees a beauty of its own, as the old woman said when she kissed the cow.

Perhaps the most important thing that Mr. Lindsay saw, is:

"The year 1955 may be remembered as the year when 1,000,000 automobile workers, many of them Negro, changed their status from wage earner to the new salariat under a people's capitalism by way of the Guaranteed Annual Wage (GAW). Next year it will be the steel workers. As Walter Reuther put it to me in Detroit, this is a financial incentive for employers to stabilize productivity."

Note the phrase — "the new salariat under a people's capitalism." This is something very few Americans know anything about. Here, we're deafened by cries about free enterprise. The line about "people's capitalism" is beamed straight at the European worker. It matches the Russian line about "people's democracy."

BLEEDING THE RUSSIAN WORKERS

The Russian Government has just issued its latest five year plan. Actually, there is absolutely nothing new in this plan that wasn't known when Stalin was alive and announced the first five-year plan, after World War II.

What is startling at first sight, this time, is the open admission that the grandiose plan for the agricultural development of the virgin lands in the Urals and Siberia, has been a total flop. (See forecast of this in *News & Letters*, Aug. 19, 1955.)

Even this admission is not startling, however, when you recognize that the architect of this plan, Khrushchev, the biggest living bureaucrat, has blamed — not himself—but all the little bureaucrats. In piously calling upon the people to fight bureaucracy, he told of one collective where there are four times as many bureaucrats, telling the farmers what to do, as they are farmers to do it.

What it all means is that the next time Khrushchev decides that the rebellious peasantry is not achieving the State targets, the centralized bureaucracy will take over ruthlessly with the same disastrous results as followed the forced collectivization of agriculture in 1933. The disaster will then be marked down as "overcoming the difference between the city and the country."

Neither Khrushchev (with or without Bulganin), nor Malenkov nor Stalin before him, ever vary by a millionth of an inch from one basic policy. That is, all the goals must be accomplished with the sweat and blood of the worker.

The first post-war plan openly called for a 12 per cent rise in productivity as against a six per cent rise in income.

Now, they are calling for a whopping 30 per cent rise in income—provided there is a 50 per cent rise in productivity.

Whoever they are fooling, they are not fooling the Russian workers.

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