

Selections  
from a paper  
that is written,  
edited and cir-  
culated by its  
r e a d e r s

**The**

# *Correspondence*

**Booklet**

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## CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. Only the People Know .....	2
2. Against the Labor Bureaucracy .....	12
3. American Politics and the Negro .....	20
4. The World and the 2nd America .....	25
5. McCarthy and Communism .....	32
6. A New Culture .....	38
7. Why Workers Don't Read .....	52
8. We and Our Readers .....	55

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## INTRODUCTION

**CORRESPONDENCE**, a new kind of newspaper—written, edited and circulated by its readers—began publication October 3, 1953. It is the first of its kind in America, or for that matter the world. It is against all bureaucracy, Communist or anti-Communist. Anyone—whether he is a rank and file worker, a professional, a middle class intellectual, Negro or other minority, woman or youth—anyone who has no ties to the bureaucracies fighting for world power on both sides of the Iron Curtain can write for it.

This pamphlet is a digest of articles which have appeared in the first 24 issues of the paper. Whether or not you have read a single issue, this digest will show who we are and what we stand for, how and why we publish this kind of workers' paper. It was started by a small group of workers and intellectuals who believed that what the ordinary people say and do is what really matters, while what the leaders, organizers and celebrities say and do is what brought the world into the mess in which it finds itself.

Each section of the paper—Labor, Negro, Women, Youth—is written and edited by the local newspaper committees themselves. We do not distinguish between articles written by committee members and non-members. **Readers' Views** appear in every section of the paper and take up the center pages as well. We have found that the hardest thing to do is to convince the ordinary person that what he says is what matters, and that anyone who can **talk can write**. Yet the way we produce this paper is proof that that is so.

**CORRESPONDENCE** is edited by a worker who has been a worker all his life, Johnny Zupan. He was born in a small mining town in Pennsylvania and came to Detroit in 1940. He has worked in shops for 15 years, first as a production worker, then a committeeman, and again on the production line. He left his work in the plant to become editor of this paper.

Charles Denby, our brilliant columnist whose **Worker's Journal** appears on the front page, was born in the deep South. During the depression he came to Detroit where he became an auto worker. He is still in the plant. He had never written a line before he began writing for **CORRESPONDENCE**. The same is true of Marie Brant, Angela Terrano, Jerry Kegg and Al Whitney.

Apart from **Building Correspondence**, the column written by an intellectual is **Two Worlds: Notes from a Diary**. What is unique about the columnists, both workers and intellectual, is that they all write of their own lives and their own ideas and from their own distinctive experiences.

The less than 100 that started this paper find that we are limited physically, financially and editorially. We have a press run of 5,000 and a monthly deficit of \$2,000. We have 1,000 subscribers and another 2,000 readers buy individual copies regularly. Compared to other ventures, that perhaps shows remarkable success. But we are far from our goal. Experience indicates a real need exists for a paper like this. The rest lies with the readers.

We as a group are demanding nothing. It is the paper and the daily lives which demands your participation. If you have the money, give it. But whether or not you have, tell your friends what **CORRESPONDENCE** stands for, what it means and what it can do.

# 1. Only the People Know

## Who Are the Backward Ones?

The other day a young worker got to talking with some Friends of Correspondence. This is what he had to say:

**"The people I work with are not Communists, but they don't like the way the government is being run at the present time. I have heard guys say that in the days of the Depression it was better than this. Some say they would like to give McCarthy more power and when he gets everything cleaned up, take him out and shoot him."**

Whatever this worker is, he is no believer in democratic politics. **"To a certain extent, your paper is boring. There is quite a lot of bitching in it. But what I am waiting for is to have someone come out and say in black and white how to overcome it. If you got to shoot all the bosses . . . shoot them, if that is the only remedy for it."**

He said much more, some of which we shall take up on a future occasion, but one thing stood out. He was sick of the way things are going and he felt that if someone only showed the way, he and his friends would be willing to go along. The reference to Senator McCarthy tells the state of his mind. For him the Senator was no democrat but a man ready to clear up things roughly.

At the same time these young Americans wanted no dictatorship. So after the Senator had cleaned up things, they would clean up the Senator.

These ideas are not wise. In fact, they are very foolish. But these young American workers are not fools. The fools are those who cannot look below the surface and see the tremendous passions which are stirring in the American people.

The young worker might talk of Senator McCarthy in a foolish way. But he has other and sounder ideas. He goes on to say:

**"If those of you who want to build a new society can put it before the people as the Republicans or Democrats put their program, then it will go over with a bang. The feeling is in everybody. All you have to do is bring it out."**

Those words, "The feeling is in everybody. All you have to do is bring it out," are words of profound wisdom, and show a deeper grasp of the realities of American politics than all the wisdom of the Socialists, Trotskyists, Communists, labor leaders and liberals put together. The one thing that unites all of these politicians (and Republicans and Democrats as well) is the conviction that they know everything, they are ready to correct all evils—the only thing is that the people are too backward, do not understand, are not yet sufficiently educated and so on and so forth.

We asked our young friend and all his friends to answer these questions: Who is responsible for the continuous wars and preparations for wars? Who uses science to create the most devastating bombs and weapons of destruction? Who mismanages production so that there is constant disorder in the plants? Who are the ones

who win elections on promises of Civil Rights for Negroes and then cannot keep their promises? Who are responsible for the ceaseless inflation? Who have taken the things created by workers as a means of emancipation and turned them into a means of workers' subordination? Who writes books and newspapers and radio news so that people never know what is lies and what is truth? Who?

The answer is plain: The learned, the intelligent, the educated, the rulers, the organizers, the politicians, the labor leaders, the diplomats. It is therefore madness to look to them and such as them to take society out of the mess they have put the world in.

Where then to look? If the educated, the learned, the cultured, the rulers, the labor leaders and the powerful have during the last 40 years led the common people from crisis to crisis, until today there is neither sanity nor peace nor hope anywhere, then there is only one place to look—to the common people themselves. If you don't, you are driven to the despair of thinking that maybe you can use a demagogic scoundrel like McCarthy. That way lies suicide. It is the common people in every country who are the most advanced.

This sounds like a most astonishing doctrine. The common ordinary people the most advanced? The rulers, the educated, the cultured, the organizers, the privileged, the most backward? Precisely so. If to lead society into a state where there is the danger of men destroying society is not backwardness, then what is backwardness? When before the Civil War, the Presidents of the United States, the Congressmen, the statesmen, the journalists, the bishops, the authors, all the learned and educated and cultured ones, said that slavery was ordained by God and had to continue, they were the backward ones. The ordinary illiterate half-naked slave who said, "I wish to be a free man and I am going to be free," he was advanced. And his policy of freedom saved not only himself but the whole country.

**So it is today. So it always has been. Always? Always. From the beginning of history to the present day, whenever an old society reached a stage of crisis and a change was necessary, all the rulers, the rich, the cultured, the educated, tried to go on in the old way and thereby became, despite all their learning and knowledge and good will and individual abilities, the most backward elements. It is the common people who have always had to show the way.**

CORRESPONDENCE cannot lead a revolution. Only the most thick-headed jackass can think that. CORRESPONDENCE does not advocate revolution. For one reason, it would be ridiculous to do so. But CORRESPONDENCE is convinced that the old society is doomed and that only the people, the common people, know how to build a new one. That is what CORRESPONDENCE stands for.

CORRESPONDENCE, however, has knowledge and ideas of its own. And one of them, perhaps the most important, is this.

Every great social and political advance the world has ever made has originated with the common people. The common people do not know this. It is deliberately hidden from them. So determined are the people of education and culture to keep this, the greatest of historical truths, from the people. . . .

(No. 10, Feb. 6, 1954)

## Readers on "Who Are Backward"

. . . it is gross flattery to tell your readers that everywhere everyone who rules or has some authority is incompetent, savage,

ignorant, barbarous, whether in government, science, or education. The enemy is more intelligent than you think even though he can't solve the central problem. And the problem is more difficult than your readers would suppose from the way you pose it. . . .

University Professor, New York  
... Once they said Negroes were too dumb to be accepted in society, now they say he is too educated.

Chrysler Worker, Detroit  
It is not on backwardness, it is the feelings of the American, the ordinary American and that should have been in the title!

Woman Worker, Los Angeles  
(No. 11, Feb. 20, 1954)

## Ford Rouge "Efficiency"

Detroit.—Production on this particular machine had been low all day, as the "automatic" cutter had been refusing to work "automatically." At lunchtime the foreman . . . asked the crew of three to work through their 20 minute lunch hours, until he could get three other workers to relieve them. . . . At the end of lunch, the replacements took over, and promptly 20 minutes later, the original crew came back.

But when they returned, they found that just a few minutes before, the "automatic" machine had stopped completely.

Ford-Rouge . . . has a staff of specialists. . . . First the floor repairman was called. He fiddled with his screw-driver. The machine started, but then it wouldn't stop. The electrician was called. He got the machine to stop, but then it wouldn't cut straight. The inspector was called to shake his head yes or no whether the pieces would pass. The set-up man was called. It cut straight on one side, but was worse on the other. The foreman was kept busy running back and forth to the phone to call more and more of the specialists.

Each specialist had a foreman. And as more and more of the specialists arrived, each with a complete bag of tools, each of the immediate foremen arrived to supervise his special category. Finally the plant superintendent himself arrived and the mass of men milling around the machine reached convention proportions.

Through it all, the three workers stood by, ready to man their stations as soon as the specialists gave the nod to try it again. . . . There were three of them; Millie, a white woman from Kentucky, Sophie, a white woman from the North, and Joe, a young colored man. . . .

The more men, and the more tools, the worse the machine operated. But when the superintendent himself came over, they really began to get into the spirit of the occasion. Sophie asked the other two when they thought the foreman would call up the President of the U.S. Millie pointed to the superintendent and ventured a guess that, "That big shot with the big belly probably doesn't even know how to start the damn thing."

As soon as the words were out of her mouth, the big shot with the big belly started fumbling around with the buttons, and finally gestured to her to come over and "start this thing." Millie and Sophie had to turn their heads to keep from busting out laughing right in his face, but Joe just let himself go. . . .

He kept saying loud enough for all to hear, "It kills them, it just kills them to see us sit doing nothing . . . and there's not a damn thing they can do about it!"

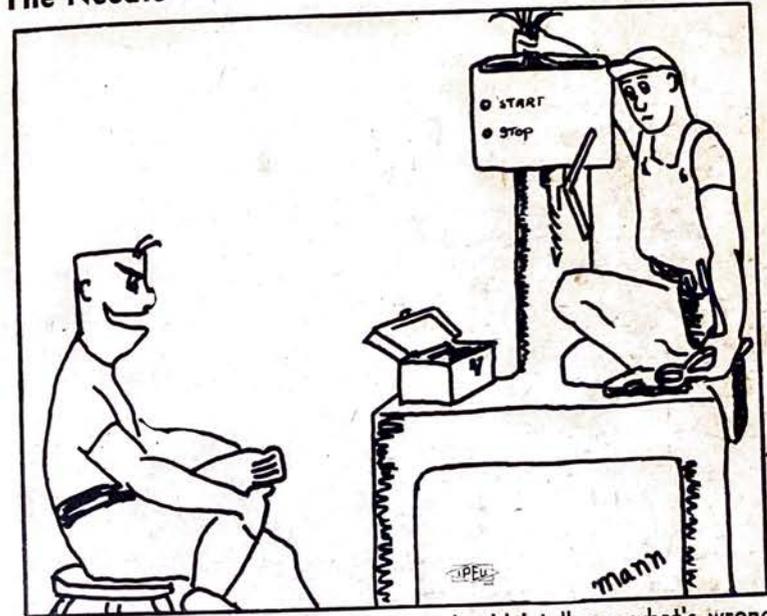
... The pay-off came when after two and a half hours, they

finally discovered the trouble. One bearing the size of a thumb-nail was at fault. Then began the mad scramble to find a new one. The crib didn't have one in stock, and the specialist in charge of that hunted high and low before one was found.

Finally the machine was fixed and Millie, Sophie and Joe walked slowly to their stations and started production again, rested, relaxed and smiling. But for the rest of the shift Joe kept busting out with uncontrollable giggles, and saying, "It just kills them. . . ." (No. 1, Oct. 3, 1953)

## The Needle

by Mann



"You want to kill a couple of hours or should I tell you what's wrong with her now?"

## We Had the Know-How

After applying for a job in a General Motors plant I was called in for an aptitude test. Two weeks later I was called in for an interview and physical. . . .

The next day I hired in. My dexterity was forgotten. I was placed in sub-assembly doing silver brazing with an acetylene torch.

The company had worked on the contract for almost a year and had produced only a few instruments, all of which were defective. The labor on them was done by engineers, laboratory technicians, inspectors of all classifications, foremen and a few laborers. They were on the verge of losing the contract. As a last desperate move they began hiring workers; not primarily for labor but for know-how.

We were told that we were free to work as best we could and that nobody was to disturb us. As the foreman put it, "We could chase anybody away from our work bench but the superintendent." He constantly stressed quality not quantity.

This lasted about three months. The employees now had a

general idea of what the job was about. A temporary line was set up. We were told if any of the women needed help we could leave our job to help them. Without being aware of it, the women worked out many of the kinks that had stumped the engineers. They told each other the methods they had used to make the job easier but kept the information from the foreman.

One day a girl was doing a job that wasn't going right. The engineers, inspectors and foreman stood behind her arguing about what was wrong. Finally the foreman said that they could leave and he and the girl would work it out. He turned to her and said, "You've been on this job for a month, can't you tell by now where the trouble is?" She answered, "You're the boss, you have to tell me. I can't tell you."

Things were running very smooth and though the out-put was very low, the quality was high. Gradually the pressure was put on us for more and more. The strain of holding production standards down was more exhausting than working at a normal speed.

The ability of workers in production was clearly shown in this factory but not to the degree that it exists within them. They were constantly holding back. The unleashing of the excess energy will not take place until production is organized in the workers' interest.

(No. 10, Feb. 6, 1954)

## What Makes This Race So Hard to Run?

Detroit.—I don't say Negroes have the same problems as whites. I say whites have the same problems as Negroes. Whites don't have any problems if they have money, none at all. If he has money, everything is his. Whatever he wants, he gets it. And whatever he says to the poor and the colored, it goes, because they are going to do what that rich one says.

The poor white people down South, they really look up to any rich people. No matter what they say, they think it is right. But the only thing is when these poor whites are around a Negro, no matter how poor they are, they think they are much better than a Negro. They think a Negro should come to them.

Rich whites will take you to their house. They treat you just as nice. And when you go into a rich person's house they don't even look at you. You are just there. But when you go to the poor segment of white people, they think you have to be under them. You can't come to their house. They think it is just too good for you.

Down South the people that my husband was working for, they were rich, they would let the kids play together. But as soon as a poor white is around, he thinks his child is too good. If your child touches his child, he thinks it would turn him colored.

One thing about the white people down South, when you are working for them, as long as you are in their kitchen and taking care of their house, you can touch anything you want. But when you carry the white kids into the park, you better not touch even the milk. They just want you to look after the kids, and keep them from running out to get hurt in the streets. You carry the food but they will feed them. They don't want you sitting next to them. But as long as you are in the house, they let you feed the kids.

(No. 3, Oct. 31, 1953)

## High Tensions

by Jerry Kegg

Tensions in Detroit are running as high as the production standards in the factories. Although the increased tensions begin there they are carried into the home and all walks of life. . . .

Jobs were very scarce so I got one through an agency. I appeared at the factory the next morning and was interviewed. . . .

He said in conclusion, "You can feel secure. We never lay off but, (he paused) we have fired a few."

When I arrived at work the next morning I saw a sign above the time clock, "Punctuality is a virtue, practice it."

At seven o'clock the foreman gave me the "rules and regulations" sermon. He took me to a machine and showed me what to do. I began to work with him standing behind me. After a few clumsy movements and dropping a pan of stock he had sense enough to leave. I worked a while, occasionally looking around to get acquainted with the place. The first thing I saw was a sign that said, "Scrap is costly, it could cost you your job." I saw enough to last for a while. I got thirsty and went to the fountain for a drink. Above it was a sign, "Fraternizing has its place, this isn't it."

Back at my machine again I looked up and counted the employees. Ten men and four women was the count. But most obvious was the absence of a union. You felt alone.

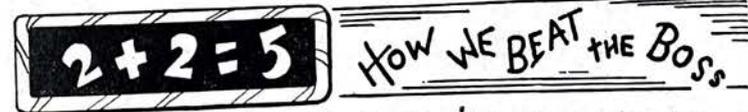
A stamping machine behind me began to operate. The noise was deafening. I began to feel real tired. My legs and back ached. To break the monotony I tried to think of what to cook for dinner. My mind refused to function. I watched the clock. Two minutes felt like ten. Finally it was 3:30. On the way out I noticed a sign above the foreman's desk that read, "He who minds his own business has a steady job."

On arriving home I was greeted at the door by my five children each with a request or a tale of woe. At a time like this you shouldn't blow your top, there is another shift to be worked at home before the day is through. Between tasks you must find time to be a mother and wife.

Tempers explode many times before the evening is over, which usually results in a redistribution of household chores. This is the most that is achieved.

Work should make a person feel he is a necessary part of society and his home. But it turns him into a tense individual, ready to move with his fellow workers in a mobilized form to change conditions to allow him to become the complete human being he should be.

(No. 21, July 10, 1954)



One of the girls who worked in the time office in our shop had a friend who worked in another office in another department some distance away. The company was very strict about people "wandering" about and "visiting." So whenever she wanted to go over and see her friend, she took a piece of paper, stuck a pencil behind her ear, and walked very fast, as if on a very important errand. The foreman never stopped her, but commended her on how busy and efficient she always was.

(No. 15, April 17, 1954)

## It's Not the Machine

... Here I want to say that I don't want this paper to go to the reader to make him think the workers are just screwballs. On the contrary, the workers love their machine, love the shop and love their fellow workers as well. The very instinct of a factory worker is that he is contributing his share and part in this society. . . . They discuss among themselves about certain machines, certain set ups or certain lines . . . .

You can't love the machine that you're working on like you love your car at home. Just like the company suggestion plan, they have lots of ideas, but they just don't give them to the company to hurt their fellow workers or themselves some day. When you're working, and the line or your machine is speeded up and the foreman drives you to go faster; then, they lay you off. You only work six or nine months a year. At the end of the year you look back, and you are lucky just to manage to live and feed your family, but still have nothing saved. You are subject to the company and to the machine, which you work on. You are not yourself. The machine you work on is not yours. You don't control the machine, but the machine controls you. And the company owns the machine. The company pays you to work or hands you a notice to lay you off any time they want to. The machine and the company controls your life and your family. . . . (No. 1, Oct. 3, 1953)

## Briggs Wildcat Gets Results

... Some guy poked his head in the booth and said, "You planning to sit there all day?" I said, "Why not?" And he said, "Well you'll be all by yourself. Everybody else has gone home. They just fired somebody." I came out of the booth and everybody was punching out.

I punched out, too, and went over to the union hall. All the guys were there, but none of the union officers had come in yet. Some of the guys were saying, "Those guys just sleep on our money."

Two guys went after them. They came back a little later with the president, one guy holding each of his arms. He finally went up to the platform and made some sort of speech about how Chrysler didn't know Briggs workers. They thought Briggs had all those wildcats only because the old management didn't know how to handle us.

The story as we got it was this: The men who tack the upholstery use metal hammers with magnetized heads. They keep all the tacks in their mouths and the magnetic head picks the tacks out of their mouths as they work. This operation is called spitting tacks. The hammers they were using were all worn out.

The company finally got them some new ones. But the ones they gave the men were all rusty. The men refused to put them in their mouths. The company insisted that they should sandpaper them down and use them. One of the men had gone to the foreman and said, "Open your mouth and put this rusty hammer in." The foreman refused.

The steward told the men, "If the foreman won't use them, don't you use them either. Just let the jobs go by." So they fired the steward. The guys walked out. The following morning the

company penalized the first 15 to walk out. That's when everybody walked out.

One rank and filer got up and said, "We never hear what's happening. We have to read it through the papers. And then it's always the company's story. How come it takes so long for us to hear the union's side? The company gets their story to the papers right away. Why can't the union put out hand bills or something to let us know what's going on?"

The union officers gave some sort of excuse that it wasn't union policy. That negotiations were complicated and they had to have time to work it out.

The third day we walked out 18 minutes after we started to work. This was pay day. Everybody went out to the pay office. They were all gathered on the street outside the office, yelling for their pay. It was before eight o'clock, and the guys at the pay office insisted that no one could get paid until ten o'clock.

That's when things started getting rough. Some of the workers started climbing the fence. Everybody was yelling. The company called the police. The police came, but when they saw that crowd they never even came up near to us. They just kept telling us that we were blocking the street and that it was against the law. It was the funniest thing I ever saw. All the guys were mad as hell and yelling for their pay, and the cops just asking us not to block the sidewalk.

Whenever a face appeared at the pay office windows, the men would yell and threaten to break in with bricks.

One worker kept saying real loud, for the cops to hear, "It's getting like the old days. I remember one time we had to drive a street car into this place. It'd be a lot easier now. They have busses. And it'd be a lot easier to drive a bus in here!"

All this time the cops just kept saying not to block the sidewalk, and the pay office just kept saying they couldn't open up until ten o'clock.

But by 8:15 they opened up. They made us come in one at a time. They were so polite, it was ridiculous. They apologized to one guy whose pay check wasn't ready, and asked him to please go out by the side door, as he might get hurt out in front.

When I went in for my pay, it took them almost 15 minutes to give it to me. The pay clerk was shaking so bad, he couldn't even find it. Some didn't get their pay until noon.

It's been a long, long time since I saw the men so mad. And the cops so scared. The company rehired the steward, cancelled its disciplinary action against the 15, and the workers are asking the company to pay these men for the time they lost.

(No. 18, May 29, 1954)

## A Committeeman on Wildcats

The companies and the unions both are hostile to wildcat strikes. They never want workers to take action on their own. They want workers to feel they have to be led.

A familiar argument of some union leaders is the one Ken Morris, president of Briggs Local 212, is using against wildcats. They say the companies want the men to strike, since they can't sell cars now.

The company never wants a strike. They may take advantage of a strike. But they never want men to take action on their own. . . .

If the men can walk out today, they can walk out tomorrow. A wildcat means that they can't plan, and they can't organize production. . . .  
(No. 14, April 13, 1954)

## Nobody Knows Who Works When

Detroit.—The auto plants in this city are at a standstill with the exception of Ford and Cadillac. Chrysler and Briggs and countless number of supplier manufacturers are closed. Why they are closed is a guessing game among the workers. . . .

What is new in this massive layoff is the uncertainty of the worker, the union and management, as to when there will be a full work week again. Unlike other layoffs since the war, when every one knew that it was only a matter of days before returning to the full production. The workers are very sensitive to what is in the making. Already they are saying that they knew this was coming as once the Republicans got in. They talk about the old soup line as if they really expect it and in the same breath they will say, "They better do something damn quick or there is gonna be trouble. . . ."

The union is the most confused of the three. They who always in the past had some explanation, whether good or bad for the worker, now have none. During the first few days of the cutback in production, they were saying it was just for the model change and would only be a few days. Then the company began to rapidly lay off and cut the work week until the workers were only making 18 to 24 hours a week. Seniority became a joke.

Workers with 10-20 years are walking the streets while some with 1 to 5 years are working. The union said they can do nothing as this is a temporary layoff, but the workers know different. This isn't temporary. This is the cross road, either the union takes a stand or it means nothing to them.

Several old workers who were being laid off came to me and said, "What is becoming of the union: if seniority don't mean anything, what is the use? I could have just as well worked at any of the plants when it was working good and did better. Now I have stayed here all my life and still I'm off."

Some talked about the pension and how they wouldn't be able to get in enough hours in a year to get credit for a year's pension. It seemed that the union with a committee studying a guaranteed annual wage program for months now can't even promise the workers a guaranteed week.  
(No. 2, Oct. 17, 1953)

## Readers' Views

I believe all these plants are shutting down to force the unemployed young guys to join the army. There will be a war in Indo-China before winter. Ike said he was going to have things better by spring, but it's getting worse. He better bring out the "project" before much longer.  
An Auto Worker, Detroit

It wouldn't make any difference who was in the White House. Truman or anybody else. They're trying to put half of us in the street, keep half of us hungry. They want to break the union. It won't be long before the contracts will be coming up and we'll have to go out on strike for the contract. When we go out, they'll start

sending notices to the guys who are unemployed to come back. They want us to be fighting each other.

Chrysler Worker, Detroit

It looks like Eisenhower's whole program to solve the unemployment is to build roads. . . . They talked about Truman and his welfare state. But that Eisenhower is going to have everybody on Welfare.

Still Working, Detroit

The slogan among the workers down here is that we're all working for the F.B.I. Furloughed By Ike.

Unemployed, Pennsylvania

There's no difference between the Republicans and the Democrats. Except the Democrats are the war party and the Republicans are the depression party. But the people get hell regardless.

Auto Worker, Detroit

The union's only umpiring this game. And they're not doing a very good job either. It's the company that's pitching.

Auto Worker, Detroit

Eisenhower says his advisers say the percentage of unemployed is 5 per cent. That's very good for Eisenhower, but I'd sure hate to be that 5 per cent without that job.

Laborer, Los Angeles

The union has nothing to say on hiring and firing. The company has complete control of that. You can't find the union bureaucracy anywhere near the plant during layoffs. If there had been a strike they would have been out at the plant telling us what not to do.

Al W., Detroit

Unemployment has really hit New York, but you don't feel it until you look for work. I was talking to a drug store clerk here who gave me all the figures of unemployment in Detroit. I'm going back to him with the issue that dealt with unemployment in Detroit.

Jobhunter, New York

The paper has punch, and isn't a lot of lies like the other papers. I can tell from reading it that it's not Communist and I like what it says about the union big shots. I like what it says about Negroes and whites.

I see you have no reporters, and I'll write in whenever I see it get out of line, but from what I've read, it's the real thing.

Polish Worker, Detroit

## 2. Against the Labor Bureaucracy

### Reply to a Letter on the CIO

#### Editorial

Today, millions of people believe that the CIO has a long and bright future. Fifteen years ago these same millions doubted that the CIO would succeed.

In both cases, these opposite points of view are based on what the capitalists would do rather than on what the workers would do. At one time, since the capitalists opposed the CIO—there would be no CIO. Now that the capitalists accept the CIO—it is here to stay.

These people were wrong when the CIO was struggling to be born, and they are wrong now.

It was the workers who decided that there would be a CIO and it will be the workers who will decide the fate and future of the CIO. Only by seeing the workers' attitude to the CIO can one see its future.

The very conditions that gave rise to the CIO—insecurity, speed-up, abominable job conditions and inadequate wages—have not only not been eliminated but they have been intensified.

The primary consideration of the workers in establishing the CIO was not the question of wages, but rather the struggle for control of production and the conditions of employment. Once the question of how production was to be run was left to contract negotiations, a labor bureaucracy arose. Unable to satisfy the demands and needs of the workers, the labor bureaucracy has substituted the struggle for wages and other economic interests. The labor bureaucracy has not only failed the worker in his basic needs but even in the matter of wages. Along with the worsening of working conditions has gone the steady decline in economic conditions.

If the labor bureaucracy only failed to do anything about working conditions, it would be bad enough. What is worse is that they actually help the corporations to increase production and discipline the workers. They aggravate the very conditions that bother the workers the most. As a result, the worker finds himself struggling against the labor bureaucracy as much as against the company.

The question remains—how long will this state of affairs remain and what form will the new struggles take? The answer is not an easy one.

Modern mass production, as a characteristic of our day, dates back to 1920. After less than 15 years experience with the degrading conditions of work in the modern factory, the American worker revolted. Out of this revolt developed the CIO. When, however, the workers failed to take over production, and the labor bureaucracy administered for management, the workers' wildcats took a new form.

Time and time again, from one end of the country to the other, even the world over, in war and peace, the workers have gone out

on wildcat strikes against oppressive conditions. These strikes are not only against the company but they are also against the union bureaucracy. They also indicate that whenever the worker is denied the use of the union as a weapon, he will wage the struggle outside of the union.

Out of the dissatisfaction with the CIO will also arise movements to break away from the CIO.

The labor bureaucracy finds itself in an impossible situation. To struggle for the fundamental needs and aspirations of the workers would mean the end of the CIO, and the opposition to the unceasing demands of the workers means the end of the labor bureaucracy.

The workers brought the CIO into being. They are the only force that can remove it or destroy it. Any estimate of the future of the CIO must be based on what the workers have in mind in regard to the CIO.

The fate of the CIO is now inextricably united with the fate of capitalism. Any destruction of the CIO by the capitalists means the end of society as we know it now.

The labor bureaucracy not only accepts capitalist production and society, but they have gone one step further than the old and traditional labor bureaucracy had gone. It is not only that they support the status quo but they directly intervene to make its smooth functioning possible.

In every case and in the most immediate sense they have to intervene and it is absolutely crystal clear to the workers that the union more and more is compelled to act against their interests. A worker finds himself compelled more and more to struggle against the union as much as the bosses. This is the doom of the CIO.

**The struggle against the labor bureaucracy will also be the struggle against official society. The labor bureaucracy is the last barrier.**

(No. 8, Jan. 9, 1954)

### Changes in the Shop in 10 Years

#### Worker's Journal

By Charles Denby

Eight or ten years ago and up to this day there have been gradual changes in the shop by the company with the help of the representatives of the workers: stewards, committeemen and officers.

After the UAW was organized one of the worst crimes a union representative could commit was to be friendly to a foreman. I have known stewards to lose their position for being friendly with a foreman. There was a clear and decisive line drawn between the workers and the company. Any worker would have a tough time if he or she talked or kidded around with the foreman. They would be labeled a company stooge.

In those early days, if a worker had an argument with the foreman, the foreman would try his best to settle it. The foreman never wanted the worker to call the steward. He knew the steward would defend the worker.

The workers used their strength against the company even if it meant going out on strike. The union leaders were forced to go along with them. They depended on the strength of the workers. The feeling of solidarity was close and felt by the average worker.

In the past five or six years there has been agitation by the

union officials that the company is not too bad and that the workers who cause strikes want to starve the other workers and their families. Labor and management can live peacefully side by side.

The labor leaders threaten workers who cause strikes and hundreds of workers have been fired by the company for such action. The other workers have been frightened by what they have seen happen. This has also weakened the close relations the workers once had toward each other.

Today, the steward spends practically all of his time in the office of supervision or walking around with his arm around company officials. They have hardly any time to talk to the workers unless it is election time. They agree with the company on most of the differences between the workers and management.

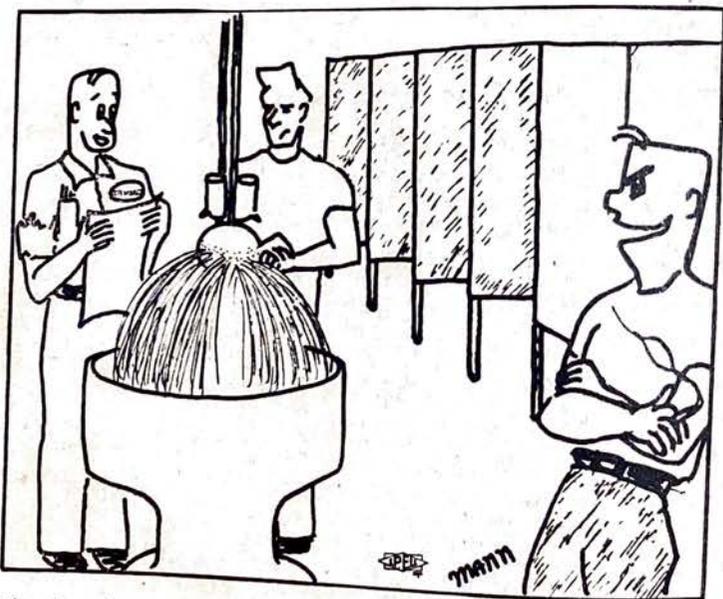
When a worker has a difference with the foreman today, the foreman will say, "Call the committeeman." He knows how they will act. In many instances the foreman will go get the steward. He uses these against the workers.

Last week in my department, the company took a worker off an operation where there were three workers doing the same type of operation. These workers put up a howl. The superintendent came up and said, "If you don't do it, I will call the committeeman and you will have to do it anyway."

(No. 4, Nov. 14, 1953)

## The Needle

by Mann



"There's only one thing wrong with the contract, Joe. The paper ain't thin enough."

## The Experience of a Union Representative

I have been a committeeman in the Ford Motor Company all told for about seven years.

When I was first elected committeeman, about ten years ago, the union contract provided for one committeeman for every 275 workers, and he was required to work on a regular job the same as any other worker. The only exception was that he was permitted to leave the job in order to handle any union business. The committeeman's wages were paid by the company. . . .

At the time I was elected committeeman the union was a new experience with the company—the union had only been established the year before. One very good aspect of this was that the average foreman and his superiors knew practically nothing about the contract or how much right or power the union had. This was due to the fact that the workers were quick to strike and a foreman never wanted to be involved in a strike, especially if the workers were striking for something that was within the contract and the foreman was denying it to them. As a result the foreman could be made to believe that the demands were legal and if they weren't he didn't know and he still didn't want to have a strike on his hands. So if a committeeman wanted to, it wasn't too hard to get what the workers wanted.

The first contracts that the unions negotiated were simple and they far from covered the numerous situations and problems that arose in the course of a day's work. This, the militant mood of the workers and the timidity of the foreman and company, made the life and work of the average committeeman relatively simple. It wasn't hard to win from the company the demands of the workers.

This situation didn't last too long. Each year a new contract would be negotiated and each time the company would wind up with more control over the workers and committeemen. It became harder and harder for a committeeman to get the demands of the workers.

As time went on the committeeman was compelled to rely on a grievance procedure rather than on the militancy of the workers to settle disputes. He was being transformed from a rank and file leader to a Philadelphia lawyer.

(No. 6, Dec. 12, 1953)

## Urbaniak's District 31: Men Without Leadership

Fairmont, W. Va.—Urbaniak came from a large family. His father was like the majority of weak miners with large families. . . .

Cecil was reared in Grantown and that is the first mine and union that he ever belonged to. His daddy wanted to send him to school, only he didn't have any money. The people around used to donate a dollar or two a month, everyone would, to help some of the boys go to school. That's the way Cecil was able to go to college. . . .

Cecil didn't finish college. He came back and started to work, I think, on the tippie. The first office he held in the local union was recording secretary. I don't think he went any higher than recording secretary in the local. . . .

Cecil went into the District as a field representative. . . . He was the youngest man in the District. How he ever came to be appointed president, I don't know. . . .

He never did anything. I don't ever remember his going out and

really doing something when there were strikes or fights over some-thing. . . . I would say that he was placed in the District to fight another strong man appointment. When he stepped up, the District began to go down. He began to weed out the strong organizers and get his type of men in.

Now we don't have a field representative capable of presenting a case. You see, the District president wouldn't want anyone in his District that was a shrewder man than him, men that could win cases and so forth.

We thought for a while that Cecil would be all right and we'd go along with him. But then, he made a big mistake. It was down at the Rivesville mine. The coal from this mine was being used by a power plant and the men came out on strike. It was the first time that this had ever happened.

Cecil came down on the case. A lot of the higher ups of the company were there in the office and Cecil jumps up and tells the mine committee that the District had an agreement with the company to keep the mine running.

John Murcheson, who was chairman of the mine committee and president of the local union, put his hand out and said, "Lay it in my hand. I'm the one who should have it, not you. It should be here at the local. If there is such an agreement, I'll know what I'm working on. Furthermore, I demand it. But until then, I'll have no notices posted to return to work."

This started the company officials to buck their eyes and set them back on their heels. When word of this got around, we all knew that Cecil was ready to sell us all down the river. . . .

I realized when Cecil was made District president that he would choose some of his close friends from Grantown. But of all men, I never thought that he would pick Joe Serdich because of his attitude toward the minority group. He had a beer garden in Grantown, and a colored person couldn't even go in and buy a bottle of beer to take out. He just didn't want a colored person in his place. And Cecil reached down and got a man like that.

I've never heard of Cecil going on a picket line since he's been District president. If he does go out on something, things are O.K. and there is a big speech to be made. He'll go out there, stomp around and say nothing. But he goes to Washington often enough. There's no trouble there and he has plenty of protection with all the F.B.I., secret police and the likes of them.

To see how times have changed, take my mine for example. A couple of months ago we had a little wildcat. The day shift had worked, but the afternoon shift hung up and the men were milling around. The mine committee came down and couldn't get them straight.

Then the super came down and said, "Now boys, you just go ahead and go to work. I'll have the District down tomorrow and we'll get the trouble straightened out." The chairman of the mine committee didn't open his mouth. Now there was a time that the company officials ducked the District; they didn't want to tangle with them at all. But now, from the way they talk about the District, they know that if it comes down it will decide in their favor instead of the workers' favor.

This District is going down, and what I'm afraid of is that we'll

have to reorganize again. The rank and file is opposed to the set-up in the District and have no confidence in it; and once the men lose confidence in their leadership, you can expect anything at any time.

B.C.

(No. 18, May 29, 1954)

## Miners Protest Fund Cuts

Pursglove, W. Va.—The cry of "Protest!" has risen from the ranks of the UMW over the cutting off of 35,000 disabled miners, widows and their dependents from the Welfare and Retirement Fund.

This action means that these miners and widows are to be deprived of \$30 a month for themselves and \$10 a month for each dependent they might have under 18 years. This is to go into effect on March 1st. In the announcement, Lewis said it was no economy move (there is about 100 million dollars in the fund), but that these people are the responsibility of the state and federal governments and should be taken care of by the government.

Everyone in the mine fields was stunned by the news. . . .

Local Union 2122 in Pursglove, W. Va., called a mass meeting to protest the action. Men from nine locals in the area attended the meeting and tore into the International for the part it had played.

A motion was passed to have another meeting and to have District and International representation to give an explanation of the action and to see what might be done to have the people reinstated to the fund.

At the next meeting some 15 locals were represented. District representatives were there, including the president, C. J. Urbaniak; the International did not bother to send anyone. But what was significant was the presence of women at the meeting who were either widows or wives of disabled miners in the area.

Urbaniak took the floor first, and what he had to say amounted to this: It was tough, but the fund was not getting in enough money to take care of everyone, so the disabled miners and widows and their dependents had to be the ones to go. He thought there shouldn't be too much to worry about though, for there was the DPA, and those who had been cut off would get as much, if not more, as they had gotten from the fund. He also said it was natural for people who were used to having something given to them to be angry when it is taken away, but that's the way it is with everything.

The first speaker from the ranks hit out against the people being cut off going to the DPA. What was wanted was to have these people put back on the fund.

Another miner, this one in a wheel chair, related experiences he had to show gross mismanagement of the fund, where charges were put on the fund by hospitals and doctors which were far beyond what should have been charged. Another miner said some of the things that the fund was paying for could be either cut off or cut down to enable the ones who had been cut off the fund to be kept on.

An old colored miner hit out at the idea that anything was ever "given" to the miners and their families. What they had, they had fought for. He related tales of the early organizing days—picket lines, yellow dogs, state police, shootings—all to live a decent life. How could what had been fought for so hard, be lost so easily?

And then one of the women spoke. She was partially paralyzed and the wife of a disabled miner. She spoke of riding up and down Scott's Run on a horse in the organizing days, fighting with the men, helping in the soup kitchens, helping the sick, the children, always fighting with the miners. And now she was cut off, what was she going to do? All your life you try to get a home, a place to stay in your old age, but you have to sign this away to get any help from the DPA. . . .

Urbaniak spoke again. He said that there were too many people to really get anything done and invited all the presidents of the local unions to meet in the District offices in Fairmont, W. Va., to work something out. When this was agreed upon, many of the people at the meeting felt that little would come out of it. Urbaniak had made his position clear—the DPA. The people at the meeting wanted something else—put the people back on the welfare. Urbaniak had his line from the International and he had to carry it out.

(No. 12, March 6, 1954)

## Reuther and Plans Experiences and Expectations

by Stefan

During the time I was active in the Reuther caucus, I had occasion to go to his home to discuss internal factional problems. It happened each time that I was there, about two or three times, Reuther would take us to his work table, which I think was on the sun porch, and point out to us some new plan that he was working on that was supposed to do something or other for the workers. It seemed for as long as I knew him he always had a plan. Reuther and plans. Those two seem a real pair. Even when he wasn't espousing a plan you felt oppressed by the sense of a plan. I guess it was in the way he lives.

No drinking, smoking, gambling or mixing with the boys. No time for that. The plan didn't allow it. The plan only allowed time for getting elected president of the UAW, since Thomas, the president then, didn't go for Reuther's plans. The plan also allowed time for innumerable trips to Washington, and innumerable visits with leading figures in Washington to discuss some new plan. . . . It may appear that these incorrigible planners are harmless. They're not. Look at Russia. They began by planning for the workers' interest and welfare and wound up putting the workers in chains. . . .

(No. 10, Feb. 6, 1954)

## Why Did Stalin Behave As He Did?

. . . There was a time when Bolshevism was a doctrine of liberation. Today everyone knows Russian Communism as the greatest barbarism on earth. Stalin is the name which symbolizes this.

It was this one-time revolutionary who initiated and carried through with unmatched brutality the greatest counter-revolution in all history. But Stalin is only the Russian name for a phenomenon that is world-wide. We need not go outside of the borders of this country to see the same social type.

Look at Reuther. He was one of the leaders of the CIO in its early days when the workers in fact took over plants from the capitalists. They would examine what they were told to do and decide whether it was satisfactory or not. In those early

days, Reuther challenged the stranglehold of capitalist management over the workers in production. Today, he is the chief instrument whereby capital maintains its domination over the American workers. . . .

No knowledge of Russian is needed to understand this social type. He is all around us, and not only on the side of management, but within the labor movement itself, from the lowest committeeman to the top bureaucrat.

Stalin's outstanding trait was a bureaucratic attitude to the masses. He claimed to be a leader of the workers, but to him it meant to make the workers do as the leader wanted and told them to do. He spoke of the party as "the vanguard of the proletariat," but to him this meant that just as the leaders of the party were to tell the ranks what to do, so the party was to order the masses about. . . . Once the Communist Party got into power, his passion for bossing came out in full bloom.

(No. 3, Oct. 31, 1953)

## What I Am Waiting For

My daddy was a worker and his daddy before him was a worker and I know that my earliest ancestors had to be workers or I wouldn't be one. I'm not concerned about what I could or would have been if my ancestors had been something else, for I realize that over 90 per cent of the world population are workers just like me. What I'm concerned with is what am I waiting and looking for as a worker.

When I grew up and came out of school I was full of energy and ambition, and it didn't take me long to realize that the world was full of people with energy and ambition and yet they spent all their energy and ambition trying to make a living for themselves and their families, plus supporting some other people who seemed to be living off of them.

I joined the union because I thought this was a place for every working man to be. Here were workers struggling against those who had all. It didn't take me long to realize that the union was only half struggling and I began to look elsewhere and I've been looking ever since. I think there are millions of guys and gals like me all over the world looking and waiting. For what?

That is the big question, and I can answer only for myself. For years and years I saw the union bureaucrats make demands on management and capitulate and I've seen the company always win and each day I see them taking back the little the union once won, so I know there is only one way left and that is for thousands, no millions, of workers everywhere in the world to start taking over. I don't mean just the companies and the jobs, but the whole thing, lock, stock and barrel.

That's what I'm waiting for. I'm waiting to see the worker not just demanding but taking over. I want to see it with my own eyes. I want to see them running the government, running the factories, the farms and everything that is runnable.

I don't know how they are going to do it, I don't know when. But I do know that this cannot go on and people continue to be human beings. Somebody has got to give up and it's too many working people to not win. I just want to live to see it.

Maybe I won't, but I want to. That's what I'm waiting for.

(No. 18, May 29, 1954)

### 3. American Politics and the Negro

#### American Politics and the Negro

A large number of people in the United States take no interest whatever in politics. These folks are usually looked upon as backward. In reality they are absolutely right. They know that whatever they vote or don't vote, whoever is in, not a single important thing in their lives is going to be changed.

But there is another kind of politics, a politics which clears away the old rubbish and changes the fate of nations. And the most conspicuous example of that type of politics in the United States today is the politics of the Negro.

The Negroes, of course, have a bunch of Negro leaders, politicians, ward-healers, fakers and self-seekers who are no better than the white politicians and very often worse. But the politics we are speaking of is the Negro struggle for Negro rights, and the solidarity of Negroes in that struggle. And that struggle is changing the whole face of American politics.

**This politics is not the politics of voting.** It is the politics of the continuous and always growing protests of Negroes against discrimination. It is the politics of the threat of the Negroes to march on Washington in 1940-41. It is the politics of the Negro soldiers in the army during World War II who fought discrimination as fiercely as they fought the Germans. It is the politics of the tremendous demonstrations of Negro rage and frustration which broke out in Harlem in 1943 and tore Detroit apart that same year. . . .

This is not the politics of voting. And yet it is one of the most powerful forces at work today which is changing the whole face of American politics—not only Negro politics but American politics, at home and abroad. Yes. The whole face of American politics. Because what this Negro struggle is doing is breaking up the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party is the strangest political party the modern world has ever seen. No other party ever seen or dreamed of has within it the ranks of organized labor and at the same time the few thousand landlords, businessmen and political fakers who rule the South. . . .

At the 1948 convention of the Democratic Party there was a terrific quarrel. In the 1952 convention the quarrel was even fiercer. The Southerners want the Democratic Party to pipe down and shut up on the Negro question, but the Democratic Party in New York, in Pennsylvania, in Michigan, in California and in many other states cannot do that. The Negroes don't let them forget it for one moment. That is politics, real politics.

The thing to note is that the Negroes who are carrying on this agitation are, in comparison with the rest of the nation, very few in number. They are only about four million Negroes in the North. But few as they are they are shaking up this great national party to its foundations. And one of the first necessities to make politics

real in the United States for everybody, to take it away from these self-seeking politicians, is to break up and clear away these two bloated old fossils, the Democratic Party and the Republican. . . .

It is because the Negroes have made such a struggle that large numbers of white people have taken notice and begun to help. If the Negroes had kept quiet nobody would have done one single thing. If the Negroes had done nothing, said nothing, the Southerners in the Democratic Party would have been quite happy to remain there. And it is these Southerners who join Republicans in Congress to pass the most vicious and reactionary laws, not only against Negroes, but against unions, against public housing, against social security, against a decent minimum wage.

No. Before a new society can be built every section of the population that is suffering from the old society must bring forth its grievances and struggle for them by real politics. In this way every section finds out its allies and learns who is the common enemy. . . . (No. 12, March 6, 1954)

#### They Can't See for Looking

Detroit.—Grown-ups don't have any effect on me. There isn't anything they can do to me. If they want to fight, I can fight them. But there isn't anything you can do to a bunch of youngsters if they want to throw stones or call you names.

If grown-ups look at me, I just look back at them. There was the time I went to look for an apartment in a white settlement. There were white people sitting on the porch. They looked so hard like you were doing something wrong. I turned around and looked hard and let them look at me. I knew there wasn't anything they could do. And when I turned around and looked and let them look, one woman got so flustered, she got out her fan and started fanning and fanning herself.

But with the kids I don't know.

A lot of white people live in the back of me. There wasn't anything back there but whites and when Negroes would come around, they would turn around and stare. But Negroes have learned to turn around and look as if to say, "What is the matter with me? What are you thinking? Am I in the wrong place? I am an American. I am supposed to walk where I want to." (No. 1, Oct. 3, 1953)

#### How a Manhunt Affects Me

Detroit.—You read about the Jackson manhunt in the paper last issue. Well, on New Year's Eve here in Detroit the cops took an axe and played around the head of a Negro fellow to intimidate him. It was the most brutish thing you could think of. It is called an atrocity when it is done in war by somebody who is officially your enemy. But it isn't an atrocity when it is done to your own people.

I think about it all the time and I know a lot of guys who do. They hate to see war but if it takes some of us to get killed to change things, well, that is the only way. When the colored guy killed those people recently, they just built a belt around the whole city. Every Negro was a suspect. They were stopping every car a Negro was in even when it was on the West Side.

A friend and I were visiting over on the West Side and talking about how they might stop us some night because there aren't many Negroes in that neighborhood. That morning six detectives broke into a house at four o'clock.

I understand the why, but I don't understand the why. I see it as part of the system, but I see so much of it accepted as part of the system, as normal, and I haven't been able to see that as a state of workers coming together.

They put Indians on reservations and every now and then some guy talks about the poor Navahoes. White guys in the shop will say if they came off the reservation, they would scalp us. They are caged up like wild animals. People are afraid of them even though they are so weak. It is a parallel to the Negro question in a way. They can only be afraid because they have a guilty conscience.

(No. 9, Jan. 23, 1954)

## Mexican-Americans Get Stopped by the Cops

Los Angeles.—I went to see a friend who lives in East Los Angeles. He is a Mexican-American fellow with four kids. When I got there nobody was home so I went to his neighbor's house and asked if they knew where he was. . . .

We were having a pleasant time when this unmarked gray Ford pulls up. Two big young guys got out of the car and flashed badges showing that they were plain-clothes men. They were clearly a little taken aback at seeing a non-Mexican in that neighborhood.

They asked, "What are all of you doing here?" One of the fellows quickly answered, "We're waiting here for one of our friends who just got out of the army," as if there had to be some special reason for us sitting there on the stoop. They asked us where we live and for our identification papers. They pulled out some sort of printed form. I asked what it was. The cop said, "It's an FI form and it doesn't mean anything." To another guy he said, "You've had it before, haven't you? You know what it is."

He wanted to know for the form if we'd ever been arrested, have any tickets and where we worked. I asked what the purpose of all this was. "We're just checking up. We'll know you the next time we see you. In case that store over there is robbed we will know where you guys are." He told me they filed the FI form at some police station.

The cops went across the street and called on the police phone to check on our names. After they left, the guys were mad and cussed them out. Some of the fellows took it as a matter of course. They've had to live with this all their lives.

I finally saw my friend the next day and asked him how long this had been going on. He said, "It's been going on all the time. In the last few years they let up a little bit. But they've started in again the last few months. You don't have to be a criminal to be 'on file' nowadays. All you have to do is hang around the Mexican section in East Los Angeles."

(No. 12, March 6, 1954)

## Detroit Riot: Two Camps

By Phyllis Stein

Philadelphia.—During the service my husband was stationed in Detroit and I went out there to live. We found a two room apartment, and shared a bath with a nice couple, Johnny and Shirlee, who hailed from a small town in Tennessee. . . .

One morning at work there was some excitement. It seemed a small race riot was going on and everyone was talking about these "Hoodlum Kids" who started it.

That same girl made a remark about, "It's about time them niggers got it, sticking themselves where they don't belong." I asked her to tell me if she knew what it was all about. No, she didn't know a thing.

I told her I didn't like the word "nigger." I said that people were people, and who was she to say where they belonged. This girl was a devout Catholic, and I asked her if she didn't know Catholics that she didn't like. She gave me a look (I could see fire in her eyes) and walked away.

Looking around I could see how the place was shaping up into two camps. . . .

Off Woodward Avenue, we could see mobs running and screaming. All we saw were white, and just itching for a fight. They looked like a bunch out for a good time and some excitement.

We heard a commotion right in back of us. These kids had stopped the car of a colored man and had dragged him out, and were really beating him up. Someone had found a can of gasoline and was pouring it on his car. At first he fought back and then he looked dazed. I kind of went crazy. I pushed my way through this mob and helped the man up. The boys just looked at me (they seemed dazed, like crazy men) but didn't come near him again.

When I finally got back to the girls who were watching and waiting for me, a few of them came over to me, and I knew they were with me. My "friend" just edged over and whispered, "Nigger lover." She never ate with us again, and only spoke to me when it was necessary. Funny thing, I can't even remember her name.

About 5 P.M. I got a call from my husband to tell me that he wouldn't be home that night. All passes were cancelled and no one could leave. He told me to go straight home and stay there. We both hung up feeling sick.

I can't remember the date of the race riots, but it was a hot, sticky night. My landlord told me that all the people in the house were sitting out on the back porch, and I should join them.

Everyone was there, and I sat down on the steps near Shirlee and Johnny. Someone started making remarks, such as, "This should have happened sooner," "It's a good thing, and I hope the police let them fight it out. Them niggers are getting too big for their britches."

I sat there thinking of how to get started, when I heard Johnny saying, "We're fightin' a war overseas. Why, we could start making life nicer right here. First they should line them niggers up and shoot them all dead, and then when they get done with them, line up all them Goddamn Jews and shoot them dead."

The blood was rushing to my head and my mouth felt dry and parched, but I was able to say, "Johnny, when they're picking up all them dead bodies, I'll be one of them, because I'm Jewish." I said good-night, and went to the bath we had shared and vomited all over the place. Then I went into our furnished two room apartment and cried and cried, till I couldn't cry any more. It was ten years ago, but there are still tears in my eyes as I remember that night.

For three or four days, I didn't see Shirlee or Johnny again. Then one night when I got back from work, I found a dish with

vanilla pudding outside my door with a note, "How come we haven't seen you?" . . .

That very night we went across the hall together and knocked on their door to thank them for the pudding. We chatted for a few minutes and left.

One day Johnny brought up the subject of "The Night on the Back Porch," and told us that other than the man (who was a louse, according to him) who owned the 5-and-10 in their town, he had never met another Jew. He started telling us the old "But You're Different" story, and we told him this wasn't so. . . .

When my husband was transferred to another state and I was to leave for home, Johnny insisted on losing a day's pay to help me pack and take me down to the station. When it was time to get on the train, Shirlee threw her arms about me and started to cry. We each knew that we were losing something.

I've never seen them again. But every Christmas I get mail from Shirlee and Johnny.  
(Nos. 14-15, April 3-17, 1954)

## Activity in Kentucky on Supreme Court Decision

### Letter of the Week

. . . They are having meetings at every barber shop and any place they can meet. Even the teachers and janitors are having meetings. . . .

At the commencement exercise a Negro principal who was the speaker got up on the platform before a mixed Negro and white Board of Education and Negro people and said Negroes were going to school, and soon. . . .

The Negro teachers and janitors had a meeting and discussed jobs. The education commission had pointed out that Negro teachers did not all have a college degree and that some could not teach. But they wouldn't let them get away with that. . . .

They have prepared a petition to take to the City Council stating that they are for a ruling which will not permit any student from going out of his district to another school. This will keep the white students from going over the line to another school to avoid going with Negro students. . . .

The women in the neighborhoods are organizing themselves to see that not only their children go to school properly dressed, but the children of other parents as well. (No. 19, June 12, 1954)

## Supreme Court Indecision

By Al Whitney

. . . The Supreme Court didn't make a decision; it was a decision of indecision. The only time people would get excited is if something started happening. . . .

The big difference between whites and Negroes is that the whites are defending what they think they have. But Negroes know they haven't got, and they fight not to defend anything, but to get what they don't have.

What does a law mean anyhow? They have a law against restaurant discrimination, and against restricted covenants. But all that means is that you can have a "case" when they don't follow the law. . . .

(No. 19, June 12, 1954)

# 4. The World and the 2nd America

## The Beria Purge

Communism as practiced in Russia is a system of the most sweated labor in the world, buttressed by forced labor camps and a vast complex network of spies and counter-spies. The counter-spies are not "foreign agents"; they are "Party men" who spy on the GPU who spy on the Party men, and both spy on the people. This octopus periodically disgorges itself in blood-baths known as purges.

Nevertheless, there could be no greater mistake made than that of all our Russian "experts" who identify all purges as the same type, and are now busy likening the purges following the arrest of the No. 2 man in the whole Russian empire, Lavrenti P. Beria, to the "Trotskyist" Trials of 1936-1938. The purges of the 1936-1938 period announced the consolidation of the monster state. The present period signifies its disintegration. . . .

We are at the beginning of the end of Russian totalitarianism. That does not mean the state-capitalist bureaucracy will let go of its iron grip. Quite the contrary. It will shackle them more as can be seen from Malenkov's blaming of the workers for the poor quality of consumer goods "To the shame of the workers of industry." What it does mean is that from the center of Russian production, from the periphery of the satellite countries oppressed by Russia, and from the insides of the Communist parties, all contradictions are moving to a head and the open struggle will be a merciless fight to the end.  
(No. 1, Oct. 3, 1953)

## Tensions Within the Soviet Union

### Two Worlds: Notes from a Diary

Last July the U. S. Government Printing Office issued Document No. 69 entitled **Tensions Within the Soviet Union**. The study was prepared by some Library of Congress scholars at the request of Senator Alexander Wiley, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations. The honorable Senator got considerable publicity for the document and it is easy to understand why. For the political conclusion of these scholars is that the tensions in the Soviet Union exist, not between the rulers and the workers, but within the intelligentsia that rules.

Only seven pages of this 92 page document are devoted to the workers. It leads them to conclude: "This is particularly notable because the preservation of the Soviet regime may depend upon the Soviet scientist, since revolutions in our day need not be mass uprisings but may hinge upon the mood and upheaval of a few scientists in charge of extraordinary weapons."

The Senator himself adopts this myth and hurries to slander the Russian workers: "Oppression creates inertia, disillusionment, fatigue, aloofness and cynicism."  
It is not easy to see the revolt of the Russian workers because

the methods of struggle in a totalitarian land are not on the surface. The workers unions in Russia have been liquidated by being incorporated into the state apparatus. Nevertheless the struggles have been continuous and have been carried on so persistently at the point of production that the Russian economy is in a constant crisis. Crisis is not a state of mind, but a state of production.

1) Throughout the First and Second Five Year Plans (1928-1938) workers left the plants and returned to their farms with a disrespect for capitalist routines very similar to the Southern production worker in the Northern United States.

2) The passport system accomplished as little in disciplining the workers as had the 1932 laws which authorized the factory director not only to fire a worker for absence without permission but even deprive him of his food card and his living quarters owned by the factory.

3) It was impossible to decree slavery. Quite the contrary. The Russian worker, like the American worker, knows how to handle his job. Where he is forbidden to strike, he slows down. The Senators and scholars speak of "low labor productivity" in Russia as if that means the Russian workers are backward. Like the economists in the United States in relation to American workers, however, the Russian intelligentsia recognizes low productivity for what it is: a sign of revolt against the conditions of production. Figures show that to complete the First Plan even in a half-way fashion, 22.8 million workers were used where the Plan called for only 15.7 million. Labor turnover was no less than 152 per cent.

4) The totalitarian rulers have more power than any government has ever had in history. Nevertheless, they did not feel capable of disciplining this rebellious labor force. They decided instead to divide it, by finding some social basis in the factory, among a special section of the workers. American workers who have seen Reuther operating with the skilled trades will have no difficulty in understanding what Stalin was aiming at.

As early as 1931 Stalin called for the "liquidation of de-personalization." This was a very fancy phrase for a very ugly truth; he had no factory personalities to defend his regime. To get them he decided to give the skilled worker a personality and a wage to go with it and at the same time transform the skilled worker into a speed demon for a day. This man set the "norm," that is, the rate of speed, through especially good machines and supplementary help and at a pace which he knew he would have to keep up for only a single day. This time-study then became the rate for the worker to produce every day.

That is how Stakhanovism was born. It was four years in the making. This speed-up movement met with such resistance that it was not unusual for Stakhanovites to find themselves murdered in the dark of the night.

At the start of war the laws of June 26th and October 2nd, 1940, forbade a worker to leave his job and punished 15 minutes lateness with six months "corrective labor"—labor in the factory with 25 per cent reduction in pay. They established State Labor Reserves which gave the youth technical training of from six months to two years and then made it obligatory for them to work for the state for four years "at the prescribed rate of wages."

Yet, after six months of operation of these laws, the Pravda reported that truancies were greater than in the months prior to it. A declaration of martial law on the railroads was passed similar to Truman's proposal to draft railroad workers in order to prevent their strike in 1946.

In 1943 the conveyor belt system was first introduced. And on the basis of the discipline of the line, there was introduced competition by factories. This meant that Factory Stalin challenges, or, more correctly, is ordered to challenge, Factory Molotov. Factory Molotov must take up the challenge "to fulfill and overfulfill" its quarterly plan by ten per cent. All workers in both factories must pitch into this back-breaking state-ordered plan. This is called "socialist emulation."

Day in and day out the Russian worker has fought the mode of labor in the factory. For two solid decades he has been unyielding in his resistance. Had the revolt not been so continuous, the terror would not have been so violent. No one wants to put millions in forced labor camps. The millions in forced labor camps are a true measure of the never-ending resistance of the Russian workers to their oppressors.

It is these Russian workers who, the honorable Senator tells us, are "aloof." With sure class instinct, he turns from the workers to the "scientists." Technocrats and capitalists have had their day-dreams of push button factories which would solve the class struggle. None, however, have been more naive than the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Russian specialists with their trust that "the few scientists in charge of extraordinary weapons" might substitute for mass uprisings. How Malenkov and Co. would love to believe that! But their ivory towers, unlike the Senate's, are too near the point of production in Russia where day in and day out they must contend, not with mythical scientists of "independent thinking," but with the very real mass resistance.

(No. 5, Nov. 28, 1954)

## Speed-up, USA: To the Tenth of a Second

Los Angeles.—At work I can't say very much because I'm new. But I keep thinking that the Germans revolted against the Russians last June because the Russians were changing the work norms. That's the same thing they're doing here. They loaded the new guys down and then they put a little more work on the old guys. I have never been able to keep up with the work yet. . . .

For six hours one day, a foreman stood behind me and watched me work. The union has been making big speeches saying if there's any speed-up, they'll fight it tooth and nail. All of the union representatives came down, including the president. They told one guy to keep the work-up, that they would give him another time study.

They had an "unbiased" time study man, from another department, study him. The company took one operation off the guy for a few hours, gave it back to him and told him not to be so particular about doing that operation. We've seen or heard nothing else from the union.

To them, a man is nothing but a machine. They say that operation could be done in .08 seconds. Everything is figured out just like a machine. If somebody else has done it, you can do it. If you did it the day before, you can do it the next day. No recognition about your being human or anything else.

With my time study, I don't even have enough time to take a short sneeze. If I had to blow my nose, I'd go into the hole. But still, they told me I have 38 minutes out of ten hours that I don't have anything whatsoever to do.

They have it all figured out in thousandths. Everything you do. The foreman explained to me for a half hour how it was all figured

out that I had 38 minutes a day free. It's a tenth of a second that I don't have anything to do on each operation. . . .  
(No. 13, March 20, 1954)

## One Year Has Passed News and Views of the World

A year ago this week—on June 17, 1953—German workers electrified the world. They rose in rebellion against the massed might of Russian occupation troops in East Germany. . . .

Strikes and demonstrations broke out in every part of East Germany. Demonstrators freed political prisoners, burned party headquarters, destroyed armaments and even plants. They demanded that Russian troops go home. They demanded German unification. The native police fled or actually joined the workers. This call to freedom thundered to West Germany and was swelled by strikes in Poland and in Czechoslovakia, in Italy and in France.

For all their might, the Russian guns were strangely silent. In small but important numbers Russian troops fraternized with German workers and mutinied against their High Command.

The rising was not put down. It subsided. The workers won important political concessions on speed-up and work discipline. The momentum of the first battle was over.

Then the Russians went into action. They immediately executed 18 soldiers for mutiny. By courts-martial and surveillance they intensified their brutal military discipline. They rotated troops back to Russia and brought in new replacements.

They purged the East German police. . . . Unable to destroy the workers movement by destroying top leaders—in this rising the masses led themselves—they attempted to frighten the workers by seizing individuals who were known to be active. About 50 demonstrators have been executed and about 1,000 were thrown into jail from one year to life. The counter-attack continues to this day. . . .  
(No. 20, June 26, 1954)

## In Kenya: Blood and Determination News and Views of the World

. . . In spite of British attempts to draw the net tighter Mau Mau infiltrate under the very noses of the troops. . . . Though the British authorities arrest thousands and kill hundreds, the military drive is being defeated by the natives' determination to win their freedom.  
(No. 24, Aug. 21, 1954)

## Puerto Ricans and the Shooting

I think those guys took their grievance to the right place.  
Auto Worker, Detroit

## Sit-downs Against Layoffs News and Views of the World

. . . Italian workers have found a way to fight these layoffs. They stay in the plant.

One stay-in lasted day in and day out for a whole year. Four thousand workers were involved. The whole community rallied around the sit-downers, supplying them and their families with food and other necessities. As a result, the military was helpless to

intervene. Protected and supplied by the community, the sit-downers in the plant reorganized production to put out three tractors of a new type. They worked out what was needed by the community and produced that.  
(No. 10, Feb. 6, 1954)

## Family Budget With Five Kids

I like your series on "The Family Budget." Here is the budget of a family with five kids, ranging in age from six years to 16. The youngest is a boy and the others are all girls.

The items listed are on a weekly basis:

School lunches .....	\$ 4.25
Weekly allowance (7 people) .....	8.00
Gas and oil for car .....	5.00
Bus tickets .....	1.75
Clothing .....	7.50
Milk .....	5.00
Cigarettes .....	3.50
Refreshments .....	2.00
Fuel oil .....	4.00
Electricity .....	2.50
Newspapers and magazines .....	1.25
Furniture payments .....	3.50
Telephone .....	1.50
Groceries .....	35.00
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>\$84.75</b>

My weekly income is \$73.50. That leaves us in the hole \$11.25 each week. We generally do two things to make up the deficit. One, my wife works when she can find a job. Two, we let bills accumulate or cut down on the food and clothing allowance. To cut down on the food and clothing allowance lays the ground work for a real crisis in the family. To begin with, neither the clothing nor food allowance is anywhere near enough to meet our minimum requirements. . . .  
(No. 14, April 3, 1954)

## Working on Farm and Factory

Flint.—I don't know just how to explain it, but work on a farm means something. What you do is important, you have that ground, and you plant a crop and you work with it. You watch it and figure things out and sometimes even it's like a game.

When you work in a factory you just work. You do things just like a habit after a while. When you first start on a job in a factory you use your mind, you have to think of what you're doing, you use your mind and your body. For a little while. But after a while, you just get in line. You don't have to think. You just work. It's just motions.

On a farm, you've got the ground and the seed to contend with. You've got the weather you've got to contend with. In a factory every move you make is the same damn thing, day after day.

As far as contentment goes, I'd rather work on a farm and lose everything at the end of the year, end up without a penny, than work in a factory and have even a real good profit at the end of a year.

The factory is just routine. Day after day you just go to work. Payday you pay the bills. Then you go to work again. Over and

over and over again, it's the same routine. In a factory, if you didn't have other guys to work with you'd go crazy. (No. 15, April 17, 1954)

## Our Aim and Our Program

### Editorial

... There have been repeated complaints, from friend and foe alike. What is the purpose of the paper? What good does it do to write for the paper? Or, what is all the griping about in the paper?

Yes, it is true we propose no program. It's also true that we don't tell workers, Negroes and others, how or for what to struggle. On the other hand, we do have ideas. What are the ideas that we have? The main and most important one is that no one, absolutely no one, except the workers and the millions of others who go along with the workers, can settle the questions of war, depression and totalitarianism.

Are we against McCarthy? Yes, we're against McCarthy. Are we for higher wages, better working conditions, the six hour day, stronger unions and a host of other admirable objectives? Of course. We're for all that, and more. Then the critic might say: Why don't you say so?

When those who call for a program or "line" say, why don't you say so? what they really mean is not that we should say so, but that we should yell, scream and continually agitate for these things. When they say that, they are saying in reality that workers and others have to be told what the good things in life are. We don't think so.

Even more. It would be extremely ridiculous for a paper our size, with the number of people associated with us, to preach to the workers the things for which they ought to struggle and the ways and means they should use to carry on these struggles.

CORRESPONDENCE is a paper that is written and edited by its readers. This one fact, and it is no small one, is the program and the line of the paper. The editorials, the political articles and analysis of current affairs will flow from what our readers have to say. The attitudes to the unions, the needs, interests and problems of the workers, Negroes, women and youth, as they are expressed in the pages of the paper, issue after issue, will clearly establish the line, program and direction of the paper. . . .

The simplest problem for the paper is to draw up a list of demands in the interest of workers, Negroes, women and youth. The hardest problem is to avoid doing that very thing.

The only program we have is to establish the paper, to make it a living reality. No amount of agitation in our paper will result in the six hour day. No amount of agitation in our paper will solve the questions of war, peace and depression. An important step in that direction would be the establishment of a paper that existed solely for the purpose, and that made it unmistakably clear, that what is decisive in this moment of history is what workers have to say.

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves. . . ." Help us to make history for our time and our circumstances by making CORRESPONDENCE a vital, vibrant and living factor in the social struggles of our time. (No. 15, April 17, 1954)

## Socialism or Barbarism

### Two Worlds: Notes From a Diary

I have received from abroad several issues of the small, but important, French magazine, **Socialism or Barbarism**. This magazine was the first to publish a translation of the booklet called **The American Worker**. . . . The introduction to the French translation . . . builds a bridge to the European working class:

"We are presenting here an unedited document of great value from the fact that it settles its accounts definitively with the absurd contention according to which the American workers do not have any class consciousness and with the myth of the comfort and luxury of the American workers. . . .

"But the value of this little booklet is much deeper. Every worker who is exploited, whatever be his 'country,' will find there a picture of his life as a worker. . . .

"To us it is no accident that such a specimen of documentary working class literature comes to us from America. . . . The most industrial country in the world, with the most concentrated working class has to develop talents that are original and new. It is an indication of the vitality and depth of the struggle of the American workers."

There lives in Holland a man who is the only living connection with the founders of the modern movement of the working class, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. His name is Anton Pannekoek and he is 84 years old. I remember when I was just a child his name was already a revered one to the European working class, for as far back as the first world war he had fought the socialist betrayers of the working class. He also opposed Lenin and Trotsky. He had his own views of how the emancipation of the working class would take place. But to the European the emancipation of the working class is synonymous with Marxism, and he is at a loss to understand the American working class. Here is Pannekoek's comment on (**The American Worker**):

"I have to tell you how pleased I have been with the articles on 'The American Worker' which clarifies considerably the enigmatic problem of this working class without socialism."

The American working class has long been a mystery to the European, worker and intellectual. . . . Because the American worker has built no mass labor party, he seems non-political. Because he is largely unacquainted with the doctrines of Karl Marx, he seems non-socialist. Yet he is so militant and has thoughts of his own. . . .

The way in which this pamphlet is making its way in Europe (it has been translated into Italian and there will soon be a German translation), the way in which it is being received, is but a sign of what is vital and what is important in American life.

The American workers and people of the middle class, women, Negroes, youth have much to teach the workers of Europe—and **much to learn**. The pages of CORRESPONDENCE are dedicated to making this experience of the second America, an experience out of which a new way of life is being born, known to the world. This is what America has that the world needs. Not the swimming pools and television sets, not the foreign policy of Dulles or the military might of the Pentagon, but the day to day life of the people, their hostility to bureaucracy, the way in which new talents and new energies are rising. (No. 21, July 10, 1954)

# 5. McCarthy and Communism

## Readers' Views

A fellow I work with, a former Southerner, said to me, "I don't know what you think of McCarthy, but I think he's a Communist. You notice everytime he speaks on TV, he never looks at the audience. He's always looking down. He's hiding something. Some reporter once interviewed him and wrote that all during the interview McCarthy didn't look him in the face once. He's knocking off all the little Communists because they must have something on him." Inspector, Los Angeles

## Is McCarthy a Communist?

McCarthy has made a name for himself by attacking Communists. But a number of ordinary people have written us letters which show their deep conviction that McCarthy is himself the most ferocious Communist in the United States.

All sorts of learned people, historians, intellectuals, and above all, political radicals, will see in this only the ignorance and backwardness of the common people. And, as usual, these wise men will be wrong. The people know that there is a Communism which means a society organized for the benefit of all, particularly those who work. And they know quite well that McCarthy is not one of those.

But the people know too that the Communism of Russia, of China and of all the totalitarian states, is the merciless enemy of all equality, justice and political rights for people. And many are convinced that McCarthy is a representative of this type of Communism.

CORRESPONDENCE joins heartily with them in this. McCarthy is a brother to Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Mao-Tse-Tung, Malenkov and Franco. . . .

You cannot judge these fellows by the things they say. Hitler used to swear that the greatest enemy of the world was Communism. But what was distinctive about his government was that not a single soul in Germany could publish a piece of paper, or make a speech, or hold a meeting, or write a book except under the authority of the one party state that ruled Germany. Above all, no workers could strike. Terrorizing the whole country was a secret police force. Millions were imprisoned in concentration camps. All opposition was brutally wiped out.

Stalin, on his part, proclaimed that the greatest enemy of civilization was Fascism. . . .

Now you don't need a lot of learning to understand why such governments arise. They arise only where opposing forces in the state are in such deadly conflict with one another and are each so strong that they paralyze the whole life of the country. Stalin had to destroy the workers movement in Russia because if he didn't de-

stroy it, it would destroy him. That was the only way out of the paralysis.

Now the United States has been in this state of paralysis for at least a dozen years. . . .

Here are some examples. The Republicans brought in the Taft-Hartley Act to discipline the workers, but they cannot enforce it. The workers re-elected Truman in 1948 on the ground that he was going to repeal Taft-Hartley. But he could not. Eisenhower promised to reform the Act and appointed a labor man, Durkin, to do it. But when Durkin brought in his proposals, Eisenhower refused them and Durkin resigned. After seven years the Act is just where it was. That is what we call political paralysis. . . .

Nobody knows what to do. That was the situation in Germany which brought Hitler to power. A similar situation brought Stalin to power. Hungry Joe has recognized that such a situation exists in the United States. And he wants to settle it as Hitler and Stalin settled it. . . .

Joe will never get his chance. But if he did, where would he learn. Hitler said that in building his state, he learned a lot from the way the Southerners in the United States controlled the Negroes. But Hitler learned even more from Stalin and the Communists who are real masters of totalitarian politics. Joe will have to learn from them. So that when the workers say, "That man McCarthy is always denouncing Communists but he sounds exactly like one to me," they are perfectly right.

However, a better word for Joe would be totalitarian. That word would include both the Hitler type and the Stalin type. And although sooner or later squawking Joe will squawk no longer, that totalitarian type will continue to exist in the United States. It will exist and it will grow. . . .

Squawking Joe wants to cure the paralysis in the totalitarian way. But the people can cure it another way. . . .

(No. 14, April 13, 1954)

## Natural-Born Foreman

For a long time I thought our foreman was just production crazy. But that isn't what drives him at all. His driving aim is his passion for bossing. I had a real run-in with him one day and he said so in so many words. "I'm boss in this department and I aim to prove it to you."

It started when he tried to get more than our normal production. We called the committeeman. He is usually the one who calls the committeeman whenever there's any trouble, and it killed him that we called instead of him. . . . He warned us he'd be watching for us to make one slip.

When we stopped to wait for the trucker to move a truck of glass into place he thought he had his chance. He wanted to know what we were waiting for, and when I told him, he shouted for us to push it into place ourselves. When I said the superintendent had said women weren't supposed to push the heavy trucks, he shouted, "I don't care what he said, I'm boss here." So I pushed it, and told him to get the committeeman again. He really blew his top.

Up in the office he threw in a lot of lies about my never getting production and such, but he started and ended on this. "I like your committeeman and he likes me, but you I don't like. . . . You're

arrogant. I give orders and you make an issue out of it. You'll corrupt the good workers, but I won't let you crucify them. I'm supposed to be foreman over two departments, and I don't see everything that goes on, but I have a few honest souls down there who tell me what happens when I'm not around. If you want trouble, you'll get it. Because you're going to find out who's boss!" . . .

Some wonder why the company keeps him on. I figure it starts out with a drive for more production but it ends up with the need to subordinate people to the machine, even if production suffers. Working on a machine is monotonous, but working on the machine itself doesn't "depersonalize" you. It requires bosses. Some foremen do it more subtly. Some wind up with ulcers or nervous breakdowns. Some foremen like this one, are "naturals" and glory in it. (No. 11, Feb. 20, 1954)

### Foremen—Then and Now

The foremen like Red Becker remind me of sergeants in the Army. Lots of guys who were sergeants or MP's in the Army, become foremen when they get back. They know how to pick that type wherever they are.

Ex-GI, Detroit  
(No. 13, March 20, 1954)

### Lead Girl

My experience in the shop, is that the career women, the lead girls, were always dressed differently. They were always just perfect. Their jeans, if they didn't wear expensive slacks, always had a crease in them. Their make up and hair was just perfect too. We had to wear hairnets and most of the girls wore fine ones, but the lead girls always seemed to wear the heaviest ones that could be bought.

If you would ask the lead girl for some help she would run up to the work and approach it as if, "I got you where I want you." She would run up to it and in two seconds it was done perfectly and then she would run off. She did things so fast that you hardly knew she was there before she was gone. She was a tiny thing but she would lift everything. She'd never let anyone help her. That was unheard of. She would pick up a tremendous steel frame for the fuselage and she'd carry it around as if it were a fishing pole. Sometimes if she'd see you doing it she'd do it for you. She treated us as if we were babies. She pampered the other women as if she were a big strong man.

What's so peculiar about her is that she dresses more feminine at work than most of the other women, but in actions she's almost like a man. That's the way I think most career women are.

(No.5, Nov. 28, 1953)

### Readers Reply on "What Is a Communist"

The way I see it, America is a place where they talk about democracy and don't practice it. And Russia is a place where they talk about Communism and don't practice it.

A. W., Detroit

At least since Marx, communism has also meant a "free association of producers," in which human freedom receives its fullest possible development. The totalitarian dictatorship of the present Soviet state does not have its origins in Marxism.

M. C. D., Cambridge, Mass.

## Life in an American Concentration Camp

By a Japanese-American

I was going to school in San Francisco when Pearl Harbor happened.

In the Japanese community in San Francisco there was fear, parents didn't know whether to let their children go to school as Americans about being "Japs," and some whites were hostile.

Some of the Issei (first generation Japanese who came from the old country) were picked up by the FBI and transported to concentration camps without being able to find out what charges they were facing. They weren't given time to say good-bye to their families.

Pretty soon there was a curfew for the Issei. They were to be in their home by nine P.M., and they could not travel more than a certain distance from their residences unless they had a permit, which most of the physicians had to get.

One day we were going into town for some shopping, and we noticed some M.P.'s posting notices on telephone poles. We stopped and read; all those of Japanese ancestry were to plan to be evacuated out of the area by May 12, 1942. We were instructed to carry the minimum amount of personal things—approximately one suitcase apiece. We were given about three to four weeks' notice.

Terminal Island, a Japanese fishing colony in Southern California, was given 24 hours' notice to vacate. There was much confusion in trying to sell their household goods and belongings. I have heard of a family selling their refrigerator for two dollars to some eager shysters who flocked there like vultures. . . .

In the spring of 1942, there were about 117,000 men, women and children of Japanese ancestry removed from the west coast states of Washington, Oregon, California and the state of Arizona into temporary gathering places which we called Assembly Centers. About 75,000 of us were Americans born here, and the remainder were our parents who were aliens because they were not permitted to become citizens. . . .

We were guided to our barracks which was about 100 by 20 feet and housed six families. It was just a frame on a cement floor with tar paper on the exterior. We had no finished walls, and partitions between families did not cover the pitch of the roof so we heard crying of babies, quarrels, scoldings and private conversations of neighbors. . . .

What we young people liked about the life was that we had plenty of time now for socializing, we didn't have chores which we had, when we were home. . . .

We chose the jobs we wanted, because there was no pressure of making a living. We chose because we were getting out from under parents' heels, or because we didn't just want to be doing nothing. It was the first time all of us had it so easy, yet I used to wake up hoping it was all a dream, a nasty dream.

My mother had not entered the assembly center with us, as she was in a hospital at that time. The hospital happened to be within view of the camp, but we were not allowed out of the center. My father tried many times to be allowed to visit her, but he was told there was much red tape to go through before such consent was given.

Finally, he got an O.K., and an M.P. went with us, but that day

was a tragic one, my mother died before we got a chance to step out-side of the barbed wire fence. . . .

We were escorted from the assembly center to the train for Colorado. It took a day to travel because we'd stop in so many little towns to let all the other trains go by. Wherever we stopped, and when we got to our destination, there was a crowd of townspeople to greet us with curiosity. The press probably gave them the impression that we'd be some sort of freak attraction.

We arrived at the relocation camp by covered army trucks, and I must say we looked like a miserably tired bunch. . . .

The next day we were up early expecting another new life. After breakfast, we took a walk around the camp and the barbed-wire fence was right around us again. At each corner was a high tower, where a sentry was posted. . . .

Some barracks were built low into hills, so you climbed down the stairs into the one room apartment. (Later, we found these families would have a bucket brigade whenever it rained hard.) . . . It was a usual thing to come across snakes and turtles and howling coyotes.

Not only did the evacuees make cages for these "pets" out of scrap lumber, some would make beautiful chests, dressers, chairs, desks, and so forth. My father made us double decker bunk beds because we were so crowded, and chairs for visitors. Later we curtained the "bedroom" off to give us privacy for dressing and when some member of the family had visitors. . . .

An effort was made by the War Relocation Authority to group together the people from each locality. In this way there were groups formed: clubs, youth gangs, baseball teams.

The various centers had anywhere from 7,000 to 18,000 people and had to cope with community problems of sanitation, construction, water supply, power and light. The community services were run by the evacuees, while the administration, fire and internal security (police) were run by the Caucasian personnel with evacuee help.

The Nisei, because they were citizens, were allowed to be local government representatives. However, the Nisei were a small adult minority as they were 33 per cent of the entire adult population. There was trouble in some centers where tensions rose on community policies. Errors were made by the authorities (WRA), and there was much dispute among the anti-fascists, the middle class business men, the fascists, and between the Issei and Nisei vying for leadership. Living under such abnormal conditions where there were resentments, frictions, tensions and nothing we could depend on, the differences would come to an explosive point. . . .

There was plenty of time for recreation, as we had no chores to do after the work hours. . . . Before the year was over, we had a hobby show, and what amazing things the young and old made. People were discovering talents that they never had the time to find out about. Painters sprung up, wood carvers, male crocheters, metal-crafters, weavers, and any number of things made from raw material found about the camp.

After a while the center had a canteen, shoe repair, barber shop, clothing store, cleaners, mail service, newspaper. It seemed the center was buzzing with activity now, but the more active people started to leave one by one or in groups—to seek a life where they could determine some part of their destination.

Those who stayed in camp until they were permitted to return to the West were first met with hostility and some violence. Most had lost their businesses, faced unemployment, lost homes and farmland. Each person would have to start anew, picking another location, changing occupation, finding some means of making a social life, that had been broken up. It was more difficult for the older generation to get adjusted again.

Some Americans say, when they hear of this mass evacuation of one race, "You were lucky you're not in Japan or China where you'd be worse off." To these people, I ask: Would you accept such a life behind barbed wire fences? It is not a matter of being better off than someone else, or comparing conditions to the worst possible. When you do that, you fall into the trap meant for you by those in control of society who want you to be satisfied to have them run your life. If you compare your conditions with what you think it ought to be and could be, then you begin to try to build a better life for yourself and those about you.

(Nos. 17-21, May 15-July 10, 1954)

### Mrs. Jones, McCarthy and Communism

We call her Mrs. Jones, but she is really several persons. In fact, she is several millions, and you could not guess in a month who they are. They are housewives, women of the middle class. And not a week has passed since CORRESPONDENCE first appeared but we get letters from them. They ask us, where do we come in, we, the housewives? What about us?

CORRESPONDENCE, they say, talks all the time about workers, workers. We do not like the present society either, and we want a new one. But, continues Mrs. Jones, you seem to have no use for us, no place for us. She says it with insistence, sometimes with passion, sometimes with rage. . . .

So there we have it. On the one hand, the working class, especially organized labor, standing up for a principled conception of democracy, decent, honest and ready to puncture this gas-filled balloon of a McCarthy, if he comes near to them. And on the other hand, all the leading elements of our society, either secretly sympathetic to this unmitigated rascal, this exposed crook, or afraid to smash him because in the last analysis they know in their bones that this corruption that is McCarthy is bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh.

Mrs. Jones must choose. . . .

The only honest determined defenders of democracy in America are the workers. And the Mrs. Joneses of America are fortunate that they live in a country which has the greatest and most powerful defenders of democracy and enemies of totalitarianism in the world, the American working class. . . .

That is why, Mrs. Jones, CORRESPONDENCE always bases itself upon the workers. But we are not so foolish as to believe that the American workers constitute the American people. And that is why your letters to CORRESPONDENCE constitute so important an element in what we are trying to do. . . .

(No. 15, April 17, 1954)

## 6. A New Culture

### A New Culture Editorial

We have received many letters from readers who would like to see more politics in the paper.

One point however should be made here. When I think of politics as we are talking about it today, I see something entirely new. The essence of the newness is that the American working class has adopted a new form of the class struggle. Picket lines, wages and hours, union bureaucrats and even the union meetings do not command the lively interest of the workers that they held in the past. Yet from the stories that we get every day from the shops, we can see a new form of struggle emerging. It never seems to be carried to its complete end, yet its existence is continuous. The real essence of this struggle and its ultimate goal is: a better life, a new society, the emergence of the individual as a human being. Each scrap with the boss, each manifestation of discontent with things as they are, all tend to smash down the old and help the new emerge. This struggle is not the old one. This is the struggle to establish here and now a new culture, a workers culture.

Culture for the American workers does not necessarily mean attending lectures, visiting museums, reading or writing books. For him it is a way of life, his relations with his fellow humans on the job, his relations with his neighbors, the kind of house he lives in, what he does in his spare time, the movies he sees, the things he likes or dislikes, this is his culture.

It is this that we must be extremely sensitive to. We must watch with an eagle eye every change or indication of the things that these changes reflect. It is these things that must fill our consciousness and the pages of the paper.

From earliest time man has chosen various forms to express his feelings, the ideas that motivate his life and express his desires. The cave man scratched these things on his cave wall with stone implements; later, others expressed themselves in their architecture. The middle ages found feudal lords gathering around themselves artisans, craftsmen and artists to give expression to their idea of culture. Today things are different. If we fail to recognize that difference then it will be impossible to give expression to it.

We know the vital force of our society to be the working class. We must observe the forms that this class uses in expressing itself. In the shop it may be marked by an aggressive attitude toward the boss, by the attitude of the worker toward his machine, the men around him. His activities outside the shop are a vital part of the same. This is the expression of the things he feels, his own attempt to build for himself and his family the kind of life he wants to lead. It is those things that constitute his culture. The things he does to his home in the way of decoration and conveni-

ences, his car, TV, his friends, amusements, sports, the places he goes, and the things he does are all an expression of what he wants out of life.

No one compels him to do any of these things as a boss in the shop compels him to bend over his machine. These things are his free expression of his ideas and desires as much as if he were to sit down and write about them, a thing he rarely does. We must see it, put it in the paper. It is his culture. It is that expression of him that we must convey abroad and seek from those abroad who observe the same expression in European workers.

(No. 6, Dec. 12, 1953)

### Changes in the Deep South Worker's Journal

By Charles Denby

When I think of the economic changes that have taken place in the farming area of the deep South, where I was born, I say to myself, "If the Southern System and the relation of whites towards Negroes, politically and socially, had changed to the same degree, the South is where I would choose to live." When I compare these changes with conditions of the factory workers in the North, in relation to workers laboring easier or more relaxed, the farming work of today in the South surpasses the factory work in the North.

I am not saying that no changes have been made in regard to the conditions of work here. From 1926, when I first started working in a factory, to now, there have been some tremendous changes. In that span of time, the necessity of production, introducing new machines, hoping to eliminate manpower and at the same time finding themselves forced to add more manpower, this and the rise of the CIO have caused great changes here. But the continuing everyday grind in the shops, as continuous as a clock ticks, every day, every month and year, in this there has not as yet been any change.

During my childhood days in the South (or back home, as thousands of us southern people use this saying), farming was looked upon as the lowest and poorest form of laboring. Many farm workers would try to avoid letting it be publicly known that he or she earned his living by farming. In those days it was primitive or feudal if there ever was such. Many used oxen. The better farmers used mules for the cultivation of the owners' land which they worked. The acreage depended upon the number of members in the family, from the age of five or six, till as long as you were able to walk, raise a hoe, or hold to the handles of a plow. Practically every farmer in those days worked twice the land he should. I have known a farmer to plant grain and never get to work it because he over-estimated what he could work. This was mainly cotton and corn. In those early years of my life this type of work was rugged and grinding. We worked from February through November. But there were three months of some relaxation. Although we put in about the same number of hours as the factory and other industrial workers, our work was not by hours. It was from daylight to dark, as we would say, "From can't to can't," meaning you cannot see when you start to work, and you cannot see when you stop.

There was a human and personal relation existing between those farmers that I have witnessed no other place. There is a different type of relation existing here, the relation of one worker to another after understanding their interests are the same in the fight against the boss. In these large factories you meet hundreds of workers from all parts of the country, with many different backgrounds.

Some have had other training and experience. We sometimes feel we know each other in the shop and out. Some get in leading positions in the unions and become political. Differences of opinion arise between these and the rank and file workers, along with hostility and hate. The thing that is so odd to me, it is always remembered by these, and they hold it against you to the end of time. With the ordinary rank and file worker, the same can happen, but it is worked out in many instances and forgotten. This was also true with those farmers in the South, who because of this continuing rugged life understood one another from head to foot.

In those days, many of the homes were one room with a kitchen. Some were log huts with mud mixed with pine straws dobed between the open spaces of the logs. Some families owned a few milk cows, just enough for the family. There were some that rented cows from the owner of the land. And when the cows were not giving milk, we small ones had to be out before day, and walk to another family to borrow enough milk for the day. When we returned we would be soaking and wet with the cold dew. We also had to do the same many mornings to borrow several matches or a piece of firewood to cook. There were not enough beds in some of these homes to supply the family. As one friend said to me, he was 16 before he went to bed. Before that he went to pallet, meaning he slept on the floor.

Many used a small 15 cent tin lamp for light in these homes. Part of the time we had no kerosene. We would cut some fat pine and put it in the fire to make light, in order to study our lessons for school. I remember on one occasion the teacher said he would not punish a child for not learning if he had to study by the fire. This strain on our eyes could cause blindness.

King Cotton ruled and dominated our life. There was no pasture to keep up the cattle. We kept them tied with a rope, taking them to work with us in order to move them around. This served two purposes. It would fatten the cows so we would receive a larger quantity of milk. But there was also a limit to the hogs we could raise because of the need of the soil for cotton. A hog eats more than any living thing and we could not afford the corn. Some families would keep very few hogs. They bought their meat from the owner of the land. Many families would share theirs. Many times, from 15 to 20 small boys would swim in some filthy, muddy, shallow pond where the hogs had been wallowing around.

Several years after the election of President Roosevelt and the NRA, farmers could not work the amount of land the owners wanted them to. They were allotted less acreage. If they cultivated more, the extra was destroyed. Many felt they could not exist on this. It seemed practically impossible. But they soon discovered by working less land, giving them time to put more work into it, they produced as much or more than they did before. Today many of these farmers own their own land, work about half what was decided by the NRA, yet double the amount, producing more with far less labor.

Yet along with hating the dreadful life of farming in those early days, there was a scenery of beauty, that we alone, with the time of the year, produced. And as I think back, no other beauty compares with it. In July, when my eyes focused across a wide, long and level distant cotton field, with four or five different colors of blossoms, purple, red, white and yellow, with its lustrous, lively, bluish leaves, it was a glorious feeling.

Then, looking in another direction, in some low fertile bottom soil, the corn, with its grayish brown tops, every stalk standing even at the top, as though it was measured and sawed evenly. And their stalks, with white and red silky tassels, soft and silky as anything my hand ever touched, developing into an ear of corn. No scenery I have witnessed is as beautiful. . . . None competes with these series that came from the sweat of the inhuman and unpaid labor that these farmers helped develop and produce in my early life.

When I was there a year ago, every family had electric lights, large beautiful gas stoves, refrigerators, radios and some had TV's. Fifty per cent have their own tractors, cars and trucks. They start farming in April with their tractors. They cultivate in one day what took us a month to work in my young life. They are through with work by September. The mule and wagon are of no use. They have large pastures for their cattle, large fishing and swimming pools. They are doubling and tripling the old production with far less labor put into it. They have four to five months of rest and relaxation. To this extent it is a New South, far from my childhood days, and is making its contribution to the development of a New America.

(No. 8, Jan. 9, 1954)

## Attitudes That Are Miles Apart A Woman's Place

By Marie Brant

Women have different ideas on many things from men. A woman leads a different life from a man. But there is often as much difference in the life and attitudes of a working class woman and a middle class woman as there is between a foreman and a worker, even though they both work for the company. . . .

I have heard that all people, even though they live differently, more or less act according to human nature, the same all over, all the time. But in everyday life this isn't true. Women who are the wives of professional men and business men or are business or professional women, and factory workers or the wives of factory workers as a whole, live and therefore think and act very differently. Being women, they have similar problems. But the attitudes to family and work and the world in general can be and most of the time are miles apart. . . .

I have seen in some middle class homes practically a family crisis about who is going to wash the dishes. It is as though they are saying, am I giving too much? Am I doing my fair share, what do I owe, what is owed to me? There are times when you have to make a fight about it. You can't divide a marriage down the middle and say, this is his fair share, this is mine. When you come home from work, if you have a family, you see what has to be done and you start to do it. You say to your children or your husband: I don't have the time or the energy to do a certain thing. I think you should do it. And you insist that they do. But you have a sense of responsibility to your home and family. There is no great fuss made about work that has to be done.

It is not that they are sacrificing their lives for their families. A working woman will say, I want some time for myself. But it is with the idea that they are part of that family and their needs have to be recognized as well as anyone else's. Working class women

try as much as they can to make marriage and family a group responsibility rather than a business partnership, where you are always wondering if you are being cheated. The family is more important than themselves individually. A marriage, both the pleasure and work, has to be shared.

It isn't easy for a woman of the middle class. If a woman's husband is a professional, she is his informal representative. She has to be a hostess, not to friends, but to people who will further her husband's or her career. She has to be constantly thinking of how people look at her, what impression she is making. She is always in the position of having to "handle" people.

She has to keep up appearances, sometimes with even less income than a worker makes. Professionals have to wear the right clothes and be seen in the right places. But even if a particular middle class woman doesn't have to for her job or for her husband's, the neighbors that live next door on either side, her friends and the life that she has always known, pushes her to act that way anyway. With these families, even if they don't absolutely have to live for what other people think, living for the neighborhood is a way of life. They are always trying to keep up with someone, whether it is the latest fashion or the latest way of raising children.

In a plant, everyone knows that the day before payday almost everyone is broke. No one is trying to keep up "appearances." You know what everyone else is making, what his check is each week. You are not out to impress anyone, especially the foreman. If you did, then the only impression that you would make would be one of a snob, someone who thinks and tries to act as if he is better than everyone else.

A worker's wife wants to look and dress well. She wants to have a nicely furnished home and she wants to be able to entertain. But the first thing that the check is for is rent, food, bills. What is left can go for clothes and the house. To have to live that way is not the way it should be, but it is the way it is. You can't work on appearances.

Middle class women try to live through their children and make their children an extension of themselves. They expect them to live the way they want them to live, doing 24 hours a day what they want them to do; marrying the kind of husband or wife that they want them to marry. Some women even show jealousy when you show affection to their children. When their children marry it is as though they have lost possession, rather than that a human being whom they have helped bring to maturity is now prepared to live a life of his own.

It isn't often that working class parents will ask about the man their daughter wants to marry, how much money does he have? What kind of a family does he come from? They ask can he keep a job; can he support you? Do you think if the two of you work together, you can establish a home, get some furniture, in a few years buy a house? What kind of a person is he and do you love him?

As I have already said, if you are a woman you have something in common with every other woman. But to know the difference that generally exists between women of different classes is to know the difference between two ways of life.

(No. 8, Jan. 9, 1954)

## Clean-Up in the Living Room

I had just straightened the house up for Sunday when my eight year old daughter came in and dropped her coat, hat, sweater and mittens on the living room floor. Then the four year old came in, took off her things and left them in a heap on the floor also.

About then my husband arrived and as he took off his things, he left them where he passed, dropping his jacket, his hat and finally his shoes.

When I saw that mess, instead of exploding, I marched to the hall closet and took out every coat, hat and jacket that I could find. I brought them into the living room and scattered them over the floor. All three of them, the children and my husband, looked at me puzzled. So I explained.

"If I am going to have to pick up all the things that each one of you have dropped, I'd just as soon use the living room floor for a closet. This way, you can drop it off as you come in and pick it up on your way out."

Without a word, they all quietly went over and picked up their things and took them in the closet and hung them up.

(No. 18, May 29, 1954)

## Exchanging Views

The money my husband brings home from his two jobs is handy, but I never see him. Many times he comes home, I am so sleepy that even when he wakes me up, I never see him. He sleeps about four hours, then he is gone all day. The kids never see him except weekends. The money is real nice but it destroys our life. If it hadn't been that we had such a hard time finding a place! Sometimes I would go to bed and cry, thinking we will have to move again. . . .

Ford Worker's Wife, Detroit

## Back Talk

. . . I remember when I first married, my husband told me I couldn't go to a certain place or buy something I wanted. When he would say this I would just say nothing. My feelings were hurt but I said nothing. It was not because he didn't want me to buy something. He was testing me. He didn't want this relationship. He wanted me to do as I wanted.

After a few months he told me if I want to do something I should just do it. He wanted to see how much spunk I had. He didn't want to run me.

Mrs. A. T., Flint

## Dick Wakefield . . . Bonus Babies Don't Grow Up In This Corner—Sports

Among the rookies trying out for a berth with the Washington Senators this year was 32 year old Dick Wakefield. This was not the first time around for Wakefield. His baseball career began 13 years ago, when he signed a contract with the Detroit Tigers for a bonus of \$50,000. He had all the style, grace and class of a natural athlete.

They immediately capitalized on his natural ability at the plate by calling him up from the minors after only two years. He had been farmed out in the first place to work on his fielding which had not improved.

Because of his extravagant bonus, Wakefield was resented by his Tiger teammates. They had to work to make a place for themselves on the team. Wakefield never had to. In his isolation from the rest of the team he was denied the experience of being part of a team, and he missed out on the knowledge his teammates had of the game—knowledge so essential to the development of a young player.

His first year at Detroit, 1943, he lived up to his promise at the plate by battling it out with Luke Appling for the batting title. A last-week slump handed the crown to Appling who hit .328 to Wakefield's .316. A star at the plate, Wakefield was still a sloppy fielder.

In 1944, loaned by the Navy for the last 12 weeks of the season, Wakefield's bat sparked the Tigers to a photo-finish with the Browns, but it was still the same story in the glove department.

In 1945 the Tigers won both pennant and World Series without Wakefield's help. He spent all that season in the Navy. When he returned to the Tigers in 1946 he was no longer considered a "phee-nom." He was just expected to take his place on the championship team. This he could not do. He was an undisciplined ballplayer. The front office, eager to cash in on their investment, assured him a place on the team but destroyed his chances to develop his natural ability.

For the next three years his batting hovered around the .230 mark before sinking to a lowly .206 in 1949. It was after the '49 season that the front office finally realized Wakefield wasn't ever going to become the star everyone had expected and he was traded to the Yankees.

When he left Detroit, Dick wrote a letter to the fans saying he was sorry to have let them down. It was a tragic letter. It should have been written by Walter O. Briggs & Co. They were the ones who let the fans down.

After he was traded, Wakefield, for the first time in his career, had to try to make the team. He failed. He was rejected by the Yankees, by the Oakland Oaks, and by the Giants. His recent tryout with the Senators proved a failure.

Wakefield was the first of the "bonus babies" and the first of those who didn't make it. Every season adds a few more names to the list. The high bonuses paid to untried kids coupled with the high salaries given home-run kings, encourage the specialization that has become the story of modern baseball. The club owners are more interested in building a pennant than in building a team. R. C. W. (No. 16, May 1, 1954)

## Give Me My Sounds

By Randy Toons

Yes, that's the way I see it. Music is a world by itself. You've got to feel it, but it's more than feelings. Music and musicians try to express something which is different from anything else. Millions of people feel it but if it's the same for them as it is for musicians I don't know. And I couldn't tell you how much they send the musician or how much the musician and his music sends them. All I know is that the musician tries for something different, something that goes out of this world.

Before I write anything else I have to tell you this: I don't earn my living by music. I have to work like anyone else. But I have known musicians for a long time and with my trumpet I have tried to do things musicians try to do. For as long as I can remember music is a part of my life like the food I eat and the clothes I wear. Many times, in my view, it is more important. . . .

When you talk about music you reach a point when you can't say any more unless you actually hear the sounds. I can't write the sounds. The best I can do is write about a few musicians everybody knows and tell you what I hear and what I think about them. I hope you hear what I hear so it makes sense even if you don't agree. Here's a once-over lightly on the musicians I will write about.

**Dizzy Gillespie** is the father of bop. As a trumpet player and a musician he has contributed something valuable to modern music as far as styles and rhythms go, but he hasn't followed it up. Diz made a splash with big bands, but in my opinion he isn't much any more except a novelty showman who can make magic on his trumpet but doesn't. He and his followers let themselves go with the head music, that is they took a theme and played all around it in complicated rhythms and variations. It reached the point where it sounded to me that they wanted to see how far they could go with notes and chords in such a way to make any resemblance to the original harmonies and melodies purely accidental. As a result, Diz and the public parted company unless you happen to be a bopster yourself. . . .

**Lionel Hampton** is the third man I want to write about. His is one of the few big bands left which still keeps to the original rhythms of jazz. As I see it, he still expresses the true feelings of jazz. The only way I can say it is that Hampton has been and still is a dynamic personality as well as a well-rounded ball of rhythm.

**Gerry Mulligan**, the fourth man, is a newcomer on the scene. I have to compare him to the discovery of the atom bomb. He is new and great in his own way and he has a lot to offer as far as modern arrangements are concerned. He started with a quartet: a drum, a trumpet, a baritone-sax and a bass fiddle. The bass fiddle carried the melody. And the sounds he made with this combination—Man! He has gone up fast. Now he has a tentette. Where he will go from here I don't know, but I'm sure willing to wait and see.

**Louis Armstrong** is the last one I want to talk about. . . . In my eyes he represents the old question in jazz: How long will it last? He has been great, he is great, he hasn't basically changed his style—and he has lasted a long time.

This will have to do as a starter. Keep it cool.

(No. 9, Jan. 23, 1954)

## Shane—A Doomed Man

Los Angeles.— . . . Shane is a gunfighter who, first of all, is top rate. He is tired of it. He wants to be once again part of society, lead a family life. The tragedy, or one of the tragedies of the movie, is that he can't make it. He is a doomed man, just as his trade is a doomed trade. **One does not change one's life by resolution. There has to be a new generation. When he rides away at the close of the movie with his wounded arm, it is the ride and position of a dead man. A dead generation. This is one of the finest shots in the movie.**

The homesteader is a simple man. He does not even know that his wife is attracted to Shane. . . . The triangle is so striking because it is so natural. It is so real, a stranger, a mysterious stranger in the household and your wife is attracted to him, but will never give up the man that she loves and the life that she has for him. She is a solid woman, in no way frivolous, she is average. And this attraction is what happens to her. She tells her son, "Don't like

Shane too much, because one day he will leave us." She is saying that to herself.

The most revealing scenes about Shane are the fight scenes. He does not want to fight, and when he fights he does not fight for glory. For one moment, he is tempted to take all of them on at once, for ego, but the child says, "There's too many, Shane," and he listens. It is the best fight scene I ever saw. . . .

The relationship between the child and Shane has not one element of maudlinism and "sweetness and light." The child sees Shane, as any child sees a hero with guns, as an exciting person. But they establish a genuine relationship, one much more like two men. . . .

He feels that he does not fit in, that is what drives him away. These people are peace-loving, and his hands and his gun are bloody. He is not like them, and he never can be. He is looking in at the window of human society all of his life. The picture is the attempt to enter the door, but he cannot stay. The whole thing is that individual resolution, individual desire is not solving anything. (No. 9, Jan. 23, 1954)

## Art Comes From the People

. . . Many who read our paper do not understand why we spend so much space and time on popular films and popular music. Without bad temper we have to point out to them: this is what the workers write to our paper about. If anybody wants to write to CORRESPONDENCE about Beethoven or Mozart, he is at liberty to do so. The writer of the letter does not understand the elementary principle on which our paper is founded—that the ordinary man should write in it about what interests him.

But the editors of CORRESPONDENCE are not hiding behind the fact that the people are interested in films and popular music. We believe that the future of Art (with a capital A) lies with the arts of the people.

Who have been the greatest artists? Learned scholars will agree on few. Homer, the Greek poet, sang his poems or recited them to the public. The great cathedrals of the Middle Ages, to this day some of the most marvelous buildings the world has ever seen, were buildings for the public to worship in. In the days before printing, paintings in churches were the means of communicating moral and social ideas to the masses. Those days produced some of the greatest paintings the world has known. The plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, the great Greek dramatists, were written for a popular audience. Shakespeare wrote his plays for the public just as Cecil B. De Mille produces films for the people today. . . .

But with all the crimes Hollywood perpetrates against good sense, good taste and the interests of the great body of the people, it has one virtue—it is popular. And although we shall, as we go on, attack without mercy all the vices of Hollywood, we would point out that Hollywood and the American public between them created the greatest artist of the twentieth century—Charlie Chaplin. Today all the intellectuals recognize him (and write some very stupid highbrow books about him). But when he made his greatest pictures, which are classics today, he made them for common people who paid dimes and quarters to see him. We are sorry we missed "Martin Luther" but CORRESPONDENCE, in art as in production, will continue to express its policy that today, whatever is to rebuild

a decaying society, will come from the people and can come from nowhere else.

## Working for Independence

L. J.  
(No. 12, March 6, 1954)

By Angela Terrano

The reasons why kids get married today might shock some people. It's not all just love and devotion but a deep longing to be free of the parents' home and the parents' domination. And it's not that you don't have many nice memories of that home.

In most families there is very little privacy for any member of the family and most of all for kids. In my family there were always four of us living in three rooms, a kitchen, bedroom and a living room. So the most private place for me was the bathroom, where I could go to read or cry or just to get away from everybody else. My mother called it my private office. . . .

I wonder how the larger families get along. One of the girls at work has nine sisters and brothers, plus her mother and father and a nephew all living in five rooms. She is 19 and now working to help her parents buy a house for the family. She feels differently about marriage though. She says she doesn't want to get married young, not if she is putting money into a house. She wants to live in it first.

From about the age of 13 on I remember telling my father that when I was 18 I was going out and getting my own place. I realize now that every time I said that I hurt him terribly. He used to say if I ever did, the door to his home would be closed to me. Here were two people working like dogs to make a good home for their family and everything kept blowing up. It must be very hard to understand why your kids rebel against things that you're sure you are doing for them.

To get back to marriage—in school they teach you about courtship before your marriage and so forth. I don't know how it is in the rest of the country but in New York it is not so easy to have the kind of courtship that they talk about in school. First of all there is absolutely no place to go, unless you have money. So you spend your time walking and walking around the city and usually end up in the park. Get home late and your parents think the worst of you.

Second your mother usually disapproves of the fellow you pick. In my case it caused a crisis in my family because my mother didn't know if my husband was Negro or Puerto Rican and either was no good. All I told her was that I didn't know what he was and I didn't care. Everything was used against us, nationality, the army because he was of draft age, money, and anything they could possibly think of. . . .

It's funny when you're living with your parents you strive to form a decent relationship with them, but that fails and you get out. Then you find yourself in your own home, and in what marriage is today. So you go from one set of tensions into another set. But no matter where, you keep striving to better yourself, not in terms of money but in terms of living with the next person.

(No. 15, April 17, 1954)

## Youth Under Communism

### Two Worlds: Notes From a Diary

Recently the Communists have been writing in their press about Russian and Polish "zoot-suiters" who hang around street-corners,

insult people, get into fights and just will not be Loyal To The Party. Four years ago I read a story in the *N. Y. Times* which by itself convinced me that youth under Communism feel much like American youth. It reprinted a letter, written by a young girl in Communist Poland, which raised one of the stormiest discussions the Communist press there had ever seen. She said she had done what was required of her by the Communist youth organization. But, she went on, the Organization "has no right to interfere in a person's innermost life."

"Yours is a creature with wings, clasped hands and a veiled face wearing a long and clean cloak of sackcloth. When it meets a pal it discusses only Marxism. It does not push in tramways nor spit on the floor and walks only on the right side of the street . . . According to you we should wear only a spotless uniform of our organization, straight hair and, of course, no trace of make-up.

"And the dignified way we should discuss with comrades such questions as the development of education in the New China! That is all very well at 40, but I have no intention of turning into an ascetic. I am young and lucky enough to have survived the war and have a right to live as I like."

This is a mark of youth today, whether in Germany, America or Russia. A concern with personal freedom as the only kind that matters. They have seen enough large, political organizations promise them freedom and betray them. It is clearest here in America. Because here the youth never were tied up with any mass youth group.

They begin with a deep distrust and understanding of bureaucracy which the German and Russian youth learned through 25 years of blood and betrayal. (No. 23, Aug. 7, 1954)

## Student Strike, 1950

. . . We started to go across a big avenue. We must have had at least 2,000 to 2,500 kids at that time. They stretched for a few blocks. We started to cross the avenue and the cops came along. They disregarded all traffic signals and when half of us got across they waved the traffic on to cut us off. They almost did a good job of it. After a couple of minutes, we just rushed across and forgot about the cars. The cars stopped for us. And we got together again.

We decided to take the subway. I don't know who decided it. But the subway was right there and all of a sudden there was a kid in the middle of the street directing traffic. He stood right in the middle of the block, waving half of us down one entrance and half of us down the other. The word was passed around what train to take across the bridge to Manhattan. We got there before there were very many kids there. Then it began to get crowded and every time another group of kids would join us a big scream would go up and everyone would yell. We'd see kids coming 15 blocks away and everyone would yell them on. . . .

You turned your head and all of a sudden you were part of a strike. Everybody was asking everybody else what school they came from. We were singing school songs. One school would start singing their song. Another school would start to sing and try to drown them out. Every once in a while the songs just dissolved into something like, "O'Dwyer we want Police Protection!" We all felt close. . . . (No. 10, Feb. 6, 1954)

## Life in a Small Town Letter of the Week

I never heard about Reuther. I didn't know who he was. I don't know anything about unions at all. All I know is about what things are like back home in Nicholas County, West Virginia. I've only been up in Detroit a little while, but I wouldn't go back South to live, ever. You just can't live like you live here. People gossip too much. They're always wanting to know your business. Me, I'm different, I don't want everybody to know my business.

There's no way to enjoy yourself down there. You can go to a movie or a roller skating rink. That's all. The only kind of dancing is just square dancing. Most places where they have square dancing, it'll be in a tavern, and some of them are supposed to be rough places, and you aren't allowed to go.

There's not even many places a woman can work. There's one chemical plant near my home. . . .

There are a few openings for telephone operators. . . . The rest is just waitress work. There are some places you can work, and some you're not supposed to. A "regular" restaurant is O.K. But a nice girl can't work in a tavern, or a bar. We call them "beer joints" down there.

Last summer I worked in one of the "beer joints." Everybody in town talked about me. I was called "no good." The place was called a "rough place." But I never saw a fight all the time I was there. I never even saw anybody get drunk.

I figure it's just as good as working in a restaurant. One of the first things that surprised me up here, is that women work in a tavern and they're considered just as good as anybody else. They work just as hard. Their job is just as respectable. That's the way it should be.

There was one girl I knew back home. We understood each other. She was a good girl. But everybody talked so much about her, even her own mother, that they drove her to doing what they accused her of. . . .

One day she came home and told her mother she wanted to get married, and that if her mother didn't let her she'd disgrace the whole family. She said she was in a "family way." Her folks not only let her, they forced her to marry the guy. As soon as she got married, everybody found out she wasn't pregnant at all. She just said that so she could get away from home.

Then she left her husband and came up to Ohio, with her sister's boy friend. As soon as she got up to Ohio, she ditched him, too. She got a job, and an apartment of her own, and bought herself all the fancy clothes and things she ever wanted. I don't know what got into her, but she finally came back home, after all that. She threw her arms around me and cried when I was leaving for Ohio. We really understood each other.

They talked about me so much, it just disgusted me. I finally figured I had only one life to live, and I was going to enjoy it. I said to hell with them. That's why I took that job in the tavern, I figured they were talking anyway, I'd give them something to really talk about. I remember how I used to let somebody pick me up to drive me home from town, even if it was only a five minute walk ahead of me, just to give them something to talk about.

A lot of the younger girls leave town as soon as they can. They take it for so long, and then they pick up and go to the city somewhere. (No. 16, May 1, 1954)

By M. D.

## Frustration and Disease

I recently attended a convention of doctors and enjoyed the week long period of discussion. The speakers were active prominent surgeons and concerned themselves with stones, tumors, ulcers, the diagnosis, complication and treatment of gall bladder diseases and disorders of the stomach, intestine and pancreas.

However, the speaker who had my closest attention was not a surgeon, but the only medical doctor at the meeting—a man engaged in research. He discussed the adaptation or response of the body to injury or stress, physical and mental. The defense response is in three stages, one following the other: **alarm, resistance and exhaustion**. The regulator of the defense is a pea sized body at the base of the brain, called the pituitary gland. What we call disease is either a response of the body to stress or an exhaustion of the body after prolonged response.

This is a fundamentally new concept of disease, one which brings together all the large number of separate diseases and shows the dynamic unity and oneness of the body, mental and physical. And it explains the great importance of the emotions in the disease process.

In one experiment a white rat was frustrated by tying its legs to a board for a period of time. When the rat was examined certain changes were seen. The most obvious were swelling and redness of the lining of the stomach due to congestion of the blood vessels, and tiny points of hemorrhage. This was part of the **alarm** reaction and was a response to mental stress in the rat.

In another experiment a white rat was given an injection under its skin of an irritating chemical fluid. This substance created a physical injury—a stress to one region of the rat's body. A localized swelling, about the size and shape of a golf ball, containing fluid and surrounded by a thick wall appeared. The same thing might have developed after a heavy blow or other injury like a splinter under the skin. This cyst produced by the body to wall off an irritating, stress producing injury is evidence of the active **resistance** of the body.

Next some digestive juice normally present in the rat's stomach was removed. To test its power to digest or eat away tissue a small quantity was injected under the skin of the rat. Within a very short time the skin was eaten away, leaving a raw wound and exposing bone. When, however, a similar amount of stomach juice was injected into the cyst under the skin, nothing happened. The sac wall completely protected the rat's body.

The same rat was then tied to a board for a period of time so that it couldn't run around. When the stomach juice was again injected into the cyst, the wall and adjacent tissue was completely eaten away—forming a large ulcer. Again we see the effects of frustration, mental stress, in the production of a physical disease.

From time to time in this column an attempt has been made to show the connection between our present living conditions which are often irritating and unsatisfactory and body diseases.

In the above experiments we have concrete evidence of this

process in rats. It is much more true of humans with their overdeveloped nervous and emotional responses. It does no good to call such people neurotics. There are about five million people in the U. S. with ulcers.

It is not the weak human we must look at but the jungle existence in which he is living today. This is not something merely interesting—it is extremely serious. Recently I read somewhere, "We have had an abundance of sign posts—recently I read somewhere, "We must now have a destination." We must make the conditions of life such that we eliminate what is frustrating us.

(No. 16, May 1, 1954)

## A Better Reason to Go to Work

It seems as if the struggle now among people is just to live. Take me. I get up in the morning and go to work. The only reason I go is to make enough to eat to live. There should be something else to go to work for.

Work is just an individual thing. It could be like a game of football, where you do certain things, like blocking or tackle to make something else click. But I am not interested in anything at work except getting my paycheck. If I were interested enough to work the hell out of myself, it would be for another reason than just to live.

The capitalist makes the paycheck everything. The work itself doesn't mean anything.

**But why does the musician work? To make people happy, or just for the money? There is something the capitalist creates that makes the work become alien to you.**

Some guys say all they need is some money. I would need about \$100 a week, every week. If I had enough, it wouldn't be a constant strain every week just to live. In the shop everybody is under strain.

**The capitalists say if I had everything I wanted, I wouldn't work. But I begin to wonder whether the reason I don't want to work is because I don't have security.**

I don't have enough now, and I know it isn't enough before the week even begins. I don't care how much I do, I am just working to try to come out even. Two-thirds of the time I spend just thinking how to exist.

I have to worry just to buy a pair of shoes when I need them. It creates havoc with the paycheck. To buy shoes you have to let some other bill go, and you are in another mess. The guys hurry up for Friday night to get paid, and then Friday comes and it is the worst day in your life. You pay your bills and feel a little better, but it's just a temporary relief. Before the week is over, you're back in the dump again.

On Sunday you know that if you go into the plant on Monday feeling good, and work like hell, you're just working yourself out on the street. . . .

**In this system everything tends to hold down production. You figure if you hold it down, it will last a little longer. And either way you go, it is as screwy as hell.**

(No. 14, April 3, 1954)

# 7. Why Workers Don't Read

## Why Workers Don't Read

A working woman in Los Angeles said to us, "I don't know nothing about nothing. I never mess around with politics. I read the headlines, the funnies, sports. That is one reason why I won't subscribe."

**The educated ones, the authorities, the leaders—all of present day society—have made this woman feel that she knows nothing because she doesn't read. But this woman, and the thousands of people just like her, know plenty.**

A worker in Detroit put it this way, "I've not got the time to read. I spend so much of my time trying to hustle a living. I hear folks say we should do this and that, but things haven't changed at all. When I read in the paper all the things they are doing, I get real mad."

Before the learned professors tell us that this shows that this worker is backward, is concerned only with material things and doesn't understand history, let them think over this: the worker's everyday existence is his history. . . .

Let us quote one more worker. "I just don't read the papers anymore. Not even the headlines. That Army-McCarthy business is disgusting. And the H-bomb business. And Indo-China. I just don't want to read about it. It makes me too mad. I get all upset and you can't do anything about it anyhow."

Pick up any daily paper. It is filled with what the big-shots are doing, with the names of statesmen and diplomats and celebrities. With reports of crime and baby-beatings. With news of international conferences and threats of war and congressional hearings (on everything except unemployment).

What does all this have to do with him? What control does he have over what the leaders of society are doing? What faintest thing does any of this have to do with the way he has to work and live?

**These Americans have read enough, and heard enough of what the leaders of the world are doing to be through with that. What they are saying to the politicians is, "That is YOUR business, not mine. That is YOUR job, YOUR worry. You don't worry about me. You wanted it this way, YOU are stuck with the state of the world."**

The American worker isn't reading, not because he is illiterate, but because he doesn't want to read what the daily press calls "news." For the same reasons, he doesn't attend union meetings, and he doesn't vote. . . .

The other side of the picture is that these Americans were the very ones who fought hard for the right to a free education and a free press; and today refuse to read. That they were the ones who fought hard and are still fighting hard in the South today for the right to vote, and today refuse to vote. That they were the ones who fought bloody battles to win the union, and today refuse to go to union meetings. . . .

It was the ordinary working people who fought for the rights for free education for all. Literacy was not handed to the American people on any silver platter, or on the initiative of the learned and educated men of the day. As late as the 1830's the majority of American children were completely illiterate, and they came almost entirely from the working class. It was the earliest American labor unions that raised the demand for free public schools. The educated ones fought against it—all the way. But the common, the ordinary people fought for it. And won it.

It was the common people who fought for the right to print their own union papers. And there was a time when they not only read every word of them, but when they wrote them. . . .

In the earliest papers, ordinary workers, some who could barely spell, wrote articles. Those papers carried articles pin-pointing foremen and scabs, calling names and describing, real conditions and real people.

The union papers today carry speeches of Reuther, and contract negotiations, and high-sounding programs. They are as far removed from what the ordinary workers want to read as the daily papers. . . .

**It has always been the common people who have shown the way whenever an old society has reached a stage of crisis and a change was necessary. Not the educated. They have always been on the other side. And it has been true even when the ordinary people couldn't read.**

It was true when the illiterate slaves fought their way to freedom. It was the continual slave revolts that gave power to the Abolitionist press, and not the other way around.

It was true in the rise of the CIO, when some of the workers were immigrants who couldn't read a word of English, or southern Negroes who had never been inside a school in their lives.

It is true today, when Americans can read, and have read when it has been of any importance and meaning to them, and today refuse to read.

A working woman in West Virginia refused to take a copy of CORRESPONDENCE. Her remark was, "Just another paper." When the power of the press is in such great disrepute that people toss any paper aside with "just another paper," it means that Americans have come to a complete rejection of what it is the learned ones have to say, and what it is the politicians are always blaring, and what it is the union leaders are trying to sell.

**This total disillusionment with the word of all people in authority, is the greatest advance in human thinking.**

(No. 18, May 29, 1954)

## Readers' Views

My wife is smart, she doesn't read anything. But she makes me read, and then argues with me. She learns all she wants to know.

The most violent people in the world are the ones who don't read anything. They act, instead of thinking. The guys who don't read put the pressure on the ones who think it's their business to be learned. Those learned ones are the most ignorant of all. They'll read and sit down to think something through. But when it comes to doing something, they can't work a damn thing out. A guy don't have to read to get where he's going.

Just a Worker, Detroit

Education is used to make millions for the millionaires. It has done little to better the life of the average layman. Specialization has channelized the talents of the professionals but the unskilled worker has no outlet for his talents. . . .

Jerry Kegg, Detroit

When union papers were printing gripes, then was the time that workers not only read or had the papers read to them, but smuggled them into the plant to show to other workers. At that time the union organizer was not a businessman. At that time the union organizer was one who fought—and not with words alone. Like your article says, then it was for the common man.

Now the union organizer is called the union representative. And is even called the union's "statesman." And it is the statesmen in Congress that the union organizer looks to, not the worker in his union.

Old Union Man, Los Angeles

In the shop you can ask a guy for his paper, and if he's finished with the sports page and the comics and has read the headlines and looked at the main pictures, he'll give you the whole thing. He's finished with it.

Briggs Worker, Detroit

Once I started to read it, I couldn't put it down until I finished it. . . . When the common people take over this time it will be for good, because it just isn't going to happen here—it is going to happen all over the world.

Office Worker, New York

## The Needle

by Mann



"Going Steady?"

## 8. We and Our Readers

### How Correspondence Is Published Two Worlds: Notes From a Diary

Here is an account of the finances of CORRESPONDENCE. We publish it because that is what our paper stands for in principle. CORRESPONDENCE is, as we say on page 1 in every issue, a paper that is written, edited and circulated by its readers. Without this active participation by the readers we would not publish a paper at all; not that we could not but something entirely different, we would not want to.

There are about 75 of us, active supporters of the paper. Half a dozen are professional people. Their average wage is about \$120 a week. But all of them have families. Most of the others work in industry. Some went to college but prefer to live and work among workers. Others have been workers all their lives. Some of them make about \$75 a week, a number no more than \$35 a week. Most work for something in between. So far we support the paper.

To print 5,000 copies of the paper every two weeks costs us \$800 per month. We have an editor who is paid a wage and two other full-time staff members. We have about three other people who work most of the time at the center. Some are housewives whose husbands work, others are unemployed.

To keep this office going, to mail out the paper (\$50 an issue), rent, stationery and general expenses comes to \$2,800 a month. Our actual cash income is about \$1,500, of which about \$1,000 comes to the center, because some of the various groups of people scattered over the country have clubrooms and other expenses. Thus we are about \$2,000 short every month. We manage to make up the deficit by loans and digging deeper into pockets (which grow ever shallower). But we planned for two years before we brought out this paper. We started in October 1953 and we hope to carry on for at least a year. At the end of that time the public will have told us whether they want a paper like CORRESPONDENCE or not. That is all there is to it.

The question is why do we do it? There is nothing behind CORRESPONDENCE. What drives us is before us—it is the state of the world, and above all, our own country.

We do it, first of all, because we are American citizens. We are proud of this great country, what it has done in the world and what it can do. But we do not like the way it is going. . . .

Some of us have long years of life before us. Are we to continue to live in terror of being unemployed, to listen to economists and politicians calculate whether there will be a depression and how large it will be? We say, "No." We say it need not be. Hands and brains created the great industrial power of the United States. Hands and brains can control it. The people who now run it cannot control it.

Some of us have children. What is to be their future? Some of our fathers fought in the first war, some of us fought in the last one and now we are getting our children ready to fight in the next one. And if they are too small to fight, they will wear identification chains around their necks so that after the atom bombs fall, if we are alive, we can go to search for what remains of them among the piled up bodies in the schools.

We do not believe that that is the way parents should have to live.

What has the country come to that a man like McCarthy, one of the most unmitigated scoundrels that ever stood on a platform, is today, for hundreds of millions all over the world, the most widely known, the most representative American of his time. For that is what he is. . . . The representative man of America in the eyes of the world is McCarthy, and we have nothing but contempt and scorn and utter loathing for the politicians, the journalists and all the rulers of society who have allowed a windbag like this to be inflated so that he casts his shadow over the whole world. . . .

McCarthy is not an isolated case. Those rulers of ours manage to live on most friendly terms with Negro-haters, gangsters who control great cities and crooks and felons of all kinds. Either they cannot put an end to this corruption or they do not want to. In either case we have no use for them.

We believe that the one party totalitarian state in Russia is the greatest barbarism the world has ever known. We are glad to say that not a single one of us has ever called Russia a "peace-loving democracy," and we would be glad to know and publish the names of all Senators, Congressmen, Ambassadors, Cabinet Ministers and high officials in Washington from the President down who can say the same.

We believe that the people of this country, workers, farmers, the middle classes know that America today, like the rest of the world in which we live, is headed for destruction. We believe they know what is wrong and that they can cure it. We utterly repudiate the doctrine that they need a party of picked, selected, specially chosen, specially anointed people to teach them and guide them and discipline them. In this there is no difference whatever between Republicans, Democrats, Communists, Socialists and Trotskyites. Different as are their ways, all of them can find room under a single blanket upon which is embroidered the magic slogan which they all subscribe to: **Trust us. Give us the power. We know.**

Is it unreasonable to think this way? Is it fantastic to think this way? Is it insane to think this way? What in our view is unreasonable, fantastic and insane is this: That there is not a single paper published in this whole country except CORRESPONDENCE where these ideas can be expressed and discussed.

(No. 14, April 3, 1954)

### Readers' Views

I'm not going to look for one person to contribute \$50 for the paper. I have no \$50 or even \$5 friends. My friends could only give me \$2 at the very most. But that doesn't make me hopeless. I couldn't promise. Maybe I won't raise very much. But maybe I'll raise \$500 or \$600. You have to be bold.

A.W., Detroit

. . . I wish I was one of those people who can write a check for

\$5,000. If I was you would have the money by now. Since I'm a working woman, clearing \$37 a week I would like to tell you how I think I can raise a substantial contribution. . . .

The first place I go to look for money is my own meager bank roll. But let's face it; it's meager. So, next is a job, a part time job. I've had some experience in selling. I might be able to get a job in a department store. I figure if I can get a part time job selling, that will amount to approximately \$15 a week, clear. If I work part time for ten weeks, that's \$150.

Next place I would go would be to ask my family for some money. They haven't too much money, but if I ask for \$100 and tell them what it is for I can be sure they will give it to me, particularly since I am not in the habit of asking them for money. That is a total of \$250. . . .

I have sold subscriptions to CORRESPONDENCE to many of my friends. I know they will be willing to kick in five dollars here and there.

Then, my next idea is one which I will really enjoy doing. . . . I like to bake cakes. At my party my cakes are going to cost plenty. Some outrageous price like 50 cents a slice will be the accepted contribution. The only thing tax free will be the music. I'll put some records on the phonograph and invite everyone to be my guest.

This is it in a nutshell; a part time job, family, friends of CORRESPONDENCE and parties. A Working Woman, California

### The Real Trouble — We Solve This or Fail

. . . For me the fate of the paper hangs on one question—can intellectuals and workers work together to produce a workers' paper? Can we control the perpetual conflict between them? . . .

The conflict not only exists. It dominates every single thing that we try to do. I repeat. If the paper succeeds, it will be because we have succeeded in overcoming it. If we fail, this will be the cause. We state this quite openly for two reasons.

1. This paper, CORRESPONDENCE, is written, edited and circulated by its readers. The only possible way of tackling this problem is by making it public and having everybody who is concerned with the paper take part in solving it.

2. It is precisely this problem which the workers face in industry, in Labor Parties, in trade unions, in the organization of society as a whole and in the organization of every detail of society. It has us by the throat because it has every mass organization in the world by the throat. The people of the world will solve it or the whole civilization will crash to ruin. . . .

We have to begin by defining the very terms that we are using.

**We say a workers' paper.** CORRESPONDENCE is not yet a workers' paper. But there is no other workers' paper in the country at all. Not one.

Intellectuals. By intellectuals we mean those who have not been organically workers all their lives. The intellectuals (I am one) have this in common, that they read a great many books and newspapers and write and speak freely. . . .

In contrast with the intellectuals we have workers, rank and file workers, people who have been workers all their lives and will never be anything else but workers. We have noticed that the women in our organization have attitudes to things very similar to these workers. And the very young people, even where they

are university students, do not have the intellectual attitude. The Negroes too belong to this grouping. So that we have, on the one side, the intellectuals, the experienced politicals, and on the other, rank and file workers, women, Negroes and the youth.

Now our intellectuals from hard and bitter experience with other papers know that only workers can produce a workers' paper. We practice what we preach. It is the intellectuals who proposed that the editor of the paper should be a working man. He left some 15 years of working in the plant to become editor. . . .

There is an editorial meeting of three people to discuss an article. . . .

The worker in the chair says that he does not think that the paper should concern itself too much about McCarthy. The workers, he says, are not afraid of McCarthy. If McCarthy attempted to touch the working class he would get a mass of blows. And having expressed this opinion briefly, he stops. The politically experienced intellectual says, "But it is not a question of McCarthy as such. There is the question of the freedom of the press which McCarthy is trying to strangle. This affects everybody including workers."

The worker replies, "The workers are not particularly interested in freedom of the press." The politically experienced intellectual says at once, "But that is absolutely untrue, and even if it were true it is the duty of the paper to point out to the workers that freedom of the press is a matter of life and death for the country as a whole and for the workers more than anybody else." . . .

Now comes the most dangerous part of the whole business. In the end, the worker is himself convinced . . . that it is imperative to have an article in the paper in which the dangers to freedom of the press which McCarthy represents should be exposed.

This article appears. . . . It is a very good article. The only thing wrong with it is that it means nothing at all to the vast majority of the workers in the country. . . .

The criminal thing is that the worker chairman did not say what he thought, that what he thought did not go into the paper.

Let us take the most extreme possibility. Suppose that he is "wrong." Why shouldn't the workers be "wrong"? But is he "wrong"? I can say that after 25 years of hard work and constantly studying the workers' movement, in theory and practice, I have arrived at this conclusion. Whenever a worker of some political understanding says something that contradicts what I, as an intellectual, think, I do not correct him, I do not argue with him. I ask him to tell me more. I do not interrupt him. I listen. And when he has said all he has to say, and I have questioned him with the sole purpose of finding out what he is driving at, I ask him to write his views down. I spend days and weeks thinking it over.

My experience, and it has taken me years to learn this, is that as a rule, what he is talking about, I am usually not talking about at all, and that what he is talking about is what matters.

Take this very example. He said, "The workers are not afraid of McCarthy." And he more than implied that inasmuch as the workers were not afraid of him he didn't see why the paper should concern itself about that loud-mouth. Now in one sense he is undoubtedly wrong, and very wrong. A paper which deals with politics cannot afford to ignore a political phenomenon like McCarthy. And a thousand political writers in a thousand little political papers know this and can preach sermons on it.

But what this worker was saying amounted to this. "Eisenhower is afraid of McCarthy. All the liberals and intellectuals and middle class New Dealers are in terror of McCarthy. We the workers are not." . . .

And that is neither right nor wrong. It is a fact. And it is a fact of profound importance. Because it shows the absolutely opposed attitudes of fundamental classes in the nation to the same thing. And that above all is what CORRESPONDENCE exists for. . . .

The blunt statement, "The workers do not care about freedom of the press," is even more startling. And he added, "The workers have no press to care about." Now it is an astonishing thing that we should miss the significance of that. Because that is exactly why we started CORRESPONDENCE. . . .

**The more I think of it, the more I see that our paper, front page, back page and center should have been plastered with articles saying precisely this. That is what CORRESPONDENCE exists for. If we do not exist for that, we have no right to exist. It is on that ground that we claim public support. We have no other claim to support. . . .**

I want now to state a few more points to help the discussion. Why does this happen to us of all people?

It happens to us because this division between the intellectuals and workers is the most powerful characteristic of modern society. Modern society rests on it, is held together by it, is being ruined by it. Who are we to think we can escape it? . . .

Our workers know this. The value of what the intellectuals have done and what they do. They depend upon the intellectuals. But that is one root of the trouble. The worker knows what the intellectuals can never know. He knows what workers think and what workers want. That is not written anywhere in books. It is something that is just forcing its way from the workers' consciousness into the light of day.

Nobody knows or can possibly know, not even the workers themselves, where this will end. It has been proved over and over again that when the French Revolution began, not a single soul in France had ever written the word "republic" for France, far less "democracy." Yet three years afterwards, the king was in jail, and as we showed in No. 10 of CORRESPONDENCE, the workers had discovered democracy. It is obvious they had been thinking along these lines. . . .

**The intellectual must be on guard, ceaselessly on guard, to listen and spend as much time and energy on a worker's statements, sometimes uncertain, sometimes blunt, as he has spent on books. Otherwise not only does the intellectual not understand. He brings forward his own ideas, and the end is the same old stuff, the very stuff all the liberal papers are full of and which the worker is doing his best to break through. . . .**

Let no one underestimate the significance of what is written here. This, and precisely this, is modern politics.

With CORRESPONDENCE we are making every day an experience, on a small scale, but with far-reaching implications.

The floor is open.

R.M.

(No. 14, April 3, 1953)

## Readers' Views

I see where you are having the trouble of books and brains

versus hard knocks. They say nothing beats experience. Not that I'm against books, but even a guy who goes to school to be an architect, has a hard time building a building the first time.

Chrysler Worker, Detroit

You say CORRESPONDENCE will fail if the workers do not say what the workers think. Some of my friends have asked me, "What is the paper for? It's about what workers think. Think about what?" . . .

I never really understood the paper and its purpose until I read the Supplement. The main article on "The Real Trouble" said so much. . . .

There must be an awful lot of tension at the meetings. I get a feeling of pressure, heaviness in the paper. I could give money and work for the paper, too, to accomplish something worthy, but it could never be a religion with me. . . .

The Supplement is clearing up a few ideas. You're saying something. In most of your articles, you go nowhere.

M.L., Housewife and Mother, Detroit

I am glad . . . the form is created where these special problems can be raised. Problems will always arise and there should be a place where one can write them. . . .

Old-timer, Los Angeles

I think the working man should have a paper of his own, so that before the five-year contract expires in 1955, he can put what he wants in the contract. It should start now with this paper and build up so that it is strong in 1955. We need to do something, anything, to get back the power for the workers in the unions. Up to now the leaders have been doing all the suggesting. We can veto everything the union leadership proposes and just pull a strike against the union until we get what we want. If we don't, in two or three years, it will be pitiful for the working man. Once the companies get back the power, it is really going to be a mess.

Ford Worker, Detroit

I don't think it's impossible for each of us to get at least one article for each issue. If not our own, then one from a friend. Somebody once asked me if we were all just going to be reporters. I wasn't sure, but now I think it wouldn't hurt for all of us to become "reporters." We'll learn a lot if we get just one article from somebody each issue.

Committee Member, Detroit

The paper itself is developing, but the question is: are we? It works both ways, if we don't get out with the paper and bring others in, the paper too will stop developing.

We have to work with others, to bring our outside friends in. Many of us can't seem to bring people around on just the basis that the individual alone can attract those close to us. I can see our politics and the only way we can grow and develop is to work together with outside friends, bring them in, and go out, in, out—it's an interchange.

GM Worker, Detroit

## A New Form of Association

Why workers don't read, why workers don't write and why workers don't come to meetings is all one. It isn't separate at all. . . .

I can look back at different types of people I've talked to on the paper. Some have come down to different meetings and haven't come back. Some have never come to the meetings, but come to our parties, even when they won't go to others. One guy has got

at least six subs for me and never came to an editing session. Yet he feels this is his paper.

I can think of another type who has sold the paper, got subs, knows what the paper stands for, but doesn't want to assume the responsibility of being a part of the group itself. He just doesn't want to be in. I know an Italian worker who collects from guys for me but has never been to an editing session. And another who I know will give me five bucks for the paper when I ask him—

who will help us if we go over to him. What are you going to do with those people? People who've sold, circulated, read—but won't come down. Every week I guess I could pick up four or five and get them down—but I want them to come down on their own. . . .

I've been thinking that perhaps what I should do is spend the entire evening each week with just one person and see what I could bring out. Anybody who pays \$2.50 for a sub likes the paper—the next thing is to involve him in the writing and financing.

The whole key to how far we have come was in going out to get comments and opinion and get them into the paper. The next thing is to get them to write and to participate in the editing meetings. . . .

That can only come from a form of association with the people that you know to let them know that what they have to say is so important that you feel they have to be here or the paper won't continue to exist. What makes the paper as good as it is is that people are involved in it. At a certain point the paper will not be taken seriously in the form it is unless people begin to attend meetings and change the paper. . . .

Al Whitney, Detroit  
(No. 22, July 24, 1954)

## What Happens After?

### Two Worlds: Notes From a Diary

A few months before the publication of CORRESPONDENCE I was talking to a group of young friends, mostly workers. They had been studying the Russian Revolution of 1917 which established the first workers' state. They wanted to know what happened after the workers gained power: what guarantees were there that, if the workers gained power in America, a labor bureaucracy wouldn't arise here? When I said there were no guarantees, one of the young friends burst out crying.

Some thought that I had the answer but just didn't give it to them; of what use otherwise were my extensive studies? As they put it: the world was on the edge of an abyss and this was no time to have knowledge and not give it to others.

I told them that the only thing my extensive studies showed was that getting rid of the private capitalists, what is often called nationalization, solves nothing. Before 1917 socialists and other radicals thought all that was necessary to achieve liberation was to get rid of free enterprise. But Russia had shown that what they called nationalization and planned economy led to the worst forced labor camps. . . . Whether the property is fully nationalized, as in Russia, or partially, as in England, or whether private capitalism is still dominant, as in America, the mark of the whole world today is bureaucratic domination. . . .

Bureaucratic domination is the mark of the world today. But so is the struggle against it. No-strike pledges here didn't keep the

workers from wildcatting. Neither did partial nationalization in England prevent strikes. Hitler fascism couldn't stop the resistance movement against it, and now even victorious Russian totalitarianism is beginning to be faced with slave revolts in its forced labor camps. The June 17 revolt in Eastern Germany marked the turn in world politics.

Everyone can see wildcats, or student strikes; colonial revolts or workers' revolts against Russian domination. Everyone, that is, can see that **struggles** are taking place. Few, however, can see the **new society** that is emerging within the struggles.

Yet in the daily lives of people today, especially here in America, the workers are struggling not only against something, but for something: building up new relations with the shopmates on the production line, new relations of Negroes and whites in neighborhoods, new relations of men to women in the home, new relations of the youth with their parents and in school.

It is clear that the struggle is not just against something, but for something. The only guarantee of a new society without bureaucracy is that workers have confidence in what they themselves want, and what they themselves are doing, in what they themselves think.

That nationalization solves nothing was a simple idea, but a profound one. It permitted us to break from the old radical organizations. . . . We turned from them and began to listen to the workers. . . .

**It is in the very nature of the economy that workers alone can plan. Otherwise there is bureaucracy. And if you have bureaucracy in production, you have it in all of society. There is no escaping it.**

The only gauge worth anything is what you are for. Everyone can be against Russian totalitarianism. That is not decisive. But what you are for is. We say we are against Russian Communism. So does McCarthy. So does Eisenhower. So did Truman. But the terror McCarthy has created in our country is what would make us exactly like Russia. Eisenhower and Truman profess to be against McCarthy, but they enacted into law what McCarthy only raved about. The Administration has instituted such a reign of terror against those whom it calls subversives that today vast numbers of people would be afraid to sign their names to the Declaration of Independence or the Bill of Rights for fear of being called disloyal or Communist. That is the surest road to Communist and fascist totalitarianism.

We are not out to lead. For two years we listened, examined ourselves, resisted all temptation to manifestos, and in a small way practiced what we preached. If the workers themselves and only they know what is wrong and how to change it, then what they say is what really matters. Let them say it, and say it in their own words. Anyone who can talk can write. Let them. We practiced putting out a mimeographed paper, written not at a center by a few intellectuals, but written and edited by the local committees themselves. . . . The unique combination of workers and intellectuals that got together to produce a workers' paper, the first of its kind in America, or for that matter the world, is what distinguishes our paper.

It is not easy always to practice what we preach. Many workers are very skeptical and suspicious that we can do so. . . .

**Their skepticism and suspicion, even of us when we say that**

**we base ourselves on the workers, is for us a very good sign. Distrust of those who profess to be for workers is a sign that workers are on the alert against any form of bureaucratic domination or any danger of bureaucracy. It is particularly powerful among American workers. And this suspicion and doubt are more guarantees there will not be in the United States the totalitarianism of bureaucratic domination that there is in Russia.** (No. 24, Aug. 21, 1954)

## **Refusals and Readers' Views**

### **Building Correspondence**

**By William Page**

I have been thinking of how the development of the paper has been reflected in this column. When we first began publication and failed to get the subscriptions we expected, the "go-getters" appealed to us more than those who reported refusals. One serious subgetter, a young working woman in Los Angeles, pulled us up sharply. "I think **Building Correspondence** No. 10, is terrible. Those letters it printed are not just refusals. They are political responses . . . they are not taken seriously in that column. And I absolutely object to saying that they are not ready for us. **Absolutely.**"

Treating refusals seriously became the turning point of the paper. On the basis of the lead article, "Who Are the Backward Ones," alone, some who had refused to buy a single issue of the paper, became subscribers. Later, the very question of "Why Workers Don't Read" became another lead article.

**Readers' Views** developed into one of the most important sections of the paper. For example, many people thought the paper was Communist. Denial that it was not was no proof. What was proof was serious treatment of the whole question of Communism in the series, "What Is a Communist," "Is McCarthy a Communist" and "Mrs. Jones, McCarthy and Communism."

But it was only when enough readers began to accept the paper as one where **they** could write—and did—that the paper developed into one that is "written, edited and circulated by its readers." . . .

Some readers went further and made the paper their weapon. Sixty-two Chrysler workers wrote a letter exposing a particular committeeman, naming names and facts and had that committeeman on the run. Workers at the Rouge circulated an article about a particular foreman and the issue on Red Becker became a best seller there. A middle class woman donated money on the basis of the article that dealt with the middle class and McCarthy, and began to circulate the paper among her friends.

The most striking example of the way workers are making use of the paper occurred in West Virginia. There a union president invited a committee member to address his local meeting of the United Mine Workers. The miners told freely of their conditions of life in the community, the mines and the union and asked him to take it down for the paper. . . .

For some, like Bob whose story appeared in issue 9, the paper has become a way of life. Both he and his wife began with the idea that the paper represents, as nothing else can, the things they stand for. Both are factory workers. Each and every phase of their life is tied up with the paper. When he goes fishing with his pals, he invites his friends to a fish-fry to raise funds for the paper. Both carry papers into the shop with them, and wherever they go. They ask everyone for stories and write them up for the paper. They in-

vite friends over to go out selling with them, and go bowling afterwards where they discuss the results. They make a social event out of selling.

Another committee member, for whom CORRESPONDENCE is a total way of life, was asked whether this was "normal." She replied, "It is normal to do what you want to do. And I find that I want to do what I am doing. Workers do not think I am crazy, but think me quite normal, too. Some say it almost with envy. We in the group lead the only normal life one can lead today and not go crazy. Where else can workers, intellectuals, professionals of all stripes, meet the way we do? And live the way we do?"

But we can no more avoid facing honestly that the paper has been accepted as a way of life by only a hundred or so, than we could at the beginning avoid facing refusals to subscribe.

We are supported by our readers, 1,000 subscribers and 2,000 others who buy the paper regularly. This is not enough. We go into debt to the tune of \$2,000 every month.

Our subscribers have to become our supporters. If they feel after reading the paper that they have a responsibility to themselves to spread the paper; if our worker readers feel that making work human is at stake in CORRESPONDENCE; if our woman readers feel that new relations with their husbands, their work and children is at stake; if our Negro readers feel that supporting CORRESPONDENCE is as much their responsibility as not letting whites step all over them; if our professional readers feel they are building a new society by allying themselves with ordinary people, workers, Negroes, women and youth; then our readers will know what to do, and our paper will more than continue. It will grow and become more of a weapon in the hands of the readers to change their conditions of life.

In places as far apart as Virginia and San Francisco, readers have organized new committees in their neighborhoods and their shops. But even that is not enough. The point is that a woman in Virginia who has 20 people around her, has in reality 20 times 20. Each one of her friends can get his friends to subscribe, raise funds among his friends, become the center of a new circle.

We as a group are demanding nothing. It is the paper and the daily lives of millions of ordinary people which demands your participation. If you have the money give it. Some few could write a check for \$500 or even \$1000. Many could give \$50 or \$100. Many more could give only \$5 or \$1. But all can give us the names of friends who would be interested. all can tell their own friends what CORRESPONDENCE stands for, what it means and what it can do.

(No. 24, Aug. 21, 1954)

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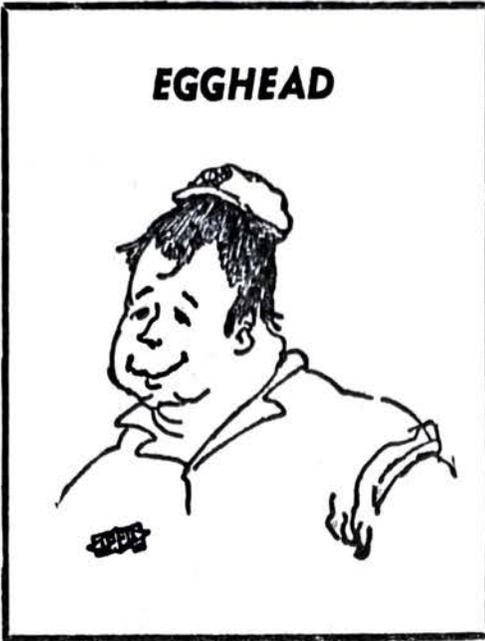
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