

Dear Editor

Letters from Readers

The views expressed in the letters printed below do not necessarily reflect our own. However we are glad to present their opinions and invite others to write to this column.

Time Is Ripe To Unionize South

MIAMI, Fla.

Dear Editor:

There was a new fresh breeze in the air at the membership meeting of the Miami Local of ILGWU, held at Electricians' Hall on Thursday, May 31, to hear the reports of the national convention.

The new atmosphere was apparent, first of all, in the attendance. The membership of the Local is almost 1,300. Some 300 chairs had been set up, but as the members kept trooping in, more and more chairs were brought in. The attendance, soon totaled an unprecedented 900! The majority of the workers were young women, predominantly Latin-Americans and some 10 or 12 Negro women. The seating was not segregated.

The delegation of three — a Negro woman presser, a young Latin-American woman operator, and the Local's manager,—were introduced.

The Negro woman delegate briefly expressed her pride and pleasure in attending the Atlantic City gathering which, she emphasized, was not segregated. The Latin-American woman delegate spoke first in Spanish, and then translated her remarks into English. In her 5-minute report she singled out the questions that most impressed her at the convention, namely, the speech of Mr. Gaitskell, and the promised organizing drive in the South which would have great importance to Florida workers.

In the course of Mr. Macey's, the manager's, speech, he made proud reference to the great improvements in wage standards ushered in by the union. But when he stated how glad he was that many union members receive \$60 or \$70 a week, he was interrupted by a voice from the rear of the hall, saying, "There's no such pay in my shop. We don't even get the \$1 minimum." Mr. Macey heeded intrusion and asked the speaker to come forward. The worker readily went to the front of the hall and showed her pay envelope to the manager. "Very bad," said Mr. Macey. "That's very bad . . . come in and see me in the union office tomorrow.

This must be changed."

—Mr. Wechsler, the educational director, in explaining the need for a dues hike from \$3 to \$3.50 a month, spoke at great length of the great organizing drive for which these funds would be used. He said such a drive is now in progress in Miami, and that two shops are to be signed up within the week. He further stated that he would not rest until the garment industry is 100 percent organized, not only in Florida but in the whole South.

Two Florida Readers.

Readers Enjoys Books and Columns by Howard Fast

SAN FRANCISCO, Cal.

Dear Editor:

I have been intending to write for some time to express my admiration for Howard Fast. He has become more than a author of progressive books. I believe that he has become a leader as well. I enjoy reading his articles. This does not mean that I do not enjoy the reading the rest of the Worker. But when I read the letters, I feel that many are too much inclined to place all the blame on our leaders.

I admit that I have also criticized them, but let us place ourselves in their position during these past trying times. While many of us sat back and waited for the tide to turn, many of our leaders were in jail, or else working under unbelievable strains and financial handicaps. —E. B.

Job Plan for Unemployed

Detroit, Mich.

Dear Editor:

Reuther and Potofsky and Rieve of the labor movement have come out for large scale federal loans and gifts to needy foreign countries of material they need. This is to be given with no political strings attached, preferably through the United Nations.

I would like to suggest a modification of this to fit the plan in with the growingly serious unemployment in the auto and farm equipment industries.

Our government should allocate 2 billion dollars for gift or credit to needy nations of auto-

mobiles, trucks, farm equipment and the spare parts related to them. The money could also be spent to help nations build auto and farm equipment factories.

This would aid the poverty stricken people of the world without unacceptable conditions attached. At the same time it would substantially relieve the plight of our own unemployed.

Lots of workers don't believe in the defense jobs angle any more because it never seems to work and it is too militaristic.

Defends Quality Of U.S. Autos

DETROIT.

Dear Editor:

I was very interested in the article by Mason Roberson. It gave some interesting insights into why the manufacturers are planning this change in the color of the refrigerator. The thing I'm interested in is his comparison with cars. Roberson says, "Today along auto row you can buy any U. S. model with an unwritten guarantee that it will begin to fall apart after a couple of years of steady use."

He then mentions an unnamed British model allegedly giving three years guarantee. Now I agree that our cars could be better. Certainly the speed-up in the plans doesn't permit us to build the cars as good as we'd like to. And the engineering could be improved like better power steering, more safety, less horse power (gas eater), better handling characteristics, etc., and some of the chrome jobs are ridiculous.

But, all in all, I will rate our Ford, Plymouth and Chevie with any car of its class in the world as far as durability, performance, style, etc. And the Cadillac with any expensive car, including the Rolls Royce.

Two other factors that contribute to short life of autos—poor roads and lousy drivers. How can Roberson compare an ice box standing quietly in the kitchen with a 3,000 pounds of steel booming along those bumpy roads and starting and stopping. I suspect that Mr. Roberson may be suffering from an affliction peculiar to left-wingers in this country—a tendency to belittle everything American.

I know two guys who have '55 Chevies, one is in bad shape the other is OK. Why? Because the first guy doesn't take care of his car. Once we have socialism and the profit motive is removed we will be able to make many improvements in our cars.

But all in all our cars are as good as anyone else's. Certainly, ours look better than theirs.

—HOT ROD.

Two Can Lighten Burdens of Wife

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

To charge as Elizabeth Lawson's articles do that the average working mother does more rather than less hours of house work because certain machines have brought certain processes and services back into the home, is to confuse unrelated matters.

The painting and carpentry etc., are done to save money—or because landlords are becoming increasingly unwilling to do their share of repairs. Whereas my own feeling is, that more mothers are harassed and overdriven at home essentially because more of them are trying to hold down jobs as well, as government figures show.

It will not do us much good at this time to talk in terms of how the working people in the Soviet Union and the Peoples Democracies are solving the problem of "women's double burden." I think if the current discussion teaches us anything in this field, it is that we cannot expect to adopt their solutions even when we reach their present political state.

I just wonder to what extent American women, with a considerably different background behind them, will want cafeteria meals and other "common services" which are perhaps joy to the woman who never had more than a one-room apartment or a peasant hut before?

The glaring omission in Miss Lawson's article is any reference to the problem of male supremacy, to the degree to which two people, man and woman, husband and wife, both working at jobs but with a common home and common responsibility in their children, can lighten the burden of one of them—the mother—by sharing it!—I. E.

Facts and Figures On Working Women

Dear Editor:

In the series on women and housework, Elizabeth Lawson, quoting Lenin, describes the possibility in a socialist society of "transferring the economic and educational functions of the separate household to society."

It is a fact that for millions of families many of the questions raised about the home and "good home-cooked meals" as well as the desire of women for further education and development are academic. For these millions

have to work—outside the home. They have jobs in factories and stores, and offices, or as in the South, whole families work in the fields.

Few women today feel any nostalgia for the "good old days" when grandma cooked and baked, sewed and mended and knitted, made cider and soap and heaven remembers what all.

More and more in the last half-century, women have shown a desire to work in all fields of endeavor. But this can never be done where women spend endless hours cooking, marketing, cleaning, and so on. While it is true that the washing machine and the electric iron lighten washdays, that is only part of the endless chores.

In "Women Who Work," by Grace Hutchins (Labor Research Association, 1952), the author gives sufficient facts and figures to quash once and for all the fantasy that women work for pin money. The book reports that 18,125,000 women work outside the home for a living and that close to two million of these women have children under school age. Nearly two-thirds of all working women support or partly support dependents in addition to supporting themselves. The great need is for all-day child-care nurseries and play schools. During World War II, beginnings were made for the care of children of working mothers, but that petered out with the end of the war.

But I don't think it takes too much imagination to picture a socialist society where husband and wife both go to work under conditions where the children will be tenderly cared for and properly educated by people trained for the job. In such a society parents will return from work, to find the house in order, supper prepared (or brought in from a cooperative restaurant), and the children safely delivered to them to spend a few hours together before bed-time. And the week-end could be a real picnic for the entire family, whether they stay home or go places.

August Bebel, German socialist, published in 1909 a remarkable book entitled "Woman and Socialism." The book is a plea for equality in every department of life, which will never exist this side of a socialist society. And even then, in my opinion, a century will pass before male supremacy ceases to be.

I know of no other book that so clearly and forcefully, citing facts and figures, spells out in detail woman's enslavement under capitalism.

SADIE V. AMTER.