

Remembering Charles Denby

On the 100th anniversary of his birth



Charles Denby (1907-1983) was a Detroit autoworker and editor of *News & Letters* from its founding in 1955 until his death in 1983. His autobiography, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, remains a classic work in American radicalism. It traces his journey of development from the deep South and involvement in Civil Rights struggles to his activity in the rank-and-file caucuses in the Detroit auto shops and his development as a Marxist-Humanist thinker-activist.

Denby's life and work remains a beacon for those striving to break down the division between worker and intellectual and between mental and manual labor in our world today.

"The 75 years of Charles Denby's life are so full of class struggles, Black revolts, freedom movements that they illuminate not only the present but cast a light on the future... 'Philosophy of liberation' was not mere rhetoric, much less an empty intellectual talk. To Denby, philosophy became a clearing of the head for action. From the minute he became editor of News & Letters, which manifested so unique a combination of workers and intellectuals, Denby's interest in philosophy was never separated from action.... Thus, from Marxism and Freedom he was always quoting: 'There is nothing in thought-not even in the thought of a genius-that has not previously been in the activity of the common man.'"

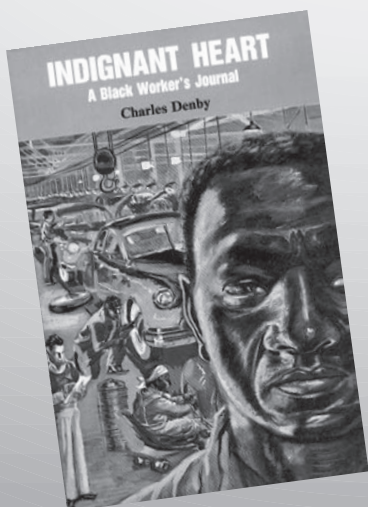
—Raya Dunayevskaya, "Afterword" to *Indignant Heart*

"Nothing has been done to eliminate these dangers to the workers. If anything, they've gotten worse-which shows just how much management is interested in the health of workers.

On the other hand, we have the new robot of unimation. It is the last step of the capitalist's dream of replacing what Marx said was in the capitalist's view, the 'refractory hand of labor.' What they don't understand is that they cannot eliminate that 'refractory hand,' which is still the gravedigger of capitalism.

These developments are putting American labor at an historic crossroad, and the answers to these problems will decide which way this country will go in the future."

—Charles Denby, *Indignant Heart*, p. 288.



To order your copy of
Indignant Heart
see literature ad on page 7.