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Cover: White blood cell attacking a yeast cell (a foreign invader). White cells probably act the same way when releasing inflammation-causing enzymes in joint tissue. See "Prostaglandin complicity in rheumatoid arthritis," p. 181. (Electron microscope photo by Sylvia Hoffstein, New York University School of Medicine)

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september 16, 1972

to the editor

Hydrogen-powered autos

I am pleased with the coverage hydrogen is getting (SN: 7/15/72, p. 46). My associates and I have driven on the highways a hydrogen-oxygen powered 1930 Model A and a 1960 Ford more miles than anyone else in the world that we know of. Unfortunately, the funds necessary to carry on this project are impossible to find, as we, the Perris Smogless Automobile Association, are not a large research organization but a group of four individuals who must finance the project out of our own pockets.

For the historians, I would like to note that we were the originators of the title "Hindenburg Syndrome" that equates the mention of hydrogen with great holocausts. We were pleased with your additional clarification on the true safety of hydrogen.

Hopefully, continuing coverage, such as yours, will make the funds available to continue the research necessary to make this a smog-free environment.

Paul Dieges
Perris Smogless Automobile Assoc.
Perris, Calif.

Scientific spirit

Tom Lash wrote a letter to SCIENCE NEWS attacking a previous letter of Ralph W. Muncy. Lash compared Muncy's views to the ideas of Karl Marx and criticized SCIENCE NEWS for printing "a letter full of political propaganda" (SN: 8/19/72, p. 114). Two letters in the next issue took a similar view (SN: 8/26/72, p. 130).

SCIENCE NEWS should be credited, not criticized, for printing the Muncy letter.

Although I do not personally agree with Muncy's conception of "industrial democracy," I am shocked by the arrogance of Lash who would use Muncy's letter to brand the scientific contributions of Marx "propaganda."

Lash was not acting in the scientific spirit.

Congratulations to SCIENCE NEWS for its free spirit.

Marty Rothman
Los Angeles, Calif.

The thoughts which probably lie behind the remarks of Muncy are shared by many, including myself. I do not think his answers to the problems of the pres-

ent system are viable. But the problems are very real and increasingly serious.

As I see it, the essential shortcoming of the present system is that, economically and socially, it does not even begin to permit the full and logical utilization of technology. To exemplify the problem, consider the following parable:

The Blivet Corp., an investor-owned manufacturer, employs 1,000 people and produces one million blivets per year at a net profit of one million dollars. The management installs automatic machinery which eliminates 900 people from the payroll. The net profit of the corporation remains the same. What is the responsibility of the stockholders and the management to the 900 laid-off people? Extend this example to the entire industrial complex. What is the answer? I have yet to hear a sensible solution to this central and essential problem.

W. Young
Technical Consultant
Mooreland, Okla.

Gas industry's 'shortage'

People who express confusion about the gas industry's story of short supplies and their search for new ways to increase consumption of gas, should read Robert Sherrill's "Energy Crisis! The Industry's Fright Campaign," in the June 26 NATION. He points out that in 1968 the U.S. Supreme Court rejected higher profits on gas because "each year new reserves exceeded production." Then "beginning in 1968, and for the first time in history, the industry claimed that it found less gas than it sold. It has been claiming the same thing for every year since. The basis for these claims is in industry's file cabinets, secret, not available to Congress or to the public."

An interesting contrast to this situation is that in the U.S.S.R., where energy is publicly owned, there is serious scientific discussion of the possibility that natural gas might be truly inexhaustible, as a result of continuous replacement in a natural energy cycle.

There is a similar contrast in our attitudes toward the fixation of atmospheric nitrogen by higher animals: The Russians have studied it for many years, while all but a few American scientists ridiculed the notion, preferring to talk about the "world protein crisis" and population control.

Ray Peat, Ph.D.
Blake College
Eugene, Ore.

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