

# Communications

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
DISTRICT 3

FLORIDA  
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## Workers of America

40 PRYOR STREET, S. W.  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303



June 9, 1966

The Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.  
Mayor of Atlanta  
Georgia

My dear Mayor Allen:

I have been following with great interest the news stories about the crisis in the Fire Department. I have the greatest respect for the firemen and other public servants of our great city and strong sympathy for the needs of the firemen, especially. I have admired you, too, Mr. Mayor for your demonstrated capacity to lead Atlanta forward and as a citizen feel honor bound to support you as you exercise the power of your office in meeting the responsibilities of your leadership.

What the papers say about your position with the firemen, however, I find almost unbelievable and certainly unsupportable. These firemen have left jobs which they have found to be intolerable. Based on present day standards of pay and working hours, I fully agree with them that their conditions are appalling. I think you would, too, if you had to be a fireman for a few days. Now comes our honorable Mayor and a judge who doesn't even bother to hear both sides and says to these men, "You will be forced under penalty of prison to work for us." Not for me, Mr. Mayor, nor for any other thoughtful, freedom-loving citizen of this city. I repudiate the very thought.

I am a property owner and a long time citizen of Atlanta and I would rather see the whole city burned to the ground than to force one single citizen into involuntary servitude for my convenience. Think, Mr. Mayor! You are proposing to make slaves of these men. They are free citizens, Mr. Mayor, not subject under any circumstances to work against their wishes for any man.

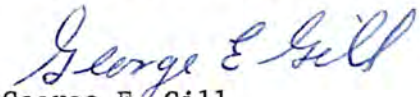
I don't know the details of your negotiations with these men. I know from my own experience in collective bargaining that it is almost impossible to get the full flavor of a labor dispute into the public prints. I recognize that men pushed beyond endurance can sometimes be exasperating. But it appears, Mr. Mayor, that you would not even meet with these men until after their frustration had driven them from their jobs and then only to threaten them with slavery. May I respectfully suggest that a more moderate, conciliatory and sympathetic approach on your part could have prevented this crisis and

The Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.  
June 9, 1966  
Page Two.

could still cure it. These men obviously have a real grievance against the city -- that means me, as a citizen and you, Mr. Mayor, as my spokesman and representative. No self-respecting man so situated could react any way except with resentment and rebellion to the insulting repudiation of their long-standing efforts to achieve some relief.

As a full and complete solution to this problem, Mr. Mayor, I commend to you and the Board of Aldermen the full and complete implementation of the Golden Rule. Slavery and the bull whip may seem desirable to you at the moment but it is not an acceptable policy in America, even under the most pressing provocation.

Very truly yours,

  
George E. Gill  
District Director

GEG/mfw