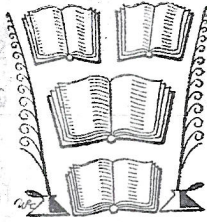


## World of Books



# A Frightening Work On the Hard Hats

**John Barkham**

**W**ERE YOU SURPRISED or dismayed when hard-hat construction workers attacked students in New York for protesting the war? You wouldn't have been had you been able to read "Whitewtown USA," by Peter Binzen.

It is a frightening yet salutary work by a Philadelphia newsman about a sore in the American body politic — one barely visible to the naked eye but with the power to inflict grave injury on urban society if indefinitely neglected.

That sore is the accumulated bitterness of the lower middle-class, white workingman concentrated in urban enclaves like Philadelphia's Kensington, New York City's Belmont section and elsewhere. These are the Whitetowns of Binzen's title, populated by artisans who dropped out of school (as did their wives), living in small houses, earning up to \$10,000 a year, flying the Stars and Stripes and standing 100 per cent for God and country.

★ ★ ★

**I**T IS THE MOST neglected segment of urban society. Binzen has studied these Whitetowners and his book offers a chilling picture of what they may be driven to do in their continuing resentment.

Though his researches are focused chiefly on Philadelphia, they are equally applicable to other large urban complexes and particularly to those adjoining black residential areas. For one of Whitetowner's major grievances, is that too much

attention is being given to blacks and not enough to law-abiding, taxpaying white citizens like himself.

Whitetowners, being under-educated themselves, traditionally look with suspicion on the college-educated man. This is part of the anti-intellectual tradition which has historically characterized American society. Today this suspicion has been enormously intensified by the uproar on college campuses and the anarchy of student radicals. Now, Binzen finds, the white workingman is against things. "He is against open housing, against school busing, against hippies, yuppies and draft dodgers. He's against letting blacks into unions and China into the United Nations."

★ ★ ★

**T**HE BOOK delves deeply into typical Whitetown attitudes, takes the reader into Whitetown schools. Binzen makes vividly clear why. Whitetowners feel themselves alienated from the blacks pressing in on them and from the better paid, better educated whites able to flee to the suburbs.

Are these Whitetowners the "silent majority" we hear so much about these days? As the hard-hat assault in New York made clear, the blue-collar white worker is nearing the point where his pent-up hatreds and frustrations are ready to explode. (Random House: \$6.95).

*Saturday Review*

William Hogan is on vacation