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Trade-Unions in an Age of Pluralism and Structural Change

The Response to the Irrepressible Demands of the Common Man

Solomon Barkin

Reviewing the industrial unrest of the last three years in Western Europe and the United States, the author describes and analyses the new trends in the trade-union movement to cope with such a new situation.

Ever since Vice-President Henry Wallace popularized the phrase « Common Man », we awaited the appearance of this « Age of the Common Man ». As each social innovation arrived, we asked if this was the answer. But successive demands for advances kept informing us that expectations grew progressively. Visions keep expanding; new horizons replace older ones. The faith in the creativity of the economy and social system deeply embedded in western man looks to the continuing unfolding of reforms to enrich and broaden lives, opportunities and rights. Current unrest also stems from an impatience with the slowness with which new challenges are defined and tackled. Domestic frustration and the outrage at the suffering forced on fellow men are frequently coupled with a yearning for positive national leadership to lift the pall which overhangs the country.

To meet these problems and expectations, we have to answer the question whether we have entered upon a new era, succeeding a period of post-war reconstruction and growth. Do current questions and challenges raise doubts about the premises of our economy and society? Do they call for major structural changes? Will spontaneous forces of adjustment, deliberate fine-tuning of existing measures or incremental changes suffice to right our course

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and restore the fundamental economic and social equilibrium of the last twenty-five years? if not, what basic innovations are essential to achieve and maintain short-term stability in a world of long-term instability and structural reorganization? How can the latter be advanced progressively in the course of short-term adjustments?

One may seek answer to these questions in *ex cathedra* speculations or empirical studies. Our analysis will proceed from a review of industrial unrest of the last three years in Western Europe and the United States.

Many different institutions play a vital role in the operation of our complex dynamic social system. Few are now as important as the trade-union movement. The masses provided the momentum which brought political democracy and trade-unionism into being. The former harnessed public restlessness and directed it into a process of progressive change. Trade-unions supplanted unilateral by bilateral decision-making in many areas of our industrial systems as well as pressed political institutions to recognize social and human needs. Both processes converted unrest into pressures for progressive change, and democratized our institutions and society. What role have the trade-unions to play in the present changing national society?

Having lived through a period of frothy reiterative youthful and student indulgence in relative extremisms expressing their disillusionment and protests against the mores and behavior patterns of our society, with a few individuals opting out of the mainstream, we are aware that the current defusion of tensions reflects only a dampening and a reorientation of the unrest and not its disappearance. In the current pregnant calm we can discern the penetration of the youths' doubts about our society among the mass of the population. Widespread dissatisfaction exists. The recession, high levels of unemployment and continuing political, racial and urban difficulties keep these tensions at a potentially explosive pitch.

We know not when or where the strains will next be revealed, but the national scene episodically discloses them. The reverses of the Administration at the November election speak of this mood. Unanticipated wide support for the peace marches is further evidence. Sporadic victories of local reform candidates at election reveal the breadth of support. Even public annoyance with noisy demonstrations reflects a desire for action. Political leaders and the Administration are cautiously in different degrees responding despite disclaimers through the programs they espouse. They realize that the blighted hopes have to be rekindled. High unemploy-

ment and low participation rates in the labor force evoke broad condemnation. The withdrawal of major military forces from Indochina is considered imperative even if the American fortress is not to be dismantled.

These responses to unrest so impressed a French journalist that he proclaimed this country to be « the apotheosis of the new revolutionary spirit ». Jean-François Revel is probably indulging in the liberties taken by another French journalist, Jean Jaques Servan-Schreiber, who wanted to awaken European and particularly French industrialists to the realities of the American challenge. Revel wants faster change in Europe, and draws the fascinating picture of the high rate of American innovation and adaptation to stimulate his own country. In any event, it is a period demanding alternatives; resistance to change produces strife. And we may wish to know more about them to accelerate our response, so that the « new American revolution », found by our French visitor, may be more of a reality.

This nation preached constitutionalism to employees and adopted the National Labor Relations Act to channel the unrest among them. Students now enjoy formal recognition and representation in the councils of some universities and high schools. What new reforms or representation and what substantive programs are essential to effect the changes implicit in the new era of expectations? This paper limits itself to the field of industrial relations and particularly to the role and programs of trade-unions.

The Recent Upsurge of Unrest in Western Europe

The United States is part and parcel of the western society because of our cultural, economic, institutional, political, military and social ties. The recent American corporate invasion of the European continent made our image even better known to the average Continental citizen. Many are now directly employed by American companies, their affiliates or associates. American capital assets and know-how provided considerable stimulus to its economic growth.

The close ties of our financial and monetary systems deprive each member nation including the United States of considerable freedom to act independently of the overall interests of the group. Disquiet in parts of the system cannot but threaten other sectors. Progressive defusion of tensions is essential for all. The lessons of each become the subject of study of all in the common organization, The Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development, located in Paris, of which both the United States and Canada are active members. Unfortunately, our citizens and many important officials, industrialists and trade-unionists and industrial relations men are not fully alert to these ties and interdependencies and function oblivious or superior to their existence.

It is essential to familiarize ourselves with the course of unrest in western Europe, their methods of handling overt outbreaks and the problems underlying them. We may thereby be helped to reach a more mature understanding of the fundamental questions raised in this paper.

During the last three years both official and wildcat strikes occurred in western Europe, in some instances assuming a violent form. In a region where industrial relations stability had seemingly become the pattern, and statistics suggested the withering of the strike phenomenon, serious breakdowns occurred. Traditional methods and policies of trade-unions and government no longer suffice in several countries. Strikes occur among groups unaccustomed to such action; such as, technicians, professionals and white collar workers. Loud and clear are the demands for better shares of income, protection against inflation, new and more rights for workers within industry, and greater democratization of the governance of the enterprise and social services, particularly but not exclusively education. The targets are both managements and the governments and both are involved in the settlements.

Students demand reforms at the universities and their radical fringes carry the challenge to broader arenas, particularly in Italy, Netherlands, and West Germany. Obverse reactions exist in the restraints imposed in several countries on immigration particularly of foreign labor, and the resistance to American financial penetration and the encouragement of domestic consolidations to counter the American competitors. These and other evidence speak of the disquiet pervading the western side of the European continent. Parallel difficulties are also reported in Eastern Europe.

Industrial unrest expresses itself in four patterns. First, in two countries, United Kingdom and Italy, an overt confrontation exists among the employees, trade-unions, employers and the government. Second, in four countries, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland, established stable industrial relations systems are threatened by serious challenges. Third, Denmark and West Germany continued to rely on existing negotiating systems, hoping that the general direct and indirect economic measures would guide the economics of the wage bargaining process.

Fourth, in four other countries employers with the government as a partner deliberately negotiated generous settlements with trade-unions often involving complementary economic and social public programs to avoid outright strife, and to tackle the problems of inflation. But the life-span of this era of industrial stability is uncertain. In this group of countries we include Austria, Belgium, France and Norway.

OVERT CONFRONTATIONS — UNITED KINGDOM AND ITALY

In 1970 the number and severity of strikes and stoppages in the United Kingdom exceeded all years since 1926, when the General Strike protested against the country's then deflationary policies. Workers constrained by a decade of recurrent wage controls in the sixties, embittered by rising prices, emboldened by successful local industrial action conducted independently of national leadership and anxious about rising rates of unemployment which in March brought the level to 3.5 per cent, a rate comparable to 5 per cent according to American methods of computation, engaged in official and wildcat walkouts, slowdowns, overtime bans, demonstrations and other forms of resistance and disapproval, both in private and public industries. In 1971 the strike of Post Office employees lasted for 47 working days and that against the Ford Motor Company, ten weeks. The latter brought a 33 per cent wage hike despite the government's efforts to keep the ceiling at ten percent per annum, a goal which is being frustrated in the negotiations in private industry.

The Conservative administration accepted this open battle; it is both resisting public employee demands and encouraging private employers to follow suit. It is rejecting counsels for immediate reflationary measures, attributing the economic difficulties to union insistence upon high wage settlements, hoping thereby to turn the public and labor against the wage claims. It is pushing through industrial relations legislation to expand government initiatives by requiring strike votes and the registration of unions, making agreements enforceable in courts, and discouraging political strikes. This action provoked protest demonstrations in March of more than 1.5 million workers, though the Trade-Union Congress disapproved of this one-day walkout. Industrial action has for the first time in half a century become a complement to political pressure for advancing worker objectives. Trade-Unions realizing the need for positive action are urging reflationary measures with guarantees of real income and may offer a voluntary income policy if these terms are accepted. Mr. Harold Wilson has urged a broad « social contract » involving all interest groups and the government to effect real stability.

The government, the political opposition, Confederation of British Industries, and the Trade-Union Congress are locked in a battle on economic and industrial relations policy which will test their endurance, political reactions and the nation's resilience. Such intransigence would be hard to duplicate in the annals of British industrial history. The costs of the current struggle will be difficult to calculate. But the victory of either side will hardly resolve the basic structural economic problems of this country. The conflicts implant a feeling of resentment which can hardly help shape a cooperative spirit.

The story of Italian strife is even more challenging to that nation's future. Pushed by the workers' desire to share in the profits of the « economic miracle » of northern Italy, the social dissatisfactions of people crowded into industrial communities with inadequate housing transportations, schools and other social facilities occasioned by the settling of thousands of southerners manning the plants, the « hot autumn of 1969 » strikes reached a new record in scope and intensity. Their numbers remained high in subsequent years. In April of 1971 a second national strike occurred followed by dispersed one-day stoppages in individual industries which involved two million people. Moreover, the strike syndrome has become a regular response to discontent or protest.

Trade-unions severed their close ties with the political parties which at the end of the war had nurtured them. Cooperative relations among the three major federations (CGIL : communist left socialists ; CISL : Christian democrats ; and UIL : right wing socialists) are now a reality, allowing the most militant to set the pace. In the last year, unions forced the divided left-of-center government through strikes and threats into an agreement on legislative reforms affecting the health system, lowcost home building, schooling facilities, the old age security program, and the tax system and then used strikes to press for immediate action. These stoppages have become so widespread and economically paralyzing that the President of the Republic recently appealed for an end to the « strike disease » fearing the concurrence of stagnation and inflation. With the government appearing to be relatively unsteady and the bureaucracy traditionally laggard and ineffective, these outbreaks continue to feed on the discontent and reflect a threatening public impatience with the state of affairs. With the Italian Communist Party preparing itself to become a real contender for government power, its leaders no doubt find the present unrest congenial to its own strategy. The same appears equally true of the Neo-Fascists.

The trade-unions through their industrial action are a major force in producing change. But the economic costs are high and the political consequences unpredictable. On the other hand, some observers believe that the strikes, focusing on the need for action, may even save the social system.

**THREATENED INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEMS :
NETHERLANDS, SWEDEN, FINLAND AND SWITZERLAND**

Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland are known widely for their exemplary industrial relations systems. Many employers and trade-unionists visit these countries to gain close knowledge of their « secrets ». But these models are now in disarray, threatened by new expectations and challenges to their underlying assumptions. Netherlands during the fifties maintained a tight tripartite system for the control of wages. In the sixties, « wage explosions » occurred, occasioned by the tightened labor markets, the resentments against intimate government control and high earnings in neighboring countries in which nationals worked. After each earlier break a modus vivendi emerged to maintain the old system. Now, however, employers and trade-unions insistently seek freedom from controls. In 1968 the parties gained the right to negotiate agreements without having to observe prearranged limits. But the government retained the right to reject contracts if inconsistent with economic policy. And such rejections occurred rather regularly. To define the procedure under this more liberalized arrangement, the government sought legislation to enable the Minister of Social Affairs to nullify agreements in conflict with the social interest. But the unions resisted this power. When Parliament in February 1970 approved the restraints, two of the three national trade-union federations withdrew from negotiations with employers' associations through the Foundation of labor and participation in the semi-annual economic review of the Social-Economic Council, the mainstays of the Dutch collaborative system of government. In December 1969 the trade-unions and employers in the heavy engineering industry negotiated a two-year contract providing among other items a cost of living automatic adjustment up to three percent, a provision of which the government disapproved but to which it finally yielded.

These disagreements produced considerable tensions among employers, government and trade-unions both within the deliberations of the aforementioned advisory bodies and in the country. In the fall of 1970, it evidenced itself in the wave of « four hundred guilder » bonuses (\$110) granted throughout industry, though the pattern originated in a

settlement with Rotterdam dockworkers who protested against the differentials paid to temporary contract workers. The government unable to obtain an agreement on wages with the industrial partners, secured the passage through Parliament, despite a general strike on December 15, 1970, of a measure limiting further wage increases in the first six months of 1971 after inclusion of 400 guilders in the base, to 3 percent in the first quarter and one percent in the second quarter. Trade-unions threatened another wage explosion at the expiration of this period, July 1. Official and wildcat strikes continue. A recent tugboat strike making demands in defiance of the wage freeze led a court to order the unions to withdraw their strike call, but finally the stoppage netted the workers their full demands. A subsequent strike of building workers also produced liberal wage benefits.

Tension continues in face of rising prices and the longing is strong for a less controlled collective bargaining system. Trade-union leaders feel threatened by the continuing rise of independent trade-unions and the dissatisfaction in their ranks. The parliamentary election at the end of April hardly cleared up this situation. The center-right government coalition lost favor but no alternative viable party coalition exists to a conservative economic program, adding further to the prevailing discontent, with the enlarged Socialist-reformist opposition feeling stronger because of its parliamentary gains, and the trade-unions more determined to contest the controls. The ways of interest consultation which served the Netherlands are crumbling in face of the disagreement on general economic and industrial relations policies and the deficiencies in the collaborative methods.

In Sweden the rupture is sharp and the road of ultimate reconciliation unclear. Still the traditional disposition for patient deliberations persists. The era of industrial peace initiated in 1938, broken only in 1945 by a large scale five-months metal strike, ended in 1969-1970 with a 56 day strike of 5,000 miners at the state-owned mines. The strikers, including a large group of foreign workers, particularly Finns, protested not only their working conditions but the neglect of other interests by union officials and management. They felt that the central bargaining system and its local work councils are hardly sensitive to their grievances. Following their precedent, 100 quickies are reported in other parts of the country to be resolved largely through local concessions.

But the most serious threat to the established system is the currently suspended strike conducted by two official national labor confederations of

government and professional employees, including civil servants, judges, doctors, tax adjusters, train dispatchers, teachers and scientists. The strike and lockout would have also blanketed military officers had not the government taken the unusual step for this country to secure a Parliamentary emergency order forcing the strikers to return for a six week period. The demand for a 23 percent wage increase gained importance in part because it sought to restore the differentials between manual and white collar workers, previously contracting in accordance with the « solidaristic » wage philosophy of the LO and the social democratic government. Current negotiations between the parties are reported to be moving in the direction of granting a substantial part of the demands though their implementation may be spread over a longer period of time.

While these disputes are raging, the negotiations between employers and the LO continuing since December are proving difficult with the union imposing overtime bans and the employers countering with threats of lockouts and the employers unwilling to accept the government commission's recommendation for a 31 percent increase in wages over three years. At the same time the government is to consider a new package of policies essential to its fight against inflation as its present price freeze in effect since September 1970 will have to be replaced by new orders.

As never before Sweden is confronted by strikes and lockouts and serious wage claims in diverse sectors. National bargaining systems are inadequate; the conflict in approaches between the LO and one of the two white collar unions, brewing for almost a decade, has come to a point of white heat. The flexibility accorded by the local union system which in the past helped compensate for the rigidity of the national agreement through local negotiations appears no longer sufficient to keep the industrial relations structure in balance. The traditional wage relationships need revamping.

Economic stability threatened by inflation suffers also from the significant migration of capital to foreign countries; the needs for structural innovations and shifts in the economy are apparent. Here too, short and long run problems combine to usher in a period of fundamental reexamination and change. Fine tuning of the economy through existing fiscal, manpower, monetary and current structural programs appear insufficient in the new era. New efforts are essential to achieve an economy as viable as the past war one.

Finland faces a similar set of serious dilemmas. The national price and wage agreements which settled the strike waves of 1967 expired.

A settlement negotiated in December 1970 with the aid of the President proved insufficient in face of the determination of the communists and militants in the building and metal workers unions to secure better terms. The seven week strike of February and March of this year followed by other wildcat strikes disturbed the four year industrial calm. The leftist parties quit the government; the industrial and political future is beclouded. The country's ability to tackle these problems will depend in part on Russia's instructions to one or more wings of the domestic communist party.

Switzerland experienced an upheaval after thirty-five years of industrial peace when the Genovese metal workers engaged this year in a wildcat strike. The exact portent of this outbreak is still unclear.

CONTINUED ACCEPTANCE OF CURRENT INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM

Third, both Denmark and Western Germany continued to rely on current fiscal, income, and industrial relations and monetary instruments and persuasion to contain the inflationary impact of collective bargaining. The parties in Western Germany took formal cognizance of the counsel of the government and the Council of Economic Advisers in their negotiations in 1967 and 1968 and the beginning of 1969. But by autumn of the latter year, the marked rise in profits produced a series of wildcat strikes and sparked demands for high wage increases which continue to date. Major strikes did not occur because of generous concessions negotiated in the contracts effecting an annual increase in wages of almost 15 percent. The government's negotiated agreements also followed the preceding pattern.

The first signs of resistance appeared in 1971 causing intermittent serious strikes such as those at the Lufthansa and in the textile and chemical industries. The country continues to operate under boom conditions though forebodings of a cooling-off are recurrently announced. The floating of the mark in May gave the government a new opportunity to tackle its prices and incomes problems. The government's meeting with unions and managements thereafter lead to an agreement with the parties that the « necessity no longer exists of gearing prices and income expectations to the conditions of the boom but to an essential phase of consolidation. » The Brand government used its close relations with the trade union movement to impress on it with the need of this more realistic view. In the meantime new tax and social policies seek to

equalize the burdens among the classes and promote reforms which would make these restraints acceptable to the organized employees. The future in part therefore will be affected by the degree to which the trade union can secure effectual support of its membership for policies of restraint. Plans to deal with the contingencies of a setback in current efforts are not public nor is public debate raging on the subject.

The non-socialistic Danish government similarly builds on traditional procedures to deal with the strains of inflation. Recalling the effects of the abortive wildcat strike at the beginning of 1970, it accepted the recently negotiated collective bargaining contract and its wage increases. To contain its inflationary impact and other influences, it reinforced the price controls introduced in September 1970 disallowing wage increases resulting from a wage drift beyond the levels agreed in the contract as a basis for price adjustments. To placate the unions and the labor force, other measures set limits on business incomes. An automatic cost of living adjustment provision is also contained in the contract. The government hopes that its controls and concessions will repress the pressures within the labor market and allow it to achieve stabilization. But it is further quite aware and has so assured the groups that these controls will be short-term in nature. What its future course would be when this transitional period runs out and the problems continue to challenge it is not evident.

COLLABORATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR DAMPENING INDUSTRIAL UNREST

This unrest and sharp confrontation is not universal in Europe though the tension and news are communicated to other countries. The underlying economy conditions and aspirations are common ; philosophies are widely shared. Close connections exist among the trade-union leaders of these countries. The communist parties have close ties though they differ in importance and even in attitudes to national problems. Moreover, labor and socialist parties dominate or share the governmental powers in Austria, Belgium, West Germany and Norway. These countries and France relied upon negotiations and collaborative relations between the government and management and trade-unions to deal with these problems and did not, with the exception of France, resort to programs sharply different from those already in operation.

The Gaulist Pompidou government reached this state only after experiencing a lukewar reception for its profit sharing program and the

test of fire. The events of May 1968 in Paris became the hallmark of the new era. The restlessness and radicalism of the French student, provoked in part by the inadequacy of the university system and its shortages of facilities as well as its restrictive entrance requirements and curriculum, spread to the industrial worker. Suffering under repressive policies and programs of the French employers (patronat), workers spontaneously joined the protest without the guidance of their unions, adopting traditional revolutionary slogans and demanding, besides material improvements, greater rights of participation in decision-making. The « Grenelle Awards » negotiated by the government, employers and trade-unions at first rejected and then accepted under duress by the striking workers, called for wage increases of up to 10 percent for the year 1968, raised national minimum wages and eliminated regional differentials at this level and improved social benefits. Most significantly, they granted new rights and protection to trade-union shop stewards and improved the status of unions, a markedly important step for it reflected official recognition of unions as the key to disciplined industrial relations. National and regional industry commissions, established in accordance with agreements, began in the next two years to monitor employment developments and promote the reemployment and retraining of displaced employees. The new program urged employers to rely on attrition to control their staff and granted reemployment preference rights to those laid-off.

Overt strikes have since subsided in volume and intensity but tension and unrest persist. Intermittent local strikes occur, occasionally developing bizarre incidents such as the invasion of corporate offices and the seizure of corporate officers. The protests in both private and public industries are directed at technological displacements, plant and mine closings, the tradition of autocratic management, and tardy wage adjustments in face of inflationary pressures. Recurrent stoppages by farmers and small shopkeepers on their own grievances increase the tension. The most dramatic recent strike involved the domestic airline industry for an unprecedentedly long period of 123 days. Later, a 25-day strike among Renault workers brought them many gains. Unions continued to press the government through demonstrations to lower the retirement age from 65 to 60 years.

The government is highly sensitive to the political threat of this unrest and has taken steps to calm the scene. Negotiations and agreements with trade-unions (« concertation ») are the byword of the period. Concessions are granted to moderate the protest. When the multi-phased

deflationary program, including the August 1969 devaluation of the franc, to deal with inflation stimulated by the settlement of summer of 1968, produced large scale unemployment and a drop in the national level of activity. Reflation became the order of the day. The government cut expenditures, taxes on foods and discount rates. Trade-unions in 1970 negotiated wage increases reaching almost 10 percent and the government agreed to the « contract of progress », which linked wages to company profitability. Finding this arrangement hardly adequate to dampen the labor unrest, the government further yielded in 1971 in its negotiations with the railroad workers guided by the CGT (communist oriented trade-union which had previously refused to sign contracts) to a six percent rise plus a guarantee of further raises to maintain a real increase in wages for the year of two percent should the retail price index exceed four percent. The government through its continuous adjustment of fiscal, monetary, collective bargaining, social insurance and structural policies seeks to ward off social unrest and further turmoil. But these agreements hardly sufficed as inflationary pressures stay high and unrest does not recede.

The national trade-unions including the CGT are willing associates to this strategy, hoping thereby to improve their security and the workers' position. They appear ready to negotiate settlements of wildcat strikes and continue general political demonstrations to dampen unrest and maintain their leadership. Nevertheless, the endemic weaknesses of the trade-union movement and internecine competition, the immaturity of the overall collective bargaining system as well as the employers' persistent rejection of unions cast doubt on the nation's ability in the near future to evolve an effective, stable relationship in this area. Increased provisions for vocational training for the young and displaced add further to a feeling of progress. The concurrent improvement of the employment office system is also expected to contribute to these ends. But here again the modest expenditures on these new activities are likely to frustrate development rather than assuage the discontented. Price increases continue high.

The government's hope is to meet these problems through collaborative techniques and by placing a great emphasis on the reduction of unemployment. President Pompidou is quoted as placing the achievement of full employment as a national goal ahead of control of inflation.

Belgium, facing a less inflationary price movement and an expanding economy financed in no small part by large scale American investments,

defused the unrest by accepting an automatic linkage of wages and cost of living indexes. In face of new demands for large wage increases the coalition government recently announced after negotiations with the economic interest groups through the existing elaborative consultative machinery more severe controls over prices, a reduction in the value-added tax on coal, cuts in taxes for lower income groups, rises in social security charges, higher subsidies for commuting employees, higher pensions and a guarantee of a 40 hour work week and four weeks holidays by 1975.

Two other countries have relied on established systems of collaboration for meeting the newer problems. Norway avoided the potential unrest through its automatic wage adjustments to price changes, contained in its national agreements and an embargo on « wage drift » increases. Other economic measures to contain the overheated economy include restraints on credit, higher taxes on consumer goods, limitations on the volume of construction. These programs had the acquiescence of the LO which in the latter part of 1970 urged a program to contain inflation. The competitive and economic consequences are still to be faced by and seriously trouble the new Labor government. The latter which is intimately associated with the LO has pledged to promote a more progressive tax system further to secure the people's support for its program of restraints.

Austria maintains its system of close control of prices which keeps them at a relatively low level. To meet the threat of unrest it allowed for an increase in the supply of imported goods, reduced taxes to increase disposable income, sharply controlled public expenditures and force fifteen percent of the private investment funds. It is combining these policies with steps to shift its industrial emphasis to finished good manufactures. These programs, particularly the guidance of price and wage and industrial relations, result from the close collaboration of the interested groups and the government in specially constituted consultative or administrative bodies, particularly the Parity Commission which supervises all price and wage changes. The latter's activities are no doubt responsible for the successes in achieving price and wage stability.

SEARCH FOR NEW COLLABORATIVE PROCEDURES AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES

The high level of industrial unrest in Western European countries follows a quarter of a century of stable progressive industrial relations. The American scene looked stormy indeed in contrast to the stabilized and even routinized relations pervading many countries. Nations like

Sweden could until this year dogmatically observe the preference for government non-interference in the negotiations whereas Austria, Norway, Belgium, Finland and Netherlands counted on close collaboration of groups. Governments relied with considerable assurance on the exchange of information about economic conditions to help contain excesses in demands. Its very stolidity gave the impression that the collective bargaining structure had been permanent, even though all had been created either immediately before or after the war.

Trade-unions enjoyed a high degree of prestige and recognition in the society. Their officials, widely consulted by industry and government on industrial and public issues, serve both in parliaments and cabinets. Labor and Social Democratic parties held sway either as the dominant party or as significant partners of coalition governments. Trade-unionists occupied important posts in the left wings of the Christian Democratic parties. Formal trade-union goals of full employments, economic growth, increasing equality, observance of equity and democratization of public services and economic, social and structural reform became general national objectives and are continuously advance. Real earnings and living standards of the mass of people rose. Worker participation in decision-making and decision-taking on the job and plant levels spread in varying degrees through diverse official and unofficial mechanisms in different countries bringing some relaxation of tensions at these levels which trade-unions had neglected. Collective bargaining on regional and/or national agreements effectively set minimum patterns while workers and local committees enjoying the advantage of a tight labor market secured additional « drift » concessions from employers.

Trade-union structural and policy deficiencies became apparent in this new era, but the leaders except for those in Italy, West Germany Norway and the United Kingdom avoided grappling them believing them not to be pressing and feeling themselves without viable alternatives to offer. Their basic class orientation left them in many countries, other than Austria, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, without a philosophical base for participation in a cooperative adversary relationship with other interests in society.

Since 1969 the scene changed. Militancy became the byword in the ranks of labor, both blue and white collar, including technicians and professionals, both in private and public employments. Wildcat strikes are common. The membership's pressure directs the leadership with the

latter still seeking to find ways of accomodation with the « establishment » but discovering it increasingly more difficult as the discontent spreads.

Europe is beset by the crisis of inflation, a product in part of the irrepressible demands of the age of common man, seeking constantly higher levels of realization of his aspirations for services, living standards, opportunities and the traditional unstabilizing forces of a capitalist society. New factors include the impact of the expanding American investments, offerings of dollars, military expenditures and rising prices in this country. The coincidence of boom conditions in different countries fed this inflationary movement. The major OECD countries, omitting the United States, showed price rises of 4.8 percent in 1959 and 5.9 percent in 1970 ; the smaller northern countries, 4.1 percent and 5.1 percent respectively.

Traditional fiscal, monetary and income policy programs are employed to contain the inflationary pressures. But it is plain that these **must** be supplemented by programs for structural changes and techniques for evening out demand pressures and other complementary programs, such as the elimination of ethnic and racial discrimination and regional development ; that the cooperation and collaboration of the constituent groups is **essential** ; that trade-union views must be assigned greater importance and unions must be allowed to maintain an independent adversary representative role and enter into periodic agreements with other groups including the government without waiving their rights to the ongoing promotion of their goals or converted into tools for the automatic endorsement of government programs, a position into which they have been placed during the last two decades and against which the memberships is rebelling ; that spontaneous adjustment and fine tuning with existing economic measures is no substitute for many needed basic structural changes in the economy and society and public services ; that intransigent and stubborn orthodox deflationary programs even if temporarily successful are socially costly and politically disastrous to incumbent parties, a conclusion that could also be drawn from the experience of the twenties ; and that wage and income controls must become permanent features of a society they are to command support among trade-unions and be workable.

The emphasis is now not only on the broad social economic goals of the early post-war period, but also upon an even wider range of objectives including greater equity, democratization, new styles of living for all and actual delivery of results rather than affirmations. It is this

shift toward social goals and the people's aspirations defined by social activities that make the older neoclassical American and British economic theories at times irrelevant and even counterproductive. They built their values on existing market operations which reflected the uneven economic and political power of participants, and these preferences can no longer serve to determine either values or resource allocation. A new scale of imputed values is developing which is more consistent with the human, social and environmental objectives of the day. An analytical system which emanates from these premises will be more relevant to the needs. Moreover, short term action has to be more consistent with long term programs and the market place is a poor harmonizer of time values in the allocation of resources for this purpose. A broad acceptance of medium and even long term planning in Europe as supplements to annual plans will do much to harmonize the two.

It is not surprising therefore that the labor and socialist governments and coalitions and even some middle-of-the road administrations on the European continent recognize the beginning of a new era. The shift in the accent of the population in the generation of post-war babies reinforced this decision. They are extending the instruments for intervention and guidance to realize more fully the broader set of goals. Collaboration with interest groups is increasingly replacing acquiescence and cooperation. Mr. Wilson's proposal for a negotiated social contract bears a close resemblance to this proposal. The pragmatic evolution of the new philosophy and economics is everywhere in evidence, even in the argument about the British Conservative deflationary program, but no full-blown exposition exist. Interestingly enough, the OECD which includes the United States as a member but which benefits intellectually only most modestly from its participation is through its periodic policy statements cautiously advancing some of the new ideas; witness its recent proposals on the methods of dealing with inflation, education and environment.

Older ways no longer suffice in Europe. A new generation is taking over which stresses action. They have been weaned away from reliance on spontaneous change as the essence of the desirable state. They are seeking structural changes in administration both to advance opportunities for participation and innovations to materialize their expectations. The progressive optimism of the last two decades allows them to accept gains but only if they are followed regularly by new additions to achieve ultimate ends.

The trade-union movement in Europe is still to crystalize its philosophies, their practical import, programs and tactics in terms of their actual current conduct. Here again, the rank and file pressure is serving to rekindle the leader's understanding of his role. The trade-union leader is a spokesman and not a member of an elite class ; he cannot abandon his adversary position ; his functions are to represent, articulate aspirations, lead and educate his following ; he must deliver results, for the common man is short on explanations and long on realities.

European trade-unions concentrate on national or regional and minimal standards of employment. But the people as their militancy evidences seek complementary job, plant, company and community action and advances. The trade-union has not only to voice, strive and negotiate for demands, but also secure them and thereafter monitor their implementation and enforcement from the job to the national level, as is evident in Italy. The multinational corporation is both a challenge to the national governments and the trade-unions for neither has worked out an effective way of harnessing them to the national public interest.

The strictures for government may also serve as guide-posts for trade-unions. More collaboration of the official structure with its membership and policies and practices, and more representation of the newer aspirations can provide a broader base for fulfilling the functions of independent representation, spokesmen and negotiators for employees.

Projections for the American Scene

We cannot yet discern a clear direction for the future of the american economy and industrial relations system. But some likely positive trends do emerge from the consideration of the role of trade unions in this new age of uncertainty. Future developments may take many unexpected turns ; but our analysis may help in orienting us to the tomorrow rather than providing a basis for precise projections.

DELAYS IN CRYSTALIZING DIRECTIONS

Unlike the European countries, we as a nation have not fully defined the new forces with which we are dealing. Most discussion is in terms of past settings. We continue our attachment to free enterprise and eschew public intervention into the economy. Our reliance is upon spontaneous correctives of existing rather than alternative stabilizing and stimulating forces. The domestic goals of high rates of economic growth and full employment are neither stead fastly pronounced nor persistently pursued.

Moreover, the country has been distracted from dealing with its fundamental problems by the battle on the regressive proposal to reinforce the power of local vested power groups in the handling of social problems and in the preoccupation with palliatives such as public works and government service jobs.

The Administration rejected the use of economic controls proclaiming their ineffectiveness and reluctantly yielded to an « inflation alert » system as a milder alternative. One meek step toward control is that directed against construction wages which affects only isolated extreme local settlements which presumably also affront the national union leaders. Guides and rules respecting nonwage incomes are undefined and present suggestions respecting them relate only to the effect of wage increases on prices. The « alert » singled out the steel negotiations for alarmist comment but left the broad expansion of price rises relatively unnoticed.

The repeated reassurances of the effectiveness of the general economic tools for cooling off the economy and avoiding large scale unemployment delayed popular reaction to their ineffectiveness. The economic Council's Report for 1970 projected a 5.5 percent rise in output, and foresaw inflationary pressures waning to a secondary status. It affirmed that « there is no inherent reason why a high employment economy must be an inflationary economy even a mildly inflationary economy. The transition to a stable condition of high employment without inflation will come slowly but with persistent attention and effort it is attainable ». Reassuring, but events proved otherwise. Output rose 4.9 percent, prices, 6 percent, real gross national output declined slightly, and unemployment reached 6 percent. The record for the first half of 1971 is only slightly better, with unemployment not receding from the previous high rate.

Protest movements here are slow in gathering momentum. The forces of potential allies are dispersed on many fronts. The racial and Vietnam issues continue to command higher vocal priorities. The coalescence of groups on economic issues is still difficult to achieve. Efforts to do so are singular and scattered. The cushions provided by unemployment insurance and other resources keep the protest at a low key. The absence of large-scale organizations other than trade-unions impedes the popular protest.

Evidences of tension in our industrial and economic fields are quite clear. One form expresses itself in the workers' desire to keep on the economic treadmill and not fall behind. Stoppages during the last two

years broke the records of most other post-war years. Workers involved in strikes in 1970 (3.3 million) exceeded the number in each year since 1952. The days lost (32 million) were only higher in 1959 and 1946. Conflicts over wages we are told by the Administration are to continue high ; they are the preferred method of breaking the upward trend in wages.

The President and his Council in the meantime capitalize on every glimmer of improvement to herald better days ahead. But that time still appears far off. Doubts about success are common. Will the resentments in the population overflow before the promised day arrives, if it ever does ? When will the forces of social protest join to command a unified following for a common program of economic and social change ?

THE CHANGING ROLE OF TRADE-UNIONISTS

In this setting the trade-union movement has an historic role to play both to help individual work units express their aspirations and reactions and to aid in the coordination of like groups to press for economic gains. There are already evidences of this alteration in outlook and pace ; in the period ahead, many new factors will probably accent these trends.

The AFL-CIO during the last year has been the only significant group which has consistently and repeatedly labeled the President's economic program as bankrupt ; it called for expansionist and control approaches to our economic problems. President George Meanay proposed broad compulsory wage, price and income controls when few voices echoed agenda. In July a national meeting of AFL-CIO constitute organizations urged new action and programs to combat unemployment.

Further changes toward broader political and social action involving the mass of members appear quite unavoidable as the present measures prove inadequate to deal with our economic reverses. Established patterns of activities within the movement which accent collective bargaining and bread-and-butter unionism will not deter the organization from moving into the wider arena. The history of the trade-union movement is the story of alternating periods of emphasis on industrial and political action, depending on their respective effectiveness. The trade-union's test of tactics is performance not theory. It is more flexible in shifting tactics and strategy than dogmatic political parties. The political action arm created in the last thirty years is now employed in limited ways. But it has been surprisingly effective, primarily as a handmaiden to the Democratic

political machine. The machinery for independent action involving the local unions and their members exists within this political framework.

The tactics of the trade-union movement are not fixed. They range from unilateral decision-making to participation in bilateral decision-making through collective bargaining, political pressures and bargaining, strikes and even more extreme moves. The choice depends upon actual conditions, attitudes of the people and other relevant factors. It has considerable flexibility and can be responsive when the advantages are clear. Our contention is that such will be the case in the immediate period ahead.

FACTORS PRESSING FOR CHANGE IN TRADE-UNION TACTICS

Many developments in the work force, economic and social environment, industrial structure, the government and the union movement itself will thrust trade-unions in new directions, without necessarily diminishing the importance of collective bargaining. The latter is likely in this country as in Europe to become complementary to a wide assortment of instruments used to advance labor's goals more assiduously and economically.

The most obvious factor is the demographic one. The bumper crop of post-war babies now is in or will shortly be joining the labor force of this country as in Europe. These persons will dominate the society. Reared in an era of high expectations and optimism, their basic tenets are traditional: American progressiveness and an accent on human rights. They bring a high sensitivity to moral and social issues; thus their individual lots and frustrations will tend to be translated in broader concerns.

Their disillusionment provided the foundation for the revolt on the campus, and the rising rate of rejection of negotiated agreements in industry. They are not, as traditionally expected, grateful for the world they inherit, a rather demeaning concept, but demanding the implementation of the ideals and principles they were taught. Their successes in uncovering the obsolescence of and dysfunctionism in the universities won them significant rights for consultation if not participation in decision-making. Their effectiveness in awakening a reluctant American population to the pointlessness of the war and the desecration of environment are potent omens for their positive positions and action as responsible adults.

They are likely to demand that we make real the national pledges for good education, health, housing, recreation and public facilities and services and local development. In the last two decades the rights were

intoned and facilities generalized in some few areas but in others they remain scanty. The quality of service deteriorated or never reached the level of expectations prevailing and is awaiting the recasting of principles and definitions of new approaches to realize individual singularity rather than mass mediocrity. These independent demands will no doubt face up to the limitations of resources and crystallize a coherent view of priorities, integration of programs, and methods for the concurrent promotion of these goals. Such claims can only be realized through organized pressure and action. The younger and older members of the work force and the community recognizing the limitations of collective bargaining or independent employer initiative in these fields, will seek their answers at the governmental level, as was true in the late fifties when the search for answers to the threat of automation led to the passage of the Area Redevelopment Act and the Manpower Development and Training Act.

George Meaney caught the spirit of the times in these words : « all of the labor leaders of the past were young men dissatisfied with working conditions when they started to build unions and from what I have seen of today's young worker I think the future of labor is going to be in good hands ».

A second demand of the work force is its insistence upon equality of status among people on all rungs of the employment ladder. Much progress was made in the last two decades in eliminating distinctions between blue and white collar workers and among the groups in the management. But a great part of this road still remains untraveled. In this democratization process we will in fact have to emulate newer European patterns defined elaborately in the Netherlands and France. But claims for differential awards for groups and continued attention to the needs of the wage earner and low salaried workers without creating class distinctions cannot be overlooked. The trade union movement can in fact merge the interests of these groups and press not only for benefits but for the transfer of the burden of financing to the higher income groups.

The minority groups which in the sixties gained recognition and entrance in substantial numbers into the mainstream are winning more real equality, rights and status. They will press even more strongly for them in the seventies. The leadership positions to which their numbers entitle them will provide them with an additional platform for profound revisions of relations among people in industry and society and thereby accent the dynamism of our society.

With a younger work force, better educated, sharing in aspirations, impatient with the rate of change, striving to realize their patrimony of expectations, entitled by virtue of numbers to reshape their society, and well aware of their ability to effect these goals, the decade ahead will witness a strong drive through governmental institutions rather than primarily through our industrial mechanism to effect relevant revisions and innovations.

The indifferent rate of progress in our economy certainly for the near future will also tend to accent public rather than private action and further set the tone for the decade. Price movements are likely to continue upward even if we should realize an intermediate reduction to a rate of 4.0 percent. The stimulation needed to reduce unemployment from the current 6 percent levels will, in our present industrial structure, lacking public controls or at least restraints or plans for structural change, rekindle inflationary trends. The price increases, the 5.5 percent level of unemployment and the sluggish rate of overall real growth are apt to sustain a high pitch of unrest, frustration, and protest against public policies necessitating continued accent on action in this field.

The accelerated rate of expansion of our potential work force as the generation of post-war babies leave school will only make these economic issues more intense. Inflationary trends not only deprive people of real buying power but also disturb the relations among groups. Social friction grows as one section of the society gains or loses more than others. In a more organized and action-oriented work force, this experience will be incendiary. Our profoundest hope is that these pressures against orthodoxy will be sufficiently effective in the vision of M. Revel to get our society to respond. The alternative is the radicalism of the first decade of this century and more recently, the students structural change and the democratization of services and direct public guidance and intervention toward economic growth and high employment rather than generalized indirect controls offer positive alternatives to the course followed by the present Administration.

Other sources of friction are quite evident. They call for remedial action to be initiated by the government. The work place, formerly the direct concern of management, workers and unions, has become the focus of public review. The worries of pollution produced an initial series of restraints ; no doubt more will come. But even more profound in its effect on industrial relations is the new federal system of the review and enforcement of safety and health conditions on the job. Union committees and

public inspectors now have a common interest in enforcing codes. As these concerns assume concrete form they will also produce far reaching pressures and a new channel of communication between the worker and the government through this union.

Mass production and the assembly line removed the traditional manual skill requirements. Repetitiousness and constraints on work duties and the transfer of planning and controls to the upper layers of management produced the historic protests against the dehumanizing effects of mechanization. Automation expands the areas of employee responsibility and has probably raised the educational requirements of the work force, but largely within the limits of high school achievement. But we have had a vast expansion of our collegiately trained people. Yet, little has been done either to upgrade jobs to meet their expectations or to utilize their education and training. This group is both vocal and demanding and will resort both to collective bargaining and the political fronts to effect suitable changes in job design.

Management for one hundred years has exercised its overwhelming power through the corporate organization created by public largesse. The privileges of management are broad ; its inaccessibility is sheltered by a sympathetic judicial system. But the centers of decision-making are now under attack. Individual business for some time leaders felt that public and consumer representation was appropriate individual corporations elected public personalities, particularly college presidents and professors to their boards of directors. Unfortunately, too few maintained an independent public stance.

In Germany trade-unions have rights to participation on the boards of directors of the coal and iron and steel industries and in a limited manner in other large corporations. Trade-unionists are on the boards of public corporations in the United Kingdom. The proposed European Economic Community Corporations contains provisions for such representation. Ralph Nader in his projected proposals for the reorganization of corporate structures and representation of interests suggests new subjects for consideration in this area. This controversy again will be fought out in the public arena. Employees and their unions will have a direct concern with these issues. Other controls on prices and other business acts may also be emerging. The unions will strongly insist on their right to be heard ; witness the keen interest of unions in the Amtrak tariff, multinational corporations, the SST and other national issues.

Governmental ineffectiveness in dealing with the problems of housing, education, medical care and other crucial public issues are central concerns of each citizen, worker and union member. Traditional patterns are effective only for an elite group. But the delivery and the quality of these services to the mass of people are admittedly poor and costly. New structures, approaches and definitions of goals are crucial to the design of solvent economic systems in these areas. More attention has to be directed to meeting the needs of low and lower middle-income groups. Again, wide public participation is needed for expanding answers and will involve the individual citizen and employee.

The Nader consumer movement set a pattern for direct intervention by its demand for national and local political action. Will the trade-union divert more of its energies, attention and resources to the public concerns of its members and following? Will it convert itself from being an agency almost exclusively directed to concerns at the shop and local levels and industrial interests to one providing advocacy representation for employees from the job to the nation's capital?

The elements for this change already exist. The need is primarily for formal recognition and an attribution of permanency to this activity. Therefore, its implications, importance and centrality must be accepted. The transformation can be made quite undramatically through transfers of funds and personnel and a new accent on political education and training at the local level. Precedents for initiating studies and getting drafts for new programs are available. The American trade-unions sponsored the preparation of the Kennedy health insurance bill which they now support and this effort is not unique. The same was true in other fields such as area development. A particular important field for initiative would be that in housing in which the construction unions and the total membership have an immediate and urgent interest. Trade-unions until recently turned primarily to public housing as a base for its proposals; they adopted interest aids and rent supplements developed in the sixties. They sponsored limited dividend and cooperative housing projects. The call is for them to underwrite the development of an integrated total low cost housing program which would break through the present impasse. The trade-unions in West Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom helped formulate and promote programs which met a substantial part of the needs of these countries; a like effort in this country would be most welcome. Similarly in the field of economic policy, the isolated unrelated trade-union planks await the preparation of a synthesis and an integrating philosophy.

The trends within the American trade-union movement will be strongly and increasingly toward the newer emphasis on public as a complement to industrial and collective bargaining action. The increased constituency among the white collar occupations and technical and professional persons and in the service and governmental sectors will reinforce these moves. What is needed is a serious commitment and a determination to move in these directions by both the leadership and the following. No doubt the current experience with high rates of unemployment, the frontal attacks on the collective bargaining system in the construction industry, and the deadlock on programs for social services will accelerate these trends.

A DEFINITION OF AMERICAN TRADE-UNION DIRECTION

However impressive our rate of response to political and social pressures may appear to visitors, the country progresses unevenly in its handling its problems. Consistency in policy and action is not our forte. Pragmatic individual advances are the established pattern. The unevenness of efforts is particularly apparent because of the disparity in the approaches of the Administration, the dominant groups in Congress and the vocal claimants in the country.

The age of the seventies will be distinctive. The generation of post-war babies with highly developed expectations will by reason of numbers, powers of articulation, training and experience in social action set the tone for the era and take over the leadership of our work force. There will therefore be a decided opportunity for merging their values and those inherent in the trade-union movement. The accent on political activity is therefore likely to grow with the trade-union movement becoming increasingly more active in this field to realize the end of social change necessary for improving the lot of its following. Political education and organization within the trade-unions not only at the national but also at local levels on a continuing basis will become increasingly permanent features of its structure. This represents no violent shift ; it calls primarily for the constitution of continuing expanded internal union agencies down to the local union level which will carry on these activities.

During the last forty years, the trade-union movement took its lead from the liberal movements ; they supported and protected its growth and survival. The trade-union positions on public affairs usually originated in the progressive liberal movements. The latter are now scattered and preoccupied with specific issues of great importance but not always central or immediate to the concerns of the trade-union. Therefore the union

movement has to initiate, become the focus and dynamism for identifying the overriding economic social problems and sponsoring the preparation of proposals for action and securing the support for them until we recreate the cohesive supporting broad movements likely to evolve in the seventies.

The trade-union movement's responsibility to sponsor the coalition of progressive forces for significant economic and social change is being perceived. Efforts in this direction are observable. For the trade-union movement it means not the subordination of its preoccupation with collective bargaining, but only the addition and expansion of new activities particularly at the local levels. For the progressive forces it signifies recognition of the common purpose and the submergence of suspicions and tensions which had grown up in the last two decades.

A great degree of convergence of the patterns of the American and European trade-unions will follow which will parallel the increasing interdependence of the two continents. Perhaps our progressive political groups may thereafter become more aware of the new relationships in Europe and evaluate more freely the usefulness of its experience, an inclination which weakened in the post-war years. A new complex of inventions in political organizations and relationships and programs will then be considered in this country. More experimentation with pluralistic relationships and structural change will be undertaken.

LE SYNDICALISME À L'HEURE DU PLURALISME ET DES CHANGEMENTS DE STRUCTURE

La multiplication des grèves sauvages et le refus des membres de ratifier les accords négociés par leurs syndicats illustrent bien le malaise de la classe ouvrière. Fascinés par les clinquants de la société de consommation, sensibles à l'impatience des générations d'après-guerre qui entrent sur les marchés du travail, mécontents des méthodes et des politiques traditionnelles des syndicats et des gouvernements, malheureux devant la montée de l'inflation et inquiets des dislocations des structures industrielles, les travailleurs exigent des innovations, l'amélioration de leur genre de vie et la satisfaction de leurs aspirations à des niveaux de vie plus élevés et à un régime politique plus démocratique. Les leaders syndicaux et politiques européens s'efforcent de contenter ces pressurés et de retaper les institutions pour les rendre plus impressionnantes et plus satisfaisantes. C'est au Royaume-Uni et en Italie où il y a confrontation directe entre les groupes de pression et l'État que les tensions sont les plus apparentes. De nouvelles valeurs et des systèmes nouveaux de relations professionnelles se dégagent en Finlande, aux Pays-Bas, en Suède et en Suisse. Le Danemark et l'Allemagne de l'Ouest continuent à s'en remettre aux régimes existants avec l'espoir qu'ils tiendront le coup. Mais l'Autriche, la Belgique, la France et la Norvège, surtout la première et la dernière, battent les sentiers de la coopération,

non seulement dans le domaine des relations professionnelles proprement dites, mais aussi celui des accords complémentaires relatifs aussi bien aux transformations économiques et sociales qu'aux changements industriels. Sous la poussée toujours croissante exercée par l'homme de la rue, on multiplie les efforts en Europe pour mettre au point un nouveau régime de relations du travail qui réponde aux besoins des salariés et les groupe sur les lieux du travail tout autant que dans l'entreprise, l'industrie et la nation en donnant la priorité aux objectifs sociaux.

Il est difficile de faire des projections quant à l'avenir aux États-Unis. Des forces semblables sont à l'oeuvre : les nouvelles générations de travailleurs demandent avec insistance des changements. Des groupes minoritaires tout comme les cols bleus sont mécontents. Mais les philosophies sociales dominantes continuent à résister aux partisans des réformes de structure qui réclament une intervention et une gestion de l'État plus poussée et favorisent la décentralisation politique. Le mouvement syndical répond spontanément en mettant l'accent sur l'action politique, en réclamant l'intervention des gouvernements et en soutenant notre régime économique et social. Ces activités constituent des compléments de plus en plus importants de l'action syndicale et de la convention collective. Les syndicats jouent de plus en plus le rôle de porte-voix des intérêts des salariés, au-delà des questions professionnelles, au plan de la communauté et de la société globale. Dans le cadre actuel, ils sont forcés d'assumer la tâche d'épouser les problèmes sociaux et économiques qui pèsent de plus en plus lourd en se chargeant de la formulation des réformes et en les soutenant. Ces mouvements, ici et en Europe, auront pour conséquence, en attendant la formation de la coalition vers laquelle on s'achemine, de faire converger les structures et les programmes des syndicats ouvriers sur les deux continents.

LE SYNDICALISME CANADIEN (1968) une réévaluation

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