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John Evansohn

Laura Foner

Mark Naison

Ruth Meyerowitz

Will Brumbach

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INTRODUCTION

Let's drink to the hard-working people
Let's drink to the lowly of birth
Raise your glass to the good and the evil
Let's drink to the salt of the earth.

The Rolling Stones

For most of its short history, the "New Left" has tended to ignore the American working class. Working primarily in the universities, and making forays into the ghettos and Southern cotton towns, the "New Left" has generally thought of the white working class with ignorance, suspicion, and fear. It was almost taken for granted that workers in this country had been too fully "bought off" and shared too strongly in the dominant anti-communist and racist ideology to ever become a force in a movement for socialism.

Times have changed. The last few years have seen increasing debate in the Movement about the political tendencies and potential of the American workers —both blue-collar and white-collar— as a force for revolutionary social change. The rebellion in France last spring, the potential and threat represented by Wallace's campaign and his appeal to the workers' sense of powerlessness, the discontent among working-class draftees in the army, and the recent debates in SDS have heightened this renewed interest in the working class.

Out of this have come some of the murkiest and also some of the best debates in SDS and the Movement as a whole on the problem of class consciousness and how we can reach and relate to American workers. In addition to the debates efforts are now being made to go into white-collar jobs and into the factories, as well as into high schools, technical and community colleges, the army, and working-class communities to try out different strategies for working-class organizing.

In the course of these debates and organizing attempts it became clear that the American working class was not "dormant": a growing militancy showed itself in the rising number of wildcats every year since 1960 and the various rank-and-file movements and radical caucuses of black and white workers which have been challenging both management and entrenched union leadership. Nor were workers as affluent or secure as had been assumed. Rather, rising costs and taxes have steadily eaten away at wage increases, and only the most skilled workers are able to earn anything near the minimum wage considered adequate for a family of four by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This "high"

income can only be achieved with substantial overtime, making the average work week for many workers forty-eight to seventy-two hours long, with some workers holding two full-time jobs. Further, many workers face constant job insecurity (There is an enormous turnover of employees in American industry.) with consequent fear and insecurity about being able to support families, or set aside money for medical expenses, education, retirement, and old age. In addition to grievances on the job, workers are faced with exploitation as consumers, tax-payers, and community residents—inadequate schools which process working-class youth for unskilled jobs and the army, poor transportation, absence of day-care centers, et cetera.

The following bibliography on the American working class was put together with several aims in mind:

1) to continue the process of destroying the myths held by the Movement about the working class;

2) to provide material which we hope will be helpful to Movement people who are currently organizing in working-class communities, or on the job (or are planning to start such projects);

3) to encourage much-needed study on areas of working-class life and experience which have been either totally ignored or distorted and confused.

It focuses on the white working class (although not exclusively) rather than on both black and white workers, largely because there has been much written recently about black communities, education, and culture as well as the role of black people in the economy. Although much of this literature does not deal specifically with black workers, sources dealing with white workers—especially contemporary materials—are much less well-known. This is, of course, partly due to the fact that little or nothing has been written in many areas of working-class history and life. But the dearth of material is only one of the problems in putting together such a bibliography.

Another problem involves a methodological critique of the existing material. Of all the subjects of study by American writers, the white industrial worker may be the most stereotyped and the least understood. Post-war sociologists have maligned him as the "mass man", an authoritarian personality who is prone to lynchings, witchhunts, and patriotic sprees—the patron of racism, McCarthyism, and anti-Semitism. Liberal cultural critics have painted him as the great consumer, seduced into political passivity by his insatiable hunger for goods. And Marxist historians have presented him as the American social hero, struggling to implement his historic mission against enormous odds,

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CONTRIBUTORS

DICK HOWARD is completing his dissertation at the University of Texas on the relationship of the Grundrisse to Capital; GEORGE RAWICK is presently teaching at Oakland University in Michigan; JOEL SLOMAN is an editor of CAW!, and his poem is reprinted from El Corno Emplumado; WILL BRUMBACH has been an organizer for the West Side Resistance Project; JOHN EVANSOHN is now teaching sociology at Essex County Community College; LAURA FONER is now a graduate student at Columbia; RUTH MEYEROWITZ is a graduate student at Columbia and spends much of her time with rank-and-file caucuses in New Haven; MARK NAISON is a Radical America associate; STEPHEN TORGOFF'S poem was reprinted from his book False Consciousness; PAUL FALER is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, finishing his dissertation on Nineteenth Century Massachusetts working-class history

bringing us closer to victory with each union struggle. These images have combined to produce ar enormous fog of misconceptions which insulate the worker from other social classes and isolate him from his own culture.

To remove some of the layers of myth obscuring the experience of the American worker is crucial if we are ever to have an effective and class-conscious radicalism in America. This will involve cutting through the pluralistic notions of America as one big middle-class society, with workers fully-integrated into middle-class life and values, while at the same time avoiding a dangerously-persistent tendency of many writers on the Left to glorify the working class and see class struggle in every street-corner brawl.

Another weakness in much of the work of our predecessors on the Left—and in the historical literature in general—is that it has dealt with the working class almost exclusively in terms of trade-union struggles. Although this aspect of the working-class experience is crucial and the work has been carried out with great skill, passion, and intelligence, we believe that working-class life has to be viewed in a general cultural setting, and that politics, the educational system, the consumer market, and the media are arenas in which class oppression is as real and important as the factory. Thus we have tried to concentrate on sources which treat working-class life in a general cultural setting, and have omitted many well-known works which have been traditionally considered the sourcebooks of American labor history.

The bibliography is divided into five sections. First, there is a selection of some of the best books on American working-class history. In this section we have tried to select works which do not identify the history of the working class with the history of the labor movement. They deal with such questions as the nature and extent of social mobility, the persistence and importance of agrarian values and pre-industrial cultural patterns, the influence of ethnic and racial sub-cultures, sources and patterns of labor militancy, and the methods by which the working class has been integrated into capitalist society. In addition to citing several works, we have suggested a tentative framework for interpreting the worker's changing conditions and responses in relation to a developing capitalist economy from 1820 to the present. Following this is a short section with books and articles on working classes in other countries. These have been included either because of their exciting methodological approaches or because of the value of the comparisons they suggest.

The third section is a large body of sociological studies on the American worker. These include studies of working-class communities and education, and attitudes toward work, politics, and the family. Some of these studies are excellent; others reek of sociological jargon. But through the bullshit, there emerges a portrait of autonomous modes of working-class life and thought. They reveal important information about attitudes toward unions, consumption patterns and the role played by credit, the sources and nature of working-class aspirations, the general balance between workplace and community in the worker's search for a satisfying life. One other point should be mentioned. Most of the community studies deal with middle-size industrial cities where the bulk of manufacturing in America takes place. We think it is important for all of us to become conscious that the main tasks in working-class organizing lie outside the great metropolitan centers.

The fourth section deals with the issue of racism and the general question of ethnic conflict. In underestimating the complexity of the working-class

experience, radicals have played down the divisions within the working class which have made radical development in America so difficult. The growth of ethnic sub-cultures, the power of white-supremacist feeling, the emergence of an internal class struggle between skilled and unskilled workers, the differences between workers born into industrialism and those recently arrived, are themes which have been underplayed in both radical strategy and radical historiography. It is time such problems were given their proper attention.

And finally, there is a short section dealing with working-class culture. We begin with novels—an important source of material on the American working class. "Proletarian culture", crudely defined, was one of the more unfortunate pre-occupations of Depression-era writers, but the vukgarity of its application should not blind us to the fact that there were and are distinctly working-class subcultures in American society with which the Left must come to terms. Thus we are presenting the best of the proletarian novels of the Thirties with the fairly-limited collection of books dealing with working-class themes that we were able to collect from the post-war period. This will be followed by a short discussion of modern working-class youth culture. The literature dealing with such matters is practically non-existent and is not very good. But its importance is such that we feel compelled to mention the theme—and raise what we believe are the necessary questions.

The bibliography is by no means complete. We hope it will help people gain a better understanding of a class whose history and present mode of life remain a mystery to much of the New Left, and whose participation is essential to any revolutionary movement.

HISTORY

American historians have not as yet provided us with a full picture of working-class life during the growth of industrial capitalism in America. The analysis of the development of an industrial infrastructure has been carried out with far greater precision than the examination of its social effects. The very excellent work done on the development and consolidation of the corporate economy by Thomas Cochran, Alfred Chandler, James Weinstein, Gabriel Kolko, and Robert Weibe has few parallels in the field of social history. Even radical historians have fallen prey to the elitist bias of seeing working-class history primarily in terms of the growth of formal institutions. We know much more about the history of trade unions and radical parties than we do about the working conditions, community life, and leisure pursuits of the workers whom they tried to represent.

However, work done in the past five years suggests that these gaps in the history of American industrialism may soon be filled. A new generation of radical historians, less sanguine about the potential of the trade-union movement than its predecessors, has begun to investigate the conditions of life of unorganized as well as organized workers, and has significantly expanded the analytical range of American labor history. The methodology of European Marxist historians has been applied to raise important questions about the manner in which an industrial working class was created and stabilized during different stages of American capitalism, to explore the nature of its resistance to industrialism, and to provide a more persuasive explanation of both the failures and the accomplishments of the American Left.

The works of Jesse Lemisch, Herbert Gutman, and Stephen Thernstrom are among the most important recent attempts to raise, and begin to answer, these questions. Lemisch's work on merchant seamen in the American Revolution in both the William and Mary Quarterly (Volume 25, Number 3, July 1968) and Toward a New Past, edited by Barton Bernstein (New York, 1968) demonstrates the importance of studying both the elite—to see how their beliefs and practices affected the rest of society, and those on the bottom—to see how they responded to, resisted, or challenged the demands of the upper orders.

Early Industrial Capitalism: 1830-1860

The best work to consult here is still Norman Ware's The Industrial Worker: 1840-1860 (Boston, 1924). The book details the anguished and largely unsuccessful efforts of American working men (and women) to resist the advance of industrial capitalism, a system which they viewed as a "radical force, ruthlessly destroying the little liberties and amenities of another day". The book is still unsurpassed for its ability to make real the experience of early industrialism. Its description of the early experiments in craft unionism, co-operation, and political reform depicts the full range of value conflicts which capitalism brought with it and is completely free of the paternalism which often ruins the history of "backward-looking" social movements.

The literature for this period describes most thoroughly the development of the textile industries and the early "Irish immigration". Hannah Josephson's "The Golden Threads" (New York, 1949) is an excellent study of New England mill girls and factory owners in Lowell, Massachusetts. Vera Shlakman's Economic History of a Factory Town: Chicopee (Northampton, Massachusetts, 1935) is a study of a New England mill town in the process of industrialization. Its most interesting sections deal with the class structure of the community and the social effects of a shift from native-born female to immigrant, largely male Irish, labor. With the coming of the Irish, a permanent factory population developed with whole families dependent on mill earnings. Also useful is Carolyn F. Ware's Early New England Cotton Manufacture (New York, 1966). Concerned principally with the development of the industry, it also has rich material on working and living conditions.

Robert Ernst's Immigrant Life in New York: 1825-1863 (New York, 1949) gives an accurate picture of the labor market in the nation's largest commercial center and a sensitive description of the dislocations produced by the Irish immigration of the late 1840s. Oscar Handlin's Commonwealth, A History of Massachusetts (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1947) contains a good description of the political controversies provoked by the beginning of the factory system, but gives little attention to the perspective of the worker and is marred by a tendency to squeeze consensus from every event. Handlin's Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1941) is one of the best of the traditional descriptions of the experiences of an ethnic group in America. Handlin describes the importance of the Irish to industrialization in Massachusetts as well as the development of a group consciousness. He ignores, however, the extent to which their behavior was molded by the pressures of their working-class position, and explains virtually everything in terms of their rural Irish-Catholic origins.

The Gilded Age: 1860-1890

Under entrepreneurial capitalism, the American working class first attained importance as a self-conscious political force, and one can look to a solid body of literature on both the labor movement and working-class political reform. Two works in particular stand out. David Montgomery's Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans: 1863-1872 (New York, 1967) is a brilliant examination of the effect of working-class agitation on the "Radical" political coalition which emerged triumphant after the Civil War. Montgomery shows how the nature of American industrialism focused working-class energies into political-reform movements after the Civil War, and how those movements raised issues for the middle-class sponsors of Reconstruction which hastened the collapse of the radical experiment. He also seeks to explain how the experience of class conflict did not immediately generate a radical socialist ideology among trade-union leaders, and how the vision of harmonious society continued to hold sway in workmen's minds. The demands for currency reform and the movements for an eight-hour day were not, as some historians have alleged, "utopian diversions", but were serious efforts to find room for democratic values within the emerging industrial system. Norman Ware's The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895: A Study in Democracy (New York, 1929) deals with similar issues. The almost-religious idealism of post-war movements such as the Knights of Labor, Ware claims, reflected the fact that industrial capitalism operated counter to widely-held social and religious values. By destroying the meaning of craft skills and creating enormous concentration of economic and political power, capitalism threatened the dignity and independence which were deemed every man's birthright. It was to the credit of groups such as the Knights, Ware concluded, that they challenged capitalism as a system and put forth values of co-operation and social solidarity in a religious spirit. The rise of the craft-minded AFL, far from being the "triumph of rationality", represented a strategic retreat from the more-ambitious reform efforts.

Ware's picture of the Gilded Age as one in which the triumph of industrial capitalism was bitterly contested on the basis of traditional social values has been confirmed by the work of Herbert Gutman. The history of the great industrial conflicts of the Gilded Age has been well covered by narrative historians who have not been as sensitive to the importance of community structure as Gutman. Wayne Broehl's The Molly Maguires (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964) is a study of the famed Irish terrorist group in the Pennsylvania mines which sheds light both upon Protestant-Catholic animosities in the labor movement and upon the development of techniques of repression—labor spies, the legal doctrine of conspiracy, the use of the state militia—to control working-class violence. Robert V. Bruce's 1877, Year of Violence (Indianapolis, 1959) is an impressionistic history of the great railway strikes of 1877 which ended with over a hundred workmen killed. At one point in the strikes, a mob of outraged workers seized control of the city of Pittsburgh and destroyed over ten million dollars of railway property. Henry David's The Haymarket Affair (New York, 1936) is a brilliant study of a pivotal event in the history of the American labor movement. David shows how the involvement of anarchists and social revolutionaries in the eight-hour movement of the 1880s, dramatized by a bomb-throwing at a Chicago labor rally, was used to discredit the Knights of Labor, which had attained over one million members, and paved the way for the dominance of craft unionism in the American labor movement.

The literature on class violence in the Gilded Age has recently been supplemented by studies of working-class life and attitudes. In a chapter on "The Workingman" in The New Commonwealth (New York, 1968) John Garraty pulls together information on trade-union activity, standards of living, working conditions, and mobility to document growing dissatisfaction and industrial unrest, which he attributes to the fact that large numbers of skilled and unskilled workmen remained desperately poor. Only an unmeasurable minority attained the dramatic rags-to-riches rise made famous in American mythology. An even more perceptive study, Stephen Thernstrom's Poverty and Progress, concludes on the basis of a community study in a New England industrial city that workmen rarely moved out of their class, but had the opportunity to make minor advances in skill levels and to accumulate some property.

Emerging Corporate Economy: 1890-1929

The history of the American worker in this period involves the description of many contradictory trends. This was the time when the corporate economy developed and the modern techniques for integrating the working class into capitalist society evolved. Advertising, the mass production of consumer goods, the centralization of urban school systems, the attack on immigrant-dominated political machines, the cultivation of a "white-supremacist" ideology through Jim Crow laws and imperial adventures, all emerged as conscious strategies for social integration by the time of the First World War. Yet the task was not carried out without important resistance. The 1890s were marked by violent labor uprisings in North and South and the rise of the Populists, a radical, anti-capitalist party that came very near success. The "Progressive period" marked the high point of American Socialist politics. And the two years after World War I contained the greatest concentration of class and racial violence since the end of Reconstruction. The ten years of social peace that ended with the Depression were achieved only after violent and systematic repression had undercut the major forms of working-class resistance.

The experience of the American workers in the 1890s has been dealt with only partially by historians, but a number of works analyze the class and racial violence of the period in a manner which raises broader issues. C. Van Woodward's Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel (New York, 1938) and The Origins of the New South (Austin, Texas. 1951) remind us that class unity between the black and white Southern poor was greater in this period than at any other time in American history. Racially-mixed unions in longshore, mining, and steel fought bitter and sometimes successful strikes, and the Populists (in some states) sought to unite blacks and whites against the politics of white supremacy. Only the failure of these movements permitted the disfranchisement of the Negro and the ascendancy of Jim Crow. Herbert Gutman's brilliant article "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America" in The Negro and the American Labor Movement confirms Woodward's view that enormous possibilities for inter-racial organization were available in the Nineties. Gutman shows how black organizers played a significant and by no means passive role in the development of the miners' union, and how racial conflicts significantly shaped the organization's history. Other works cataloguing class and labor violence in the period are also worth examining. Louis Adamic's

Dynamite, The Story of Class Violence in America (New York, 1934) and Samuel Yellin's American Labor Struggles (New York, 1936) treat the Pullman Strike and the Homestead Lockout, two of American labor's most-dramatic failures, in an interesting if romanticized manner. Ray Ginger's Eugene V. Debs, A Biography (New Brunswick, 1949) gives an excellent picture of the lives of American railway workers, and a careful examination of the forces which led to the failure of the American Railway Union in the Pullman strike. It also offers telling documentation of the strength of racial feeling among white Northern workmen. Robert Weibe's fine book The Search for Order (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962) provides some excellent information on the response of the middle class to industrial unrest. He describes the establishment of employers' associations, the hiring of detective agencies and labor spies to minimize agitation, and the development of techniques of government intervention to protect corporate property and to control labor violence. The years between 1890 and 1900 were an important turning point in the history of the American working classes. More needs to be known not only about the way workers lived and thought, but also about the way the forces of order in American society organized to prevent change.

Better material is available on the experience of American workers in succeeding years. David Brody's Steelworkers in America: The Non-Union Era (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962) is a remarkable case study of how the work force in the steel industry was kept unorganized by a combination of repression, welfare programs, and exploitation of ethnic differences. Brody finds conclusive evidence that the structure of the communities in which the workers lived and the expectations which they brought to their work were as important as industrial conditions in determining the forms and outcomes of labor activity. The astute manipulation of social antagonisms between native-born immigrants and black workers seems to have been the steel corporations' major technique of defeating efforts to organize its workers. Another excellent study, by Robert Ozanne, A Century of Labor Relations at McCormick and International Harvester (Madison, Wisconsin, 1967) finds similar techniques used there. The growth of self-contained communities among immigrant workmen is brilliantly documented in Florian Znanieck's monumental The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (Boston, 1920, five volumes). This work, which every serious student of the American working class should read, shows how the activities of immigrant workmen in America were dominated by their experiences in their homeland, and how the forms of social organization which they developed insulated them from other social groups in a manner which undercut efforts to organize a unified working-class movement. Moses Rischin's The Promised City (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962) and Melech Epstein's The History of Jewish Labor in the United States (New York, 1950-1953, two volumes) make the same kind of analysis, in a less-ambitious manner, for American Jews. The centrality of ethnic differences in the radical movements of the period is also well analyzed in two general works dealing with the labor movement and the Left—Marc Karson's American Labor Unions and Politics: 1900-1918 (Carbondale, 1958) and James Weinstein's The Decline of Socialism in America: 1912-1925 (New York, 1967)—and in an article by Charles Leinenweber in Science and Society (Winter 1968) entitled "The Socialist Party and the New Immigrants". These articles demonstrate that immigrant sub-cultures in American cities were both a major source of

socialist sentiment and a serious obstacle to the unification of the labor movement in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century.

The strike wave that followed World War I represented the last major offensive of radical unionism before the Depression, and its interpretation remains one of the great unfinished tasks of radical scholarship. However, several excellent works which examine conflicts in specific sections or industries—such as David Brody's Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919 (Philadelphia, 1965), Harvey O'Connor's Revolution in Seattle: A Memoir (New York, 1964), and Robert Freidheim's The Seattle General Strike (Seattle, 1964)—deal with two of the period's most-dramatic movements, whose failure spelled a dim future for industrial unionism. The inability of the established labor organizations to fully commit their energies to organizing drives in transportation, extraction, and the mass-production industries, these authors argue, enabled the post-war open-shop drive to win critical victories. The same point of view, somewhat more-harshly stated, can be found in William Z. Foster's American Trade Unionism (New York, 1947) and Pages from a Worker's Life (New York, 1939). Foster shows convincingly how the AF of L bureaucracy stood in the way of the "hurricane" strategy needed to successfully organize in steel, and ended up by undercutting its own power as well as that of more-radical leaders. An excellent account of the persecution of labor leaders during the War and after is found in William Preston Junior's Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals: 1903-1933 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1963). Preston shows how the repressive apparatus of the state —the army, the courts, the FBI, the immigration bureau—were placed wholly at the disposal of the corporations between 1917 and 1921, and were used to crush the great organizing drives in the mass-production industries and destroy the morale and the leadership of radical unions. Yet only short impressionistic chapters in William Leuchtenberg's The Perils of Prosperity (Chicago, 1958) and Sidney Lens's Left Right and Center (Hinsdale, Illinois 1949) seek to make the connection between the repression of the post-war strike-wave and the "success" of welfare capitalism in the years that followed.

The conditions of American workers during the "open-shop" years of the Twenties has been given sensitive if somewhat ahistorical treatment in Irving Bernstein's The Lean Years: The History of the American Worker: 1920-1933 (Boston, 1960). Writing about a period when the labor movement had lost all pretensions of militancy and was "trying to sell itself as a necessary auxiliary of business", Bernstein discusses the conditions which made the working classes unable to organize successfully in the shop or to resist business domination of education, politics, and culture. He points to the following as the sources of the unprecedented class harmony of the Twenties: the end of immigration and the accompanying campaign to Americanize ethnic sub-groups, the development of welfare capitalism in the mass-production industries, the influx of women into the employment market, the expansion of white-collar employment, the dissemination of cheap consumer goods through installment credit, and the development of new devices for mass entertainment (the automobile, the radio, and the movies).

One of Bernstein's major sources was Robert and Helen Lynd's study of Muncie, Indiana, Middletown (New York, 1929). The Lynds found that a lack of autonomy and opportunities for individual mobility at the workplace did not keep Muncie's workers from accepting corporate paternalism. Aspirations were easily deflected to the next generation, faith was placed in the school system

as the major arena for upward movement, and personal gratifications were sought in home-life and leisure (made possible by the availability of consumer goods). Mass culture and mass education had thus emerged as a substitute for controls over the work process and the political system. Along with the suppression of the post-war strike-wave and of the Left, these were major forces behind the political passivity of the American worker during the Twenties.

The Worker in the Great Depression: 1929-1940

The Depression brought an abrupt end to the conditions which made for class harmony in the Twenties. Corporate paternalism ceased, consumer goods stopped flowing, and millions were thrown out of work. Many workers turned to unions and radical parties to restore security and a sense of meaning to their lives. But the degree to which fundamental life patterns and cultural attitudes were changed by the experience is open to question. We have yet to discover whether new forms of community and new types of consciousness emerged among the working classes, or whether loyalties forged in previous years still held sway. Before we do, it will be difficult to say to what degree the failure of Depression-era radicalism was due to overwhelming social conditions, to the strategic failures of radical parties and radical labor leadership, or to the rapid submergence of discontent in the onslaught of the Second World War.

Existing community studies of workers during the Depression seem to suggest that fundamental changes in consciousness did not occur. E. Wright Bakke's studies of New Haven, The Unemployed Worker (New York, 1934) and The Unemployed Worker and His Family (New York, 1940), and the Lynds' Middletown in Transition (New York, 1937) found that working people during the Depression tended to view their distress as temporary, reject far-reaching solutions to the crisis, and sink into a generally-lower energy level in their private lives. Workers responded favorably to the appeals of unions and the unemployed leagues, but did not see them as the basis upon which to construct a new social and political life. They met the appeals of radical parties with a mixture of apathy and suspicion.

But the conclusions of the above-mentioned works cannot be applied to the whole of the Depression-era working class. The towns in which the studies were done—Muncie and New Haven—were centers of relative labor peace in a time of widespread unrest. A more general view of the period suggests that potential for a radical consciousness existed in many segments of the society but was not developed by proper organization.

The profundity of working-class discontent during the Depression has been demonstrated by a number of excellent works. The latter chapters of Bernstein's The Lean Years document the violent textile strikes and unemployed demonstrations that marked the three years before the New Deal. Anna Rochester's Labor and Coal (New York, 1931) deals with the dislocations caused by the Depression in coal-mining districts. Lens's Left, Right, and Center, Art Preis's Labor's Giant Step (New York, 1964), and Edward Levinson's Labor on the March (New York, 1936) discuss the conditions in the mass-production industries which led to the formation and the meteoric rise of the CIO. Sit-down strikes in Flint and Toledo and general strikes in San Francisco and Minneapolis indicated social and political commitments which went well beyond the range of bread-and-butter concerns. But perhaps the most

persuasive evidence of fundamental cultural breakdown comes from the South. In both rural and industrial areas, union leaders found Southern workers uniquely willing to organize if supplied with proper leadership. Racial differences proved to be less of a barrier than at any time since the Nineties; inter-racial unions were organized in coal, steel, tobacco, cotton, and food processing. For a discussion of the Southern organizing experience, see especially Stuart Jamison's Labor Unionism in American Agriculture (Washington, DC, 1945). This book is one of the best works of social history ever written in the US. It exhibits an incredible range of social discintent in rural America during the course of the Depression which was never able to coalesce under any single banner.

The question of when and how the American worker was re-integrated into the corporate system after the shick of the Depression has just begun to receive serious attention. Ronald Radosh's "The Corporate Ideology of American Labor", Studies on the Left (VI, 1966) and Mark Naison's "The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the CIO", Radical America (September-October 1968) argue that the leadership of the CIO, unwittingly aided by many segments of the Left, contributed consciously and directly to the rationalization of the corporate economy. The biographies of the two foremost CIO leaders, Matthew Josephson's Sidney Hillman, Statesman of Labor (New York, 1952) and Saul Alinsky's John L. Lewis: An Unauthorized Biography (New York, 1949) support this conclusion. The two "statesmen of labor" clearly saw industrial unionism as a means of bringing greater democracy and efficiency to a basically-sound economic system. Nevertheless, there are still matters here that need to be discussed. No matter what the CIO leaders intended, the enthusiasm released by the CIO organization drive between 1935 and 1939 made many radicals feel that the future belonged to the Left. The New Deal had manifestly failed (unemployment jumped from eight to eleven million in 1938); radicals had important positions of leadership in a powerful labor movement; and there was much talk of forming a national labor party. But with the coming of the War, the Depression-era conditions abruptly ended and a new tone was imparted to national life which profoundly affected the psychology of the American worker and his radical spokesmen.

The Worker from the Second World War to the Present

World War II seems to have had an effect on labor militancy and radical politics similar to that of the First World War. The urgency of the war effort, coming after the sit-down strikes, focused public suspicions on labor's potential to disrupt the economy, and encouraged the viewpoint that labor had to be carefully disciplined to protect the national interest. For the worker, the War engendered a curious ambivalence. On one hand, he felt more willing to sacrifice immediate economic gains and better working conditions for the society he was defending. On the other, he was afraid that the crisis would be used by business to halt the trade-union advance and reduce standards of living.

The armistice brought with it crisis and repression in rapid order. A post-war wave of strikes increased union membership and won some wage increases, but intensified the anti-labor response in Congress. The Taft-Hartley Act was a major result. The revival of anti-communist hysteria coincident with the implementation of the Taft-Hartley Act drove the radicals out of the labor

movement and placed both militant unions and the Left on the defensive. Almost every major union, as described in Max Kampelman's The Communist Party Versus the CIO (New York, 1957) and in James Prickett's "Communism and Factionalism in the United Automobile Workers", Science and Society (Summer 1968), went through the painful ritual of purge and self-purification. It is in this context, as well as that of the continued escalation of the Cold War, that the ascendancy of business unionism in the CIO must be viewed.

The Fifties were also a period of business prosperity, super-patriotism, and experimentation with various techniques of manipulating public opinion and directing attention to consumption. Like the Twenties, the Fifties created the illusion among some intellectuals that business prosperity was on the way to creating a classless—albeit middle-class—society. Concerned, in the aftermath of McCarthyism, with finding stability and consensus in a strife-torn society, they attempted to prove that workers had become middle-class and desired nothing beyond the satisfaction of consumer needs.

The facts, however, blatantly contradicted the model. Not only did the working class maintain a distinct culture and life style, as the advertisers were among the first to recognize, but the insecurity of their position within the economy kept them marginal. While working-class and political consciousness remained largely unarticulated, militant and bitterly-fought strikes among the rank and file and surprising hostility to management contrasted sharply with the conservative business unionism and "harmony of interests" ideology peddled by labor leaders.

Concern with disciplining labor, a dominant theme of the post-war period, grew out of war-time events. As Joel Seidman's American Labor from Defense to Reconversion (Chicago, 1953) shows, government restrictions developed early in the War. One of the most important regulatory instruments was the War Labor Board. Although the Board threatened both reclacitrant unions and employers with the seizure of plants—a forty-time occurrence during the War—business leaders were sufficiently impressed with the Government's ability to restrict labor's gains to turn to it for aid in the post-war period. The NAM's successful campaign to blame labor for the post-war shortages and inflation was, along with the Taft-Hartley Act, part of the attempt to make working people accept responsibility for stabilizing the economy.

In the 1950s, particularly after the Teamster exposes, attention focused on the corruption and political passivity of labor. Bert Cochran's Labor in Midpassage (New York, 1959) brings together essays which survey the state of the unions and working-class life, as well as the potential for radical political activity. Sidney Lens's Crisis in American Labor (New York, 1961), Paul Jacob's The State of the Unions (New York, 1963), and George Morris's American Labor: Which Way? attempt to explain why the CIO relinquished its efforts to organize the unorganized and decreased its political activity. While part of the answer lay in the weakening of the unions as a result of the anti-labor campaigns and the purge of the communists, the insecurity created by recurrent recessions was another factor. Other answers can be found in the rise of the professional labor leader, as described by C. Wright Mills' New Men of Power (New York, 1948), and in the suppression of internal union democracy, the conditions for which are surveyed by S. M. Lipset, Martin Trow, and James Coleman in Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographer's Union (New York, 1956). The lack of an organized opposition

made it easier for the labor elite to peddle the ideology of labor-management co-operation despite the fact of conflict in the period.

The analyses dealing with the facts of working-class life, as opposed to those generalizing from levels of income, were not very sanguine about the successful integration of the working class into the corporate system. In "The Subversion of Collective Bargaining", Commentary (March 1960—reprinted as a REP pamphlet), Daniel Bell describes how consumers and blue-collar workers subsidize the expansion of plant and production as well as the growth of the white-collar work force. Interested in further rationalizing the economy, Bell suggests that unions win a greater comparative share of the nation's wealth by using their political power to win tax reductions for lower-income classes; that they pressure corporations to reduce prices; and that they demand a guaranteed annual wage. The latter demand would end the practice of treating blue-collar workers as commodities and cease forcing them to absorb the shocks of the production process. It would also begin to break down the distinction between manual and white-collar workers.

Also important were the numerous and bitter strikes of the period, and the spread of wildcats, particularly in the Sixties. These strikes, directed as much against the unwillingness of the union bureaucrats to settle grievances as against the company, are mostly described in European socialist journals. A bibliography badly needs to be compiled. Among the literature available, however, Stan Weir's "USA: The Labor Revolt", reprinted from the International Socialist Journal as a REP pamphlet, is one of the best analyses of the significance and potential of wildcat strikes and rank-and-file movements. Martin Glaberman's Be His Payment High or Low (Detroit, 1963) is also quite excellent. The viewpoint of American sociologists, on the other hand, is succinctly summarized in an article by Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, "The Inter-Industry Propensity to Strike", in Industrial Conflict, edited by Arthur Kornhauser (New York, 1954). Troubled by intense and recurrent strife, the authors outline the conditions leading to militant strikes, and suggest minimizing conflict by better integrating workers into heterogeneous communities.

The experience of the industrial worker on the job and in the community also received attention in the Fifties and Sixties. Eli Ginzberg and Herbert Hyman edited The American Worker in the Twentieth Century: A History Through Autobiography. Theodore V. Purcell wrote The Worker Speaks His Mind on Company and Union (Chicago, 1953), a study of packinghouse workers in Chicago. In 1960 he compared working-class life-styles and attitudes among packinghouse workers in Swift and Company plants in three cities—Kansas City, East Saint Louis, and Chicago—and noted differences based on the nature of community life, race, and seniority. Robert Blauner's Alienation and Freedom: The Factory Worker and His Industry (Chicago, 1964) studied workers in printing, textiles, chemicals, and autos to understand the nature of their work and the factors leading to job satisfaction.

Articles by Richard Hamilton, S. M. Miller, Patricia Sexton, John Leggett, David Street, Frank Riesman, Lee Rainwater, and Hyman Rodman in Blue Collar World: Studies of the American Worker, edited by Arthur Shostak and William Gomburg (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1967), illuminate many aspects of working-class life. Finally, Studs Terkel's Division Street USA (Chicago, 1966) and Sidney Peck's The Rank and File Leader (New Haven, 1963) provide insight into why and how working-class people arrive at their opinions.

The International Scene

The following materials discuss the history and current situation of working classes in other countries. We have only included a few works which we felt were of particular importance.

E. P. Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class (Vintage paperback, New York, 1963) is an amazing book. It should be read by everyone interested in working-class history and the problem of the development of working-class consciousness. Eric Hobsbawm's collection of essays, Laboring Men (Anchor paperback, New York, 1967), is also a classic. His Marxist historiography offers insights into the labor aristocracy, labor militancy, the effects of imperialism, and the competition between skilled and unskilled laborers. Richard Hoggart's The Uses of Literacy (London, 1957), also about England, is one of the few attempts to assess the impact of mass culture on the working class. Goldthorpe and Lockwood have done an excellent study of workers in the most advanced segment of the English economy: "The Affluent Worker and the Thesis of Embourgeoisement", Sociology (January 1967). It provides a basis from which to begin evaluating structural changes in the advanced capitalist economies and their impact on the working class. On France, Richard Hamilton's Affluence and the French Worker (Princeton, 1968) demonstrates the impirtant political effects of grass-roots political organization. Hamilton shows that where union militants and CP local organizers have continued to be active, workers continue to express radical political views even when they have attained "middle-class" income levels. In an article on West German workers, "Affluence and the Worker: The West German Case", American Journal of Sociology (Volume 7, September 1965, Pages 144 through 152), Hamilton studies the effects of affluence on consumption patterns. Like the French worker, the German, even when he earns an income equivalent to that of the middle class, will continue to show consumer behavior more like less-well-off workers. Karl Schorske's German Social Democracy: 1905-1917 (Wiley paperback, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955) also should be read. It deals with the growth of bureaucracy and revisionism in the German Social Democratic Party and the suppression of radical rank-and-file insurgencies. For a look at a working class in a country building socialism, see Maurice Zitlin's Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class (Princeton, 1967).

Sociological Studies

In recent years interest in the American class structure has revived. In Assimilation and American Life (New York, 1964) Milton Gordon suggests the relationship between class and ethnicity. He describes the strong persistence of ethnic sub-cultures through second and third generations and attempts to identify which forms of behavior can be attributed to working-class and which to ethnic origins. Richard Centers' Psychology of Social Classes (New York, 1961) studies the attitudes and consciousness of those who describe themselves as either working-class or middle-class. He finds that individuals who identify with the working class tend, among other things, to be more liberal than those who identify with the middle class.

There are several studies of working-class communities. Some describe the impact of particular events on attitudes and consciousness. Thus Alfred

Winslow Jones, in Life, Liberty, and Property (New York, 1941), studies the attitudes toward corporate property in Akron, Ohio after the sitdown strikes in the rubber industry. Others identify the factors making for a life-style different from that of the middle class, as do the Lynds in Middletown and Middletown in transition. Some of the best studies relate the social structure of the community and the workplace to the development of political attitudes and the emergence of a distinctive life-style and culture. August Hollingshead's excellent study Elmtown's Youth (New York, 1949) describes a small industrial community of six thousand in the heart of the Midwestern corn belt. Hollingshead documents the mechanisms by which middle-class-dominated institutions coerce working-class kids into pre-established patterns, and their resistance to it.

In Steeltown: An Industrial Case History of the Conflict Between Progress and Security (New York, 1950), Charles R. Walker describes the company town of Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, at a time when the company was threatening to move to Gary, Indiana. Of the fourteen thousand inhabitants in 1946, sixty per cent were native white; thirty-five per cent were Italian. The overwhelming majority of both groups came from rural or semi-rural areas. Walker describes the elaborate kinship structure, unusual in an industrial town, and the importance of church and social organizations in community life. The union, the largest single organization except for the Catholic Church, was not, however, a major influence in the community. The most valuable parts of the book describe life inside the mill and suggest the importance of the close-knit work situation for the widespread participation in community life. In Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia (New Haven, 1942), Liston Pope describes the social structure of the textile town and the role of the Church in legitimizing employer practices and serving as an agent of social control. Important sections deal with the influx of radical organizers, and the Loray strike of 1929 and its impact on attitudes and class-consciousness.

Two views of Italian working-class life are presented in William F. Whyte's Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum (Chicago, 1943) and Herbert Gans' The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian Americans (New York, 1962). Gans describes the social structure of a community composed largely of skilled and semi-skilled manual employees. He discusses their distinctively working-class style of life, their views of the middle-class outside world, suspicion of politicians, insecurities about work, and resistance to middle-class patterns of consumption and behavior as portrayed in the media. He emphasizes the importance of the peer group for sustaining a working-class way of life, and notes the lack of participation in the few community organizations which exist.

Some of the components of working-class life and attitudes are described in Blue-Collar Marriage by Mirra Komarovsky (New York, 1962) and Workingman's Wife by Lee Rainwater, Richard Coleman, and Gerald Handel (New York, 1959). These two books present excellent material on the life and attitudes of working-class women. Workingman's Wife specifically contrasts the more restricted, routine view of life and sense of inferiority of workers' wives with the variety and self-confidence middle-class women expressed. The constant tensions over job insecurity and the tightness of money in working-class homes and their effect on family relationships emerge clearly in Blue-Collar Marriage. One of the more interesting findings notes that the high-school graduates have a more middle-class style of life and that, with few exceptions, the families caught in the conflict between status and economic

drives were those of the high-school as opposed to the grade-school graduates.

Eli Chinoy's excellent study Automobile Workers and the American Dream (New York, 1955) describes how workers adjust to the fact that they're not going to move up very far within the plant hierarchy, and that their jobs offer little personal satisfaction. While some cherish the hope of setting up a small business or buying a farm, others devote a great deal of time to family life and off-the-job concerns. Robert Guest's "Work Careers and Aspirations of Automobile Workers", American Sociological Review (Volume 19, 1954), explores further the response to limited opportunities for mobility. Lewis Lipsitz's excellent "Work Life and Political Attitudes: A Study of Manual Workers", American Political Science Review (Volume 58, 1964), contributes to this discussion. Lipsitz observes distinct divisions between skilled and other workers in regard to political attitudes, job satisfaction, attitudes toward the future, and satisfaction with Reuther and the UAW. He found skilled workers were less fatalistic, less radical, and more satisfied with their jobs and the union.

S. M. Miller and Frank Riesman deal directly with the question "Are the Workers Middle Class?", Dissent (Volume 7, 1960). In Working-Class Suburb: A Study of Auto Workers in Suburbia (Berkeley, 1960), Bennett Berger shows that suburbanization in and of itself does not lead to a more-middle-class style of life. Altgough there is a new feeling of well-being, the social relations characteristic of working-class life persist. There is little evidence of profound striving, status anxiety, or orientations to the future. Tastes and preferences seem untouched by the images of suburbia portrayed in the mass media.

Finally, John Leggett's Class, Race, and Labor: Working-Class Consciousness in Detroit concludes that for the unionized, class-consciousness derives fundamentally from workers' economic problems, with the contradiction between a heightened pay scale and continuing occupational and job insecurity most important. The book attempts to come to terms with the implications of working-class consciousness for radical political activity.

Education and the Working Class

Education has long been viewed as one of the most important factors influencing one's occupational and class position in American society. Much is now being written about education in the ghetto. Herbert Kohl's 36 Children and Jonathan Kozol's Death at an Early Age provide some of the best examples. There is little of comparable value concerning the education of white working-class kids, since most of the literature deals with children bound for college. Natalie Rogoff's "Local Social Structure and Educational Selection", in Education, Economy, and Society (1961), finds that class origin is more important than IQ in determining who goes to college. The dullest rich kid is more likely to go to college than the brightest poor child. Joseph Kahl's "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Common Man Boys", Harvard Education Review (Volume 23, 1953), also reports on this subject. For a summary of more-recent trends see David Riesman and Christopher Jencks, The Academic Revolution. The authors find little indication that the "revolutionary" expansion in educational opportunities has reached the working class.

The best information on working-class high schools is in August Hollingshead' Elmtown's youth. Hollingshead describes the systematic discrimination agains-

working-class kids by teachers and administrators in almost every aspect of school life—grades, discipline, tracking, relationships with teachers, and parent-teacher relations. Also interesting is Edgar Litt's "Civil Education, Community Norms, and Political Indoctrination", American Sociological Review (Volume 28, February 1963). Analyzing the content of high-school civics texts, Litt finds that working-class kids are taught what roles to play in the system, middle-class kids are taught how the system works, and upper-class kids are taught how to work the system. Finally, Patricia Sexton's Education and Income: Inequalities in Our Public Schools, a study of Detroit, documents the class nature of the school system with extensive statistics. With data on IQ scores, reading levels, money allotments, drop-outs, sub-standard facilities, tracking, scholarships, curriculum, college admissions, and class size, the mechanisms of working-class oppression and exploitation are spelled out.

Racism and the Working Class

Contrary to the prevailing mythology, the working class is not more racist than other classes in the society. But from the point of view of the organizer, this is small comfort. Racism has been and remains one of the chief obstacles to the development of a class-conscious working-class movement in this country. The literature cited below deals with both these points. It offers evidence which counters the notion that the working class has a greater psychological and economic stake in racism than any other class in the society.

The force of racism in the American working class is documented by an impressive array of historical works. David Montgomery's Beyond Equality documents the ambivalence of the American working-class leadership after the Civil War toward the newly-freed labor pool of ex-slaves in the South. Spero and Harris, in their decisive study The Black Worker (Athenaeum paperback, New York, 1968, originally published in 1931), deal among other problems with the question of labor competition between whites and blacks from the 1870s to the 1920s. As they out it: The discrimination which the Negro suffers in industry is a heritage of his previous condition of servitude, kept alive and aggravated within the ranks of organized labor by the structure and politics of American trade unionism. This persistence of the Negro's slave heritage and the exclusive craft structure of the leading labor organizations are two of four basic factors in the Negro's relation to his fellow white workers. The other two are (a) the change in the Negro's fundamental relation to industry resulting from recent migration and the absorption into the mills and factories of a substantial part of the reserve of black labor, and (b) the rise of a Negro middle class and the consequent spread of middle-class ideas throughout the Negro community. Spero and Harris also present some insights into the cases in which inter-racial class solidarity was achieved (Knights of Labor; IWW; Mine, Mill, and Smelter; and United Mine Workers).

Elliot Rudwick's book Race Riot at East Saint Louis (Meridian paperback, Cleveland, 1964) is an excellent account of what can happen when union racism and economic conflict between workers are deliberately exploited by employers. Both employers and politicians created and enflamed an explosive situation by using blacks as strikebreakers and spreading racist propaganda in the press. Good summaries of the racial practices of the AF of L can be found in Herbert Hill's essay "The Racial Practices of Organized Labor from the Age of

Gompera and After"; in Ross and Hill's Employment, Race, and Poverty (New York, 1967); and in Karson and Radosh's "The American Federation of Labor and the Negro Worker: 1894-1949" (in Jacobson, previously cited). Cayton and Mitchell deal with the black worker and the early CIO organizing drives in their Black Workers and the New Unions (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1939)—one of the few treatments of this important subject. Mark Naison's "Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the CIO", Radical America (Volume 2, Number 5, September-October 1968), shows how a narrow conception of industrial unionism shared by both CIO and CP leaders undercut a growing inter-racial union of sharecroppers and tenant farmers. The demise of the STFU seriously weakened the potential for radical organizing in the South. There is some material on the conflict between Negro and white workers in Detroit during World War II. Although these works—Howe and Widick, The UAW and Walter Reuther (New York, 1949); Herbert Northrup, Organized Labor and the Negro (New York, 1944), in the chapter on the auto industry; Robert Weaver, "Detroit and the Negro Skill", Phylon (Volume 4, 1943); and Lloyd Bailer, "The Negro Automobile Worker", Journal of Political Economy (October 1943)—are largely descriptive, the information they present is worth looking at and could be helpful. The racial practices of unions in the 1950s are reviewed by Herbert Hill in "The Racial Policies of Organized Labor—The Contemporary Record" in Jacobson, previoisly cited) and "Organized Labor and the Negro Wage Earner", New Politics (Winter 1962). Also worth studying is Hill's "Racism Within Organized Labor: 1950-1960", Journal of Negro History (Volume 30, 1961).

The contemporary record of racism within the working class has not been carefully studied, but there is some material to which organizers can refer. Sidney Peck's study of shop stewards in Milwaukee, The Rank and File Leader (New Haven, Connecticut, 1963), shows how white workers exhibit both class consciousness (based on the recognition of the common economic situation of both black and white workers) and racism (based on a desire to maintain social distance between whites and blacks). Peck discusses the strains produced by the co-existence of these two tendencies. John Leggett's book Class, Race, and Labor (New York, 1968) provides brief but pertinent remarks on the relationship between class consciousness, ethnic identity, and racism in Detroit. A good impressionistic piece on Wallace's appeal to the working class is Jim Jacobs and Larry Laskowski's "New Rebels in Industrial America", forthcoming in Leviathan (Volume 1, Number 1). It is based on the authors' experience in the shops and in a working-class community college in Detroit. Matthew Ward's Indignant Heart (Detroit, 1953) is an enlightening treatment of a black production-line worker's condition in the same city. An article in the January 1969 issue of Fortune by Peter Swerdlov, "The Hopes and Fears of Blue Collar Youth", has some instructive but brief remarks on racial attitudes of young workers in Akron, Ohio. For a study of a backlash that failed to develop in the 1964 Goldwater campaign, see Jonathan Wiener's Princeton Honors Essay "White Workers and the Negro Revolution" (unpublished). Michael Rogin's "Wallace and the Middle Class: The White Backlash in Wisconsin", Public Opinion Quarterly (Volume 30, Spring 1966), is a breakdown of the 1964 Wallace vote for the state of Wisconsin—and especially Milwaukeee County, where Wallace got thirty-eight per cent of the vote. Rogin shows that, contrary to all expectations: "The center of racist strength was not in working-class areas but in the wealthy upper-middle-income suburbs of Milwaukee."

Culture and the Working Class

The decline of fiction dealing with working-class life is one of the more striking changes in American Culture which occurred after the Second World War. Much of the great writing of the Depression era was rooted in the folk culture and social life of the American lower classes. William Faulkner's Light in August, James Agee's Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, Robert Penn Warren's All the King's Men, and Erskine Caldwell's Tobacco Road portrayed the lives of tenant farmers and day laborers in the rural South. James Farrell's Studs Lonigan, John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer, Henry Roth's Call It Sleep, Meyer Levin's The Old Bunch, Mike Gold's Jews Without Money, and Clifford Odets' Golden Boy and Dead End told of the immigrant workman's struggle for survival in an alien culture. John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath, Of Mice and Men, and Cannery Row recounted the trials of migrant laborers in the Dust Bowl and the West. All these were works which drew a remarkable force and dignity from the working-class experience. No less significant is the large body of relatively-obscure writing from the period dealing with strikes and industrial conflict. Ben Field's Piper Tompkins and The Outer Leaf, Albert Maltz's The Underground Stream and The Way Things Are, Ruth McKenney's Industrial Valley, Wessell Smith's FOB Detroit, and James Steel's The Conveyor are novels based on union struggles and factory life which are well worth looking at. The writers of the Thirties have been accused of romanticizing the experience of the working class, and of this some were undoubtedly guilty. But with the best of the Depression-era writers, the portrayal of the working class as a source of strength and sensitivity in a society which had fallen upon hard times rings true, and results in some of the most powerful work ever produced by American novelists.

The Second World War and the tense but prosperous years that followed pushed this writing into a distinctly-subordinate place in the American literary mainstream. Anti-communist America wanted its intellectuals to build the myth of the affluent society, and the more talented and critical writers—the O'Haras, the Updikes, the Cheevers, the Mailers, the Salingers, the Roths, and the Bellows—focused on the emptiness of affluent middle-class and upper-class life. Some novelists continued to deal with working-class life in a serious and unsentimental manner, but their works were both rare and relatively unheralded. Harvey Swados' On the Line, Clancy Segal's Going Away, Edgar Lewis Wallant's The Human Season, James Jones' From Here to Eternity and Some Came Running, Willard Motley's Knock On Any Door, Kenneth Kesey's Sometimes a Great Notion, Budd Schulberg's On the Waterfront, Alfred Kazin's A Walker in the City, Bernard Malamud's Idiots First, and Arthur Miller's A View from the Bridge are among the few works of the past twenty years which treat working-class life with the same mixture of realism and respect which marked the novels of the Depression. Some concern for working-class themes was also sustained by Southern writers during the Fifties, demonstrating that section's continued alienation from the central impulses in American culture. Flannery O'Connor's The Violent Bear It Away and Shepard, Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire, and Carson McCullers' The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter are fine works which develop around the cultural world of the poor Southern white. Walter Rideout's The Radical Novel in the United States: 1900-1954 (American Century paperback, New York, 1956), although by no means a radical treatment, is fairly comprehensive and contains a very complete bibliography.

In sheer bulk, however, these works were overshadowed by a collection of novels which dealt with working-class life in a manner which can only be described as backhanded. During the late and middle Fifties, the best-seller lists bulged with novels and plays which exploited (and to some degree created) popular hysteria over "juvenile delinquency". These books, the literary arm of the liberal assault on the "mass man", presented lower-class sub-cultures as breeding grounds of crime and violence, communities which had to be disciplined en masse to accept the norms of middle-class life. In Evan Hunter's Blackboard Jungle, David Wilkerson's The Cross and the Switchblade, Harold Robbins' A Stone for Danny Fisher, and others, the heroes are teachers, ministers, and social workers. They are the evangelists of the suburban ethic, and their success must have made every righteous liberal feel titillated with vicarious potency. Yet there is something more to be drawn from these books than a morality play. In their own distorted way, they remind us that there was a thread of resistance running through some working-class youth in the Fifties which negated the myth of cohesive liberal society. It was not a political resistance—it was too unstable and self-conflicting to present a real challenge to the institutional order—but in its blunt rejection of middle-class values, it sent more than a flutter of anxiety into those who saw cultural uniformity and respect for authority as the prerequisites of the stable society. In a way which we have only begun to take seriously, these novels give us a clue to the possibilities for reaching and organizing working-class youth.

Youth Culture and the Working Class

As suggested, certain aspects of the "lower-class youth culture" referred to in these novels—gang life, rock music, motorcycles, hot rods—represent a definite rejection and resistance to basic controls and channeling mechanisms in the society. They express an alienation from a society which has sought to make violence efficient and antiseptic. In an exaggerated and often self-destructive way, they assert their resistance to the boredom and sense of impotence felt by much of the American working class.

But this rebellious and anti-authoritarian thrust among lower-class youth often takes root in sectional pride and racial and ethnic solidarity. It often (but not always) carries with it strong prejudices against blacks. And, as Bill Drew and Mike Rosen point out, that same thrust can become its opposite when, out of frustration and hopelessness, there is a reversion to a "desperate identification with the cops, the army, and the mythology of capitalism. Yet it does represent an alienation from American society which is shared by a growing number of middle-class youth.

Now, certain manifestations of what was once a uniquely-lower-class sub-culture and, in certain ways, represented a (marginal) white working-class rebellion against a standardized American life-style, has been generalized throughout the society and incorporated into the "radical youth culture". This diffusion is in part the product of Madison Avenue's exploiting the potential for profit in the "rebellious" youth market; and it has resulted in a dilution of the rebelliousness this market contained. But at the same time, this spreading has made it possible for larger numbers of youth to adopt similar styles of protest and has opened up new opportunities for communication between the New Left and working-class youth based on shared language, music, et cetera. We have also seen that behind the appeals of these forms of protest (dress,

music, et cetera) lie a new recognition that young people are rejecting some of the same controls—the draft, police, high schools—and this opens up new possibilities for organizing.

But we should also be very careful. First, we must pay attention to ways in which white-working-class youth culture still remains distinct from youth culture in general. Second, we should be aware of the dangers of concentrating on organizing around life style. As Bill Drew and Mike Rosen found from their work in Waukegan, "resentment of authority is strong and shows up in music, dress, drugs, and other aspects of youth culture....The major conclusion is that anti-authoritarian life-style organizing in this constituency (white working-class youth) is only a beginning. Today the Movement continues only in the high school. Most of the young factory workers have returned to their jobs, accepting their roles. The Movement must expand into armed forces organizing, junior and trade colleges, and the insurgent rank-and-file labor movement. The Left must begin to offer solutions to questions more basic than those of style....Unless radicalism can deal with...productive life in the factory or school, it is a lie and offers no real possibility for a working-class youth to live as a radical."