Nixon assures us that we are the best fed and best housed population in the world, Senator Kennedy reminds us that 17 million Americans "go to bed hungry every night." Although Mr. Nixon's optimism regarding the relative prosperity of American workers to their fellows in other lands may have some validity, it has no merit. Regardless of the height of the American working-class standards it is far from being "adequate" according to the latest published estimates of the U. S. Labor Statistics Bureau, estimates which incidentally leave no room for luxuries. For these latest reports maintain that in Boston, for example, it takes an income of $121.00 per week to support a worker with a wife and two school-age children in what is termed an "adequate" condition. Incomes are actually much less. In fact the results of last year's Federal filings show at least 75% of those who filed received below this figure and the Dept. of Commerce reports that "there were more than 55 million individuals and families in the U. S. whose incomes were below this figure, most of them drastically lower." (The Progressive, Oct. 1960.)

According to the Record (RWDSU)* the average factory worker earns $91 per week, while in retail trade the average is $69. A far cry from adequacy.

On the other hand, the fact that Mr. Kennedy's figures on the number of hungry Americans may be too low is not nearly so important as the knowledge that neither he nor Mr. Nixon can possibly do anything to relieve such a situation. Thirty-three different presidents and their political parties over a period of some 171 years of American history have been unable to bring adequacy, let alone prosperity, to the majority of the population. There is no reason to assume that either of the candidates in 1960 can cause capitalism to function in any but the normal way, bringing wealth to the wealthy and poverty to the poor, not to mention international warfare to the population as a whole.

* Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

Circus Maximus

In the meantime, if the bread is none too plentiful at least the same cannot be said for the circuses. The national election campaign and the meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York would, in ordinary times, be more than enough to take the minds of the workers off their more pressing problems. Never before in all history, to paraphrase a "great" man, have the eyes and ears of **so many** been subjected to **so much** of **so little** actual consequence to their real interests. The performance of the various heads of states — the top "brain-power" of so many nations and the "great debates" between Vice-President Nixon and Senator Kennedy on television, have outrivalled anything Barnum was ever able to accomplish in bringing the Greatest Show on Earth to the American public. The total net value in dollars and cents of this most dazzling array of the world's star windbags can be imagined from the following interesting bit of information. As of the time of the visit to America in 1959 by the Soviet dictator,

> "Lloyd's (of London) biggest life policy was purchased by Nikita Khrushchev, whose life was insured for 1¼ million pounds (app. 3½ million dollars) during his visit to the United States." (People, Australia, Mar., 1960.)

If, as the Communists would have us believe, Mr. Khrushchev is but an ordinary Soviet citizen and certainly no capitalist, what must we assume the lives of the other heads of state, including the two Americans, one of whom will become the 34th President, to be worth? And on the other hand, if Mr. Khrushchev is in reality worth more dead than alive to the Soviet Union, is this also true of the "rest" of the Soviet working class? And if not, why not?

But it is doubtful if at least a percentage of the workers are overly impressed. At least not with the visiting dignitaries. The very sight of such "leaders of the masses" as Khrushchev, Castro, Nasser, Tito, Gomulka, etc. in action, can easily irritate quiescent ulcers and cause the workers to wonder how long it will be before the "fanatical" followers of the dictators will begin tossing H. Bombs or even "ordinary" blockbusters, in this direction. In the eyes of many American workers, these individuals are the "baddies" who quite possibly will overcome the "peaceful" intentions and methods of America's foremost "goodie," Pres. Eisenhower, and touch off another world war.

By far the leading stars among the international cast were, of course, Mr. Khrushchev, and Mr. Castro of Cuba. At least the headlines accorded the two gentlemen by the press would seem to indicate this. Even Mr. Macmillan, of Britain, after giving perhaps the "best" speech of all, was compelled to relinquish the headlines to Mr. K. because of the table-thumping tactics of the Soviet dictator. But although the open contempt for the uncouth Castro from workers and capitalists alike was apparent, the feeling toward Khrushchev is by no means the same. He is the spokesman for America's number one competitor and there have even been attempts to get him together in another conference with President Eisenhower. He may have gotten nowhere with his demands in the U. N. sessions, but he is still regarded, as important and is treated, to a considerable extent, by at least some of America's capitalists as an equal, if a rival.

In this regard, an article in The Boston Globe for Sept. 27 is illuminating. It seems that a Mr. Thomas B. Adams, a "blue-blooded" Yankee financier, a direct descendant of Presidents John and Quincy Adams, from South Lincoln, Mass. was an invited head table guest at the luncheon tendered Mr. K. by industrialist Cyrus Eaton. The Globe states:

> "Adams said the Russian premier was received politely by the group of American capitalists at the closed door luncheon at the Biltmore Hotel."

And the article goes on to quote Adams as follows:

> "He in no sense can be compared to Hitler or Mussolini, who were fanatics, or to Fidel Castro, who is impossible!"

According to Adams, those invited to the luncheon were "a group of American businessmen who treated Mr. Khrushchev with the same respect we would show a business competitor." Class is definitely thicker than ideology. It is more difficult to conceive of Mr. Khrushchev chumming at luncheons with working people — even Russian workers — than with members of his own and rival ruling classes. The Khrushchevs and the Eatons and Adamses have much more in common with each other than they have with the working people of their respective countries, despite the differences which sometime lead to war.

As for the national elections, and the scheduled "great debates" between the contestants — nothing shows up more clearly the one party nature of America's so-called democratic political system. Whatever effect the television performances may have will be almost entirely based upon an evaluation of the personalities of the rivals rather than on anything they have to say. Even superficially, there is very little difference between the programs and nothing they have to offer can be of any value to the working class. The issue seems to be mainly: which one will do a better job of "standing up" to Khrushchev. They have truly been dubbed "Tweedle Dick and Tweedle Jack." The only possible ray of sunshine to come out of the cloud of capitalist propaganda is the possibility that this election might awaken a number of American workers to the truth about the inadequacies of capitalism.

* * * *

This, then, is the American scene today. Anxieties about employment; fear of all-out war; a subjection to the greatest concentration of capitalist propaganda this nation, if not the world, has ever seen; and with all, the mad scramble on the part of the American workers to keep their heads above water-level in the task of making a living. There is as yet, no noticeable increase in the ranks of the socialists but we are convinced that the day is coming.

HARMO