And finally, there is this matter of revolution. I am pleased the World Socialist Party has given up the idea. Certainly loyal Marxists would have a right to be discouraged after all this time. Marx, with all his supposedly deep insight into the laws of social evolution, was pathetically wrong in looking constantly for the great revolution. From 1848 on, every sizeable rebellion in Europe was enthusiastically seized by Marx and Engels as the sure beginning of a world revolt. In his 1895 preface to *The Class Struggles in France,* Engels comments on these premature proclamations of the imminence of the World Revolution. His comment, it seems to me, might fittingly be applied to most of the so-called principles of Marxism. He wrote:

"History has proved us, and all who thought like us, wrong."

YES — George Gloss

Someone once wrote a blood-curdling story about a murderer who couldn't get rid of the body. He burned it in a furnace, submerged it in acid, dumped it in a lake, ran it through a meat grinder. All of his work was wasted; the cadaver always returned. The murderer finally gave up and turned himself in after awakening one morning to find the thing in bed with him.

The tale puts us in mind of the exasperating vitality of the system of thought known as Marxism. Subjected to a continual process of distortion and dismemberment, it won't down. An endless procession of economists, historians, philosophers, moralists, psychologists and sundry unclassifiables examine Marx—or claim to—hand down the death sentence, and with an undisguised satisfaction jerk the switch. And yet Marxism remains a living, vital, dynamic force because its application of science to society has been tested in the crucible of history and found worthy.

Fundamental to an understanding of Marxism is a knowledge of the Materialist Conception of History. Yet, of this concept, Mr. Ryder manifests obvious ignorance. His "general rather than detailed knowledge of Karl Marx and his unique principles," is obviously limited—limited to the critics of Marx, to the apologists for capitalism.

Had he consulted even the most elementary Marxian sources, he would have found that socialists ALSO "reject any concept which denies that intelligent, purposeful men can influence their own futures." The very existence of the world socialist movement makes this evident.

Instead of erecting and attacking straw men, it might be well for our critics to actually consult the statements of those whom they attack. Throughout their works the founders of scientific socialism were crystal clear in their definition of historical materialism. Here are a few quotes:

"Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history; he discovered the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat and drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, religion, art, etc.; and that therefore the production of the immediate material means of life and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the forms of government, the legal conceptions, the art and even the religious ideas of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which these things must therefore be explained, instead of vice versa as had hitherto been the case." — Engels' speech at grave of Marx, March 17, 1883.

"Labour is, in the first place, a process in which man and nature participate, and which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate nature's productions in a form adopted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature."—Marx (Capital, Vol. I, page 157).

"We hold, that in the final analysis, economic conditions constitute the determinative factor in historical evolution. . . . That the political, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., evolutions are based on the economic evolution. They all re-act upon each other and upon the economic bases. It does not mean that the economic factor is the SOLE ACTIVE CAUSE and all others merely passive effects. But the whole situation presents a mutual interaction among the various forces on the basis of economic necessity, which latter force ultimately prevails. . . . History is not as some would imagine for the sake of this greater convenience, an automatic effect of the economic situation, but men themselves make their own history. Certain it is, however, that MEN ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PREVAILING CONDITIONS THAT DOMINATE THEIR FIELD OF ACTION and among these the economic circumstances, however much influenced by political and ideological forces, are always of chief importance." —Engels, in a letter to a student, Jan. 25, 1895. (Our emphases).

Yet Mr. Ryder continues to claim that the Marxists failed to comprehend "the complexity of human society and mass movements" and explained great movements *"solely* in terms of economic motivation"! Surely "that sort of view of history is distorted and inaccurate" and "too oversimplified to be valid." Yet that is a view of history concocted by Mr. Ryder!

No "gnawing doubts" as to the inevitability of Socialism bother the genuine socialists. Despite Mr. Ry-

[Continued on page 20]

"IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, YOU CAN QUIT"

The employer and employee enter into a contract (verbal or otherwise) where the employer agrees to pay wages in return for labor.

The conditions of the contract are clear. Now, how would a breach of contract by either party affect the two parties?

If the employee breaks the conditions of the contract the employer can fire him or, if reversed, the employee can quit. The employer then seeks to employ a new employee and the employee seeks a new employer.

If the demand for labor is high and the supply low it is to the advantage of the worker. But where it is difficult for him to hold out for a good or better contract, because of his circumstances, his dire need of a job, he must get the best he can quickly. If the supply of labor is high and the demand low, which is usually the case (except during time of war), it is to the advantage of the employer.

Even if the demand for workers is high and the supply low, the owner can hold out much longer for a contract that suits him, because of his resources. The owner can usually dictate the conditions of the contract and change them at random and "if you don't like it, you can quit."

The worker usually sells his labor-power for a "living" wage and not too much emphasis is made on working conditions. These he finds as he goes along and when he finds it is worse than he bargained for and complains he is told politely or otherwise: "If you don't like it, you can quit."

But, you exclaim "It's like that no matter where you work." So the worker finds himself in the same predicament in all the places and all the jobs that he works. And since he has to work or starve, the alternative is not "If you don't like it, you can quit" it is instead "Take it and like it, or — starve."

PEPPER