From Our Mail Box

Nagano, Japan — "I appreciated reading a copy of THE WESTERN SOCIALIST. Will you please send me copies of all your publications. What policies have you against the drive toward a new world war by the present governing classes of the world powers?"

HARVARD CRIMSON (Cambridge, Mass., April 24, 1959, page one): In reporting a debate between the World Socialist Party and the Harvard Debate Council, the following gems are quoted from the Harvard argument:

"Countering the Socialists' declaration that almost half the people living in the U.S. have incomes below the maintenance level calculated by the Federal government, Marc E. Leland said 'Some people are worth more than others; I personally do not feel I could live on the scale set up by the government. Furthermore, since that 50 per cent of the people are still living at all, I would say that things seem to be coming along all right.' In refuting the Socialist accusation that capitalism causes wars, Leland declared, 'Some of our most magnificent history has come from wars.'"

REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND held at Dublin during Easter: "It was a most encouraging and enthusiastic affair attended by Socialists from Dublin, Belfast and Armagh, and also by fraternal delegates from the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the Socialist Party of Canada, and also a number of sympathizers. The decisions made, following discussions and resolutions, should make for a more efficient and workmen-like Socialist organization in Ireland, more capable and better fitted for the task of disseminating Socialist propaganda.

"After the Conference a most successful public meeting (SOCIALISM OR ANNIHILATION) was held in the Boilermakers' Hall, Dublin, addressed by a comrade from London. Although we were prepared for a bare hall and bitter opposition, the hall was packed to capacity and the audience was very receptive. Communists and Irish Nationalists asked opposition questions, but they were weak and soon subsided; about a dozen attendants took part in the discussion period. The meeting was highly successful not only from the propaganda, audience and literature points of view, but also from a financial standpoint. During the next week a number of successful meetings were held at Belfast and Armagh and addressed by a comrade from London.

"What with Com. Jim's tour of centres in our part of the world still fresh in mind; Com. Gilmac's forthcoming visit; Com. Sid (of Vancouver) in Ireland and Scotland; and Coms. Greta and Jim (of Winnipeg) in London over Easter; and the influence of S.P.G.B. propagandists in Ireland; all this, let's hope, as it makes the world smaller will make the socialist movement bigger. They are certainly encouraging signs."

Secretary, Paddington Branch, Socialist Party of Great Britain, London:

"We did the Aldermaston March again and results were way up on last year. Members were selling literature along the March and at Trafalgar Square, which was alive with S.P.G.B. members; wherever you looked you could see the SOCIALIST STANDARD or our pamphlet on WAR. 5,000 leaflets were distributed, 234 copies of the March SS sold, also 161 copies of the WAR pamphlet. This was one of the most successful literature drives organised by the Party. Apart from literature sales, many contacts were made with various people. One member was seen sitting on one of the Lions in the Square, holding the SOCIALIST STANDARD almost as high as Nelson's column."

Los Angeles, Calif. — "I doubt whether there is another organization in the world as small as ours that can show such international response to our propaganda activities...The gold rush that history records in California during '49 has been replaced by the job rush in '59 here as well as elsewhere."

Vienna, Austria — "There is a General Election campaign in full swing here. Really, if the bulk of the Austrian electors possessed any political intelligence, one might say that this election propaganda is a gross insult to their intelligence. But as it is, people are too apathetic to take notice of anything. In the absence of a genuine socialist party, we do the usual thing — handing in typed declarations stating the socialist position."

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THE WESTERN SOCIALIST

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE FOR SOCIALISM! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS

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CONCENTRATION OF "FREE" ENTERPRISE

One of the more popular of present-day American folktales is the more-or-less widespread description of U.S. capitalism as a Free Enterprise system, distinctly different from the economies of most important nations of our times. One hears this from sources at all levels of education and the mythology of a modern American competitive society seems to be as reluctant to die out as is the mythology of Creation. The typical American worker seems as hoodwinked by the one grandmother story as by the other. The facts are quite different and it is indeed the case that so far as a pattern is concerned, competition has not been typical of America's economic system for many years.

As far back as the turn of the Century certain American politicians began to take notice of the rapid trend toward large scale concentration of wealth and economic power. Opportunists such as President Theodore Roosevelt were able to present themselves to the public as enemies of the "'moneyed class" — as "Trust-Busters." By 1912, popular leaders such as President Wilson and Louis D. Brandeis headed a mighty movement to break up industrial trusts and combinations and to eliminate the "money trust." The Federal Reserve System, designed to distribute the "money power" was established in 1913; and the Clayton anti-trust law was put into effect in 1914 — a law which was supposed to tear apart all large industrial combinations.

The efforts of the "liberals" in this fight against the normal development of capital proved however to be as futile as were the efforts of working people in earlier times to combat technological unemployment by smashing machines. Capitalism in America continued to evolve.

THE MECHANICS OF CONCENTRATION

By 1939, the research staff of the National Resources Planning Board had found the trend quite well developed and the Temporary National Economic Committee (T.N.E.C.) had compiled a vast accumulation of statistics on the concentration of wealth-control in America. The so-called enemies of the "economic royalists," this time the New Deal Democrats, were now in the saddle and promised great things for the workers and for small business. Big Industry mobilized its press to do battle against "that man in the White House."

It seems that there are four major methods by which ownership control becomes concentrated. First is the device of interlocking directorates and by 1935, according to the National Resources Planning Board, only 25 of America's 250 largest corporations had no director in common with at least one other company on the list.

The second method is through