

tional unions and tens of thousands of local unions *are* democratic. Formally they have all the safeguards needed for countervailing power. But labor's democracy today, like that in society generally, is not a meaningful one. It is a manipulative type of democracy. In all spheres of American life democracy no longer seems to mean the full participation of the individual in every facet of government, but the right of the Big State, Big Business, Big Madison Avenue to *manipulate* the individual in any direction they see fit, so long as in the process of manipulation there is no resort to force or police terror. This is the essence of our new conformity. The individual submits to subtle and ceaseless manipulation; he is not an active part of the democratic process.

The same type of manipulative "democracy" prevails in the labor movement. "If one asks," writes Sumner Slichter, in *Challenge of Industrial Relations*, "whether unions give their members what they want, the proper answer is that for most unions the question is irrelevant. The great majority of the members do not have much opportunity or desire to consider and discuss alternative policies. Hence they are not to be regarded as making a choice. The proper question to ask is: 'Do the members like what they get?' The answer to that question is usually 'Yes.'" The rank and file influences the leaders, Slichter claims, but it does not participate in decision-making, except at the lower, and least important, levels.

Neither ethical practice codes nor resolutions on democracy can, in themselves, wake the labor movement from its state of suspended animation. Superficially, it seems to lack nothing for a great new advance. It has the necessary funds (far more than in the 1930's), and the necessary organizers to organize the unorganized. It has scores of competent public-relations men and lobbyists to present its point

of view in the right places. It is certainly better placed to move forward than a quarter of a century ago.

What is missing, unfortunately, is what C. Wright Mills calls the "insurgent impulse." Labor has once again exhausted its *elan vital*. It is incapable of galvanizing millions of workers to zealous sacrifices. It is fighting today's wars with yesterday's weapons—very much as France tried to fight the second World War with the Maginot Line concepts of World War I. Today's wars are political, but labor's chief efforts are on the economic plane. At least 90 per cent—probably more—of labor's efforts remains in collective bargaining. Labor refuses to face up to the demands of a new era.

In the 1930's labor was still fighting against industrial tyranny and starvation wages. That battle is still far from won—for the unorganized and for Little Labor. But it has been achieved for the mass-production and construction workers. The movement itself is far from the inconsequential force of three million it was a quarter of a century ago; it is now the largest single-interest bloc in the nation. American labor, just like Western European labor a half century ago, needs new objectives. It has, so to speak, exhausted the "old enemy." The new one is essentially—though not completely—a political one; labor must be ready to accept a far broader social responsibility than it has been willing to assume up to now. That is particularly true in an era of hydrogen bombs, cold wars, the second industrial revolution, and competitive coexistence. If American workers can be fired with an "insurgent impulse" at all, it is only over such vital issues as peace, full employment, civil rights, welfare legislation. A ten-cents-an-hour wage increase is meaningless if hydrogen bombs begin to fall on Detroit or Chicago. It can't be won at all if there are eight or ten million un-