

from Paris (I will see the good when I get to Paris and write
you then)
An other very long talk by the Greek friend leaving
in Paris for the last time, member of S. & B. that will
be interesting. A talk by Seymour of S. & B. formerly
from England, reporting on England being and
completely incredible, and had to talk since he came
to the conf. (but he was very nice & in a way
know in France and his going to sell
the book & these who speak English will
tell more on that later)

And (4) talk by a friend from Genoa by the name of
Corbetto, an absolutely terrible talk about nothing
can be done & out party, Hungary is over-simplified
etc. Anyway I am going down Genoa in
the a.m. and will report what I find.

O.K. now the agenda that Damer proposed
that was accepted after a lot of loud talk mostly
between the Italian friends and as far as I
can tell not on any principle issues.

1. Reports by participating friends on political
situation in their country

2. Make the rounds again on the
following day the reporting on the
activity and politics of their sector

If you had a week with at least official and
circulated reports before hand it might be
all right - it was it was nothing but
talk with chance & discuss the "line" of politics
pursued by each country, indeed their
was a "line"

3. Establishment of Int. connections

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My first talk was ³ on the American scene, ^{second} Americas, you can't judge it by Rep or Dem. Parties they haven't build h.p. has advantages, they therefore can not be misled, & most judge American worker at point of production which had the following history from birth of C.I.O. till today, V.H. recorded that since 1953 ~~the meaning of Marxism~~ and created from that practice the meaning of Marxism for anti-trial, M.F. could not have been without V.H. I said I was official R.B. rep., that is V.H. recognized Int. resp. and send me to Europe even before this conf. was org. and circulated Int. Memo in advance, and that I will speak on the second point on the agenda. I of course opened with official greetings. And so the first sweaty day ended, it's the worst possible weather for a conf. but like old radicals they are always ready for a meeting, I kept some workers would show up and tell us something about Milan conditions but I guess that would be just "economics" not politics, on Sunday a worker from Turin showed up, that's where the Fiat is made so I asked him if he was going to tell ~~us~~ about conditions there and then an interpreter I was told she was not on the agenda. Well I did a lot of thinking what to do on Sunday & my talk, Int. Memo was not translated, everybody just talked what came to him head, no one discussed, an information bureau at least involved something written down. I therefore decided to do a

few minutes introduced into the Dub. Memo. which
 had it translated by Pasay he did a
 very good job, in that way about 40 people
 heard it and know of its existence, I know
 Giulio (commonly known as Gene) will have it translated,
 although now that we official have a "Cetro di
 Corrispondenza" that the name, Deman of
 C.B. and Aldo Vmazzo (C.A.) its secretaries, ~~have~~
 the job of the Cetro is to distribute documents
 between the different sections, & the translation
 into French, English and Italian is the most important
 on finances Gene suggested that C.A. keep
 account for 3 mos. and see what it costs,
 it of course his org. which has the money
 to run it. (S. & B.) said that will have to official
 have to pass it before officially adhering
 to the Cetro. It was midnight by then and everybody
 was glad to go. Some where along the line
 I said that the Italian C.B. & C.A. have already
 acted in an Int. manner by helping to get
 an Italian Edition of M & F. with some help
 into this Cetro by us it can certainly contribute
 to some understanding. Deman closed the
 meeting by reading a resolution which
 he called a minimum for all to stand on
 it was the conception of an elite party
 par. excellence - when finished Vige
 pushed reading it - by the way he
 was chairman at the end because
 the chairman simply gave up towards
 the end and he was having good,
 asked whether any wished it dissolved
 the nos had it, so simple. Cetro was voted on

workers around Damer to which he would
 the American & French representatives to speak
 these started a fiery discussion at the
 Conf. because he asked the conf. to recess
 for that meeting, a compromise
 was reached where J. & Kothe & Damer
 went to the public meeting while the
 conf. went on. I mention all these
 things to show you the lack of org. of
 this conf. They seem to always get together
 in Conf. where a lot of talk takes place &
 no executive action. Eric told me that a conf.
 like the one I attended took place last year
 which resulted in a decision to communicate
 which never took place. Whether
 some communication and exchange
 of interest will take place following
 this decision I don't know, Eric was
 please that Damer is one of the Sec. because
 he is at least dependable enough to
 do something. Eric said the best that
 he can see is that they are helping
 on the publication of M. & F. in Italy.
 Now the meeting - there were 50-55
 workers; Ragoz was the translator
 Damer was pleased in my talk
 the little time for papers and reports of
 their conf. that I asked for

woe! their union do nothing for them
 since 1948, 2-3 different unions represent
 one shop and none do anything
 for them not even on wages, the contract
 has such a low level that the boss
 pays twice what the contract asks for
 the terror on the shop is so bad that
 you are afraid to speak to the workers
 next to you because unemployment
 stresses them in the face, 2 1/2 million
 unemployed, with a language I could not
 get into form of struggle workers are carrying
 on in the plant, many workers came over to
 shake my hand, Rosaz the intellectual could
 not convey to me what they all said at
 the same time. Rosaz is the leader in
 the Genoa local of A.C. from which they
 are discussing to break, because he
 says Gene (about Giulio) is all action
 without theory, to give you a picture
 of Rosaz will just have to wait till
 I get home I can only say his
 theory is certainly not for the purpose
 we want it is the proletariat wants.
 He asked me to come down to Genoa
 to speak, Damer said it should not an
 advertised meeting but just word of
 mouth. So on Friday we went down to
 Genoa and down to an industrial
 community of Savona for a meeting
 of 25-30 people, mixed workers

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Keeping in mind what Damer said about
mine & Mother's speech namely that it is
an economic level, I put
my talks in the world & nation section
this is where politics comes from
this is working class philosophy.
everyone was pleased. Louis
took down the following from one worker
series - about 50-60 years (various questions
from different people)

1. In this new mission philosophy, is there any place for
conquest of political power? 2 How do you expect to take
political power in the U.S. 3 How can you create a
platform for you (immigration?) if economic conditions differ
in different countries 4 You are awaiting signal from
Russia - you receive - you don't send signals. 5 Why
a new kind of philosophy, when this expressed 100 yrs ago.
6. Rise of unemployed in Italy - men from country
continually, become put pressure on employed worker - who
fear loss of job. 7 American strikes lasting 6-9 wks. This
indicate that they don't expect the Am. Capitalist. Am.
worker don't take part in politics - their living conditions are
better. America is made up of descendants of immigrants
whose father had political ideas. As soon as they
touch American soil they die. The Italian worker
is socialist minded - have looked to Russia for freedom
since Hungary much sorrow. They remain in the CP
because they are socialist trying to make it a fighting force.
Does the Am. worker vote and why does he? Is the
American worker conscious of fatherland (patriotism)? In
Italy there is no longer patriotism - more thinking
internationalism. If there is in America so much pressure
on prod. worker what means does the Cap. class use to
avoid (bankruptcy)? Love Biss

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Sunday Am (Battaioli) chairman of Vega on 2nd part of agenda.

Sw B announces beginning has stood for a no. of problems
considers fundamental framework for a workers movement
~~not~~ necessary to talk of ~~bankruptcy~~ "workers parties"
Can't talk of reconstruction ~~as a~~ reason for bankruptcy.
Sw B thinks that working class might go thru pd of retreat & Cap. might intensify
exploitation - nevertheless condition for socialism.
Continues. Beneath surface there is no retreat of
workers movement or struggle. In some periods the
workers have been more openly violent, they now carry
on a daily struggle at the point of production. Tendency
to socialism shows itself not only in open revolt against
exploitation but in dev. of collective organ in W.C.
at point of production imposed by modern industry.

The life in factory - conflict between tendency of work for
collective organization & resulting conflict which frustrates
this. Real creative organ? of work is possible only after
overthrow of system & taking power by W.C.
? of nature of bureaucracy.

Our position is that ~~is~~ is not a substitute for
Capitalism of a new layer of specialists who will organize
production in name of worker but the organization by workers
themselves of prod. & distrib + soc. whole. We see the reality
of this in workers councils. Every time in history there was
a ? of power, there were thrown up forms of organization
not only of struggle but of organization of society itself.

Sov. workers councils - working class fights Bur. - appearing
of form in Hungary & even in attenuated form in Poland.
Proposed today is social program? Critic of Capet & of Russia
limits itself to crit. of 25 yrs ago. Not enough to say treason
of leader, isolation of Russia or that in Russia
exists Capet-relations of production; must go
further

to show that another form of society is possible &
and to show what this would be like - must have
a program & content of worker power
1) It is necessary to develop the idea of management
of society by mass org. of workers. 2) How to get there
Obj. conditions exist & develop determine pds. of crises in
Bourgeois society & in Com. Russia. In crises possibilities
of rev. action is open to workers to take over society
the movement for reconstruction of Rev. theory & formulation
of aim of mod-proletariat is the central task of revolutionary
avant guard. It is not possible to think that this
class as a whole can be conscious of aims, but
this is bound to take place in a minority of workers
in association with intellectuals. Minorities organize
in pds without open struggle. Maintain continuity
of development of revolutionary theory. Task of this org. & help
W.C. to surmount division & gain control. to help W.C.
by showing clearly historical aims & possible means
to achieve these aims. At some time present
tasks, a work of political clarification & to help
workers struggle to defend themselves against cap. & trade
Union org. which collaborate. Cap. sept to engulf
W.C. while we think conditions for the W.C. is ripe
It is foolish to think that Cap. cannot develop further
maximum before it can be overthrown. The cond. one
the - requires of struggle - express itself not in
mass org. of workers but in formation of minority grouping
Don't put as aim of Rev. org. seizure of power - org.
to help workers to take into own hands control of society
all aspects - all levels

v. eq a cont.

In France Rev. org. task clarif. of political field.
Tendency more profound analysis of Cap. western & eastern forms - to show function of recovery while it holds power in east & in west where it has its own role.

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Finally (tasks?) to develop connections between the struggles of Fr. proletariat & rev. struggles taking place elsewhere.
Task is not so that the worker politicalized or not to be kind organization. It is evident that this form of program theory can't continue without close study & control of working class itself. Encourages development & regrouping of workers outside framework of unions. Must not be dogmatic about this re-...? Must be adapted to struggle against Cap., to formulate from moment to moment the reaction that apply to each new situation. Ex. In France widespread feelings of workers over different salary level - strikes over this - role of org - possible now diff. wages. Believes that rev. org is product of a natural tendency of W.C. to organize itself. Our task not to offer W.C. a platform or a candidate. Rather part of W.C. must dev. & must determine. One can't see rev. org simply as a group that create themselves. A theory constructed in isolation is unusable.
Rev. theory at same time is an expression of W.C. & institution of W.C. There are his views. He best need to get S & P to accept them. Inside S & P are de. agreement.

Wrote Sunday aft.

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about esp. & worker paper in Renault factory where he works.
The W.C. has had a certain pol. esp. - common elements in all
countries - anti cap & anti burocr. But it doesn't follow
that even if we have some perspectives of W.C. - even the
W.C. doesn't follow the big organization - it doesn't mean
that it follows ours - even tho we have (in France)
some perspectives as W.C. - an expression of what is latent
in life. In present society (?) a prolet. struggle? a
mass small org incapable of rallying the W.C.??
Workers express ideas of a rev. org. Yet there is a
striking division between them. How is it our language
is not understood by W.C. And the division exists.
For years small organization fought against the so called
(worker org. of CP SA) with org. of historical and
philosophical forms which corresponded to a previous
period of which failed. Small org. not able to fight
Buro. & which? doesn't want polemical but
when he reads papers of left groups in Italy & France
he sees that they put forward organs & phrases not
comparable to 1917 - Reformism & ideas of no social
reform. This is important in explaining resp. of workers
Esp. continue to polemize against pol. parties (CP) as if
they were real parties & a real base when in fact
no workers are therein - they are skeletons - background
In Renault in part 4 you tried to give worker expression
of experiences - when difficult to express themselves, we
try to understand their criticism of society & write it down
we try to carry on discussion with worker - only way to
obtain info. & ideas latent in working class - not a
question of searching but of bringing out. Idea of
exchange between worker & rev. organ. is not expressed in
writings of Lenin. None used it & journals of
Tribune Bureau: must integrate directly ideas of autonomy
of working class. Esp. when a section of a factory organizes
itself for a struggle we say we are at your service

We have ability & exp. in writing articles - are ready to help you - but you must org. yourself to struggle against Boss. Ideas have been inculcated for you by Politicians & Union org. that the rule of the U.S. is to delegate power to these org. & then they will defend them. We say it is not for us to defend this or that - It's you that will fight & fight to raise money, to bring out pamphlets we will struggle to you, be at your disposal but count on no one but yourself. Try in all struggles to create strike committees - showing to workers that the struggle must be carried out to most complete democracy possible at level of workshop.

Results so far not dramatic but able from time to time to see a committee formed here & there which mostly disappear after the struggle (acute) But the exp. is valuable. - creating naturally not abstractly we publicize as much as possible examples of such committees. Between pd. & struggle try to hold together & keep in contact with workers. Content of our paper Tribune Bureau determined by preoc. of workers in factory to persuade polit. individuals to try & express similar things in their factory - contact to give workers a wider view of society in struggle. Ex. Helped to form an Inter-fab. Committee - (org. of committees in diff. factories) - of people not in agreement with us but so long as they fight for idea of workers democracy - Ex. Simon & costume maker (group of trade unionists & rev. point) Dr. Naites Am. side were contacted re. committees on basis of ideas of Tribune Bureau, put out a paper similar to our. There is hope for a national paper in these lines.

Sunday aft.

(5)

Raimondi -

His group Com. Action have not yet crystallized theory. Are looking for theory. Operating since 1953 within CP official party. 1953 election of int. delegates - off. CP lost many votes - a complete fall - the reality of their condition - go to rank & file - cleaning up ideas - not interfered by leading off in CP. Bur. org of CP - 5 deg. unethical - distributed traits - rank & file 55 to 56 Criticism CP. In 1926 the left wing of CP was represented by Fortiguera - Dancer and Borlega. - criticized historical dev. of Ital. & found Trotsky not a tactician. In Dec 56 a united front of 2 left wing CP tendencies in union Trotskyist - Libertarian & Com. Action 1954-56 operated secretly. - edited documents - come out openly when this was seen as better way to avoid police interference (secretly) Individuals write articles & took responsibility. Had contact with Trotskyist - who wanted entrance to CP but they didn't want this but estab. relations & Com. Libertarian working together successfully. Present paper speaks for Libertarian paper & Comm. Action policy. They expose the CP as against real w.c. interests. Express feelings of worker large section reserved for letters but would esp. in the SA. Workers write about political national interest. Also had internal contacts with Marty - published his book & on introduction parallel dev. of Fr & It. CP - when Marty died - realized he had clarified his thoughts & understood CP. Had contact with Stauffer - agree to his views Fortiguera taught them much of dogma of CP and of a Leninist conception - published his booklet 15-18000 copies of paper Com. Action in Ital. 3-400 militants scattered thru out Italy. They distribute paper, some work in unions - some even spec. in CP dom. (unions?) also run a workers school but interested in prof. ideas. Surprised by union activity - study group and espec. publishing books - large no. already published. Guaranteed sale of M + Z otherwise difficult to publish in Ital. - Young Socialist - young intellectuals are attracted to public activities. Tactics of SP to engulf all tendencies - must guard against. Two things re. paper - must increase circulation. No diff. of unity of w.c. between paper & party has to act on active part & edit materials in paper; political ideas to workers - info. comments & bureau of int info. & all world workers. More interest in European Communist market than in Latin

Diary ^{Sunday} - yesterday work good & clear. Today there is a
 certain force forcing our opinions ^{rather} instead
 of trying to find pts of contact. not having written document
 shows we are not functioning so good. He has a document
 on party functions & a party of leading elements of working class.
 The first days presentation had a ^{socialist} union
 character. Comrade will argue at his position in house
 this is not a direct prob. of theory & practice. A tendency
 to give necessity to Hegel's to Hegel's ab. idea (???)
 There is no theory to which practice does not correspond
 there is no absolute idea. Abs. ideas come from below
 from practice. where there are many ideas - liberalistic
 You talk thru particular American experience. We think
 in a different way, our force, different. Experiences are
 direct - not natural evolution. History does not repeat
 naturally refers. (Warns against optimism in class struggle)
 Revolution is a class party - not natural revolution

Not a long exp. American and class struggle. It
 will take time for American working class to reach
 level of Italian exp. In the U.S. factory workers can
 work out a local thing (problem?) - ^{use better} ^{organize} ^{problem}
 unions but must be able to force proletarian
 freedom for society. A small group of intellectual
 cannot be away from workers. Intellectuals are given
 to the workers & workers give them experience
 Intellectuals from workers elaborated again by
 intellectuals. Role of party not intellectual but
 as a leading group. ^{Observation (merely??) & leading}
 party internationalist. ^{translations & richness of}
 still something left in us from these
 2 schools. Must have a minimum program of food
 agree on basis for all groups of workers & nationalities
 useless to do more. ^{Common denominators - exchange}
 information ^{experience of workers struggle} - to
 lead central to revolution

identification of revolutionary and...
 according to experience...
 leadership must be able...
 (disseminated and centralized to...
 can be reached thru national...
 National way to...
 was completely spoiled...
 After Stalinism working class...
 to be a force in international...
 working class had...
 task to take up broken...
 lines of Lenin for respective...
 either U.S. or Russia...
 now had a document...
 position for agreement...
 those present...
 disagreement in these...
 not all clear to me...
 and finally a simple...
 accepted...

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minimum

Excerpts from Bess' Report on her Trip to Europe 1959

Wednesday, July 29, 1959

Dear Rae:

This is the conference report. You have a couple of naive but hard working representatives and the situation within small groupings are in such a (state) all over Europe that even at a so-called conference it is very difficult to get a hold of a thread to make some sense of their politics. The deeper thought is that they do not have a theory to live by. But what I would want to find in this confusion are some forces who will help to develop a theory from the passions of the European masses with the method of Marxism and Freedom. An Italian edition and an absolute must of a French edition will bring fruit from this conference (. . . I will leave London on August 13 . . .)

We have an international connection at great financial expense. Such connections certainly do not weigh heavy with Socialism or Barbarism. Damen, of course is very conscious of international connections and is rather disappointed when his politics do not bring results from such politicians (I do not go out of my way to tell him so). I rather believe that he thinks America is a serious group and when they grow up politically to the stature of the Italians, they will be something, but at present they are still in the economic field of trade unions and have not reached the political field. By the notes, you will see that he said as much about me and Mothe of the French section. Enclosed is Louis' absolutely . . . job of notes of the main talks. (They did not even provide us) with not one professional translator, or even questionable objectivity. It is not from malice, but from ignorance . . .

Now, the agenda that Damen proposed that was accepted after a lot of loud talk, mostly between the Italian friends and as far as I could tell, not on any principled issues. Damen proposed:

1. Reports by participating friends on the political situation in their country.
2. To make the rounds again on the following day. Reporting on the activity and politics in their section.

If you had a week with at least official and circulated reports beforehand, it might have been alright. As it was, there was nothing but talk, with a chance to discuss the "line" of politics pursued by each country, indeed if there was a "line".

3. Establishment of international connections.

My first talk was on the American scene -- the second America, that can't be judged by Republican or Democratic parties. They haven't built a labor party, this has advantages, because they cannot be misled. You must judge the American worker at the point of production in which there is a history from the birth of the C.I.O. until today and that News and Letters recorded that history since 1953 and created from that practice the meaning of Marxism for our time. M&F could not have been without News and Letters. I said

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that I was an official Resident Editorial Board representative that is News and Letters recognized international responsibility and sent me to Europe even before this conference was organized and circulated an International Memo in advance and I will speak on the second point on the agenda. I of course opened with official greetings. And so the first sweaty day ended. It was the worst possible weather for a conference but like old radicals they are always ready for a meeting. I hoped some worker would show up and tell us something about Milan conditions, but I guess that would just be "economics" not politics. On Sunday, a worker from Turin, that is where the Fiat is made, showed up. I asked him if he was going to tell us about conditions there and through an interpreter, I was told that he was not on the agenda.

Well, I did a lot of thinking, what to do on Sunday with my talk. The International-Memo was not translated. Everyone talked (about) what came to their head. No one discussed an information bureau . . . I therefore decided to speak a few minutes in introduction to the International-Memo that had been translated by Radames. He did a very good job. In that way about 40 people heard it and know of its existence. I know that Guilio (commonly known as Gene) will have it translated. Although now that we officially have a "Cetro di Corrispondenza" (that's its name), Damen of C.B. and Aldo Vinazzo of C.A. are its secretaries, the job of the Cetro is to distribute documents between the different sections. To me, the translation into French, English and Italian is the most important.

On finances, Gene suggested that C.A. keep account for three months and to see what it costs (it's of course his organization which has the money to run it). S. or B. said that it would have to officially pass it before officially adhering to the Cetro. It was midnight by then and everyone was glad to go. Somewhere along the line, I said that the Italian C.B. & C.A. have already acted in an international manner by helping to get an Italian edition of M&F. With some life into this Cetro by us, it can certainly contribute to some understanding. Damen closed the meeting by reading a resolution in which he called a minimum for all to stand on. It was the conception of an elite party, par excellence. When finished, Vega finished reading it, (by the way, he was chairman at the end, because the chairman simply gave up. And he was damn good.) Asked whether any wished it discussed and the no's had it. So simple a cetra was voted on . . . Workers around Damen to which he wanted the American and French representatives to speak; there started a firey discussion at the conference, because he asked the conference to recess for that meeting. A compromise was reached where I, Mothe, and Damen went to the public meeting while the conference went on. I mention all of these things to show you the lack of organization at the conference. They seem to always get together in conference where a lot of talk takes place with no . . . action. Eric told me that a conference like the one I attended took place last year which resulted in a decision to communicate, which never took place. Whether some communication and exchange of material will take place following this discussion, I don't know. Eric was pleased that Damen is one of the secretaries, because he is at least dependable enough to do something. Eric said the best that he can see is that they are helping in the publication of M&F in Italy.

Now the meeting, there were 50-55 workers. Radames was the translator. Damen was pleased with my talk. (In) the little time for discussion and reports of their conditions, that I asked for was: their union does nothing for them since 1943. Two - three different unions represent one shop and not one has done anything for them; not even on wages. The contract has such a low level that the boss pays twice what the contract asks for. The tyranny in the shop is so bad that you are afraid to speak to the worker next to you because unemployment stares them in the face; 1-1/2 to 2 million unemployed. With the language, I could not get what form of struggle workers are carrying on in the plant. Many workers came over to shake my hand and Radames, the intellectual, could not convey to me what they all said at the same time. Radames is the leader in the Genoa local of A.C. from which they are discussing (whether) to break, because he says Gene (Guilio) is all action without theory. To give you a picture of Radames, will just have to wait until I get home. I can only say that his theory is certainly not for the purpose we want it or the proletariat wants. He asked me to come down to Genoa to speak. Damen said it should not be an advertized meeting, but just word of mouth. So on Friday, we went down to Genoa and drove down to an industrial community in Savanna for a meeting of 25-30 people; mixed workers.

Keeping in mind what Damen said about mine and Mothe's speech namely that it is on an economic level. I put my talks in the world and national situation. This is where politics comes from, this is working-class philosophy. Everyone was pleased. Louis took down the following from one serious worker, about 50-55 years old (various questions from different people). (From Louis' notes):

1. In this new Marxian philosophy, is there any place for conquest of political power? 2. How do you expect to take political power in the U.S.; 3. How can you create the platform for (insurrection?) if economic conditions differ in different countries? 4. You are awaiting a signal from the masses. You receive, you don't send signals? 5. Why a new kind of philosophy when this was expressed 100 years ago? 6. Masses of unemployed in Italy -- men from country continually come and put pressure on employed workers, who fear loss of jobs. 7. American strikes lasting 6-9 months. This indicates that they donot effect the American capitalist. American workers don't take part in politics; their living conditions are better. America is made up of decedents of immigrants whose fathers had political ideas. As soon as they touch American soil they die. The Italian worker is socialist minded. Have looked to Russia for freedom. Since Hungary, much sorrow. They remain in the C.P. because they are socialists trying to make it a fighting force. Does the American worker vote and why does he? Is the American worker conscious? of fatherland (patriotism?) In Italy there is no longer patriotism, more thinking internationalism. If there is in America so much pressure on production workers by what means does the capitalist class use to avoid (bankruptcy?).

Love,

Bess
Louis

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