

# 400 at Socialist Forum Sift Effect Of Automation Era

More than 400 socialist-minded persons vigorously discussed America's future in the era of automation and atomic energy over the weekend in a national conference under the auspices of the American Forum for Socialist Education.

Carl Dreher, engineer and author, told one panel that every decrease in hours "has been bitterly contested" and that a man cannot be sure under automation either that (1) he will get more interesting work or (2) that he will get work at all.

Sidney Lens, secretary of AFSE and a Chicago trade unionist, said however, in a paper read at the morning session, that automation held out some hope, providing man's progress in other fields equal technological progress, because a majority of people in the world are hungry.

Dreher is the author of the new book, "Automation: What It Is, How It Works, and Who Can Use It."

Dreher's observations ran counter to those made by Frank Bello, science editor of Fortune magazine, who saw automation as relieving men of long hours of work. Bello said that if mass unemployment comes "it won't be due to automation but some other fault of our social system."

Both men agreed on one thing: like it or not, we are in for more and more automation.

Bello said that in the last ten years, the rise in productivity was 15 percent, yet workers in plants in 1947 were a shade under 13 million and now are just 13 million. The 71 million labor force today also includes trade, 12 million; service, seven; government, even, finance, two million, with the other 24 million in mining, construction, transportation, self-employed and unemployed now numbering more than 3 million, a million more than 1947.

He anticipated another 15 percent increase in the total labor force in the next decade, or 81 million, and another 45 percent rise in productivity. As for atomic energy, he said in 1967 only 2 percent of all our electric power will be nuclear.

Panel discussions were held on

various phases of the problem—trade union, youth, cultural, political action, and socialism and democracy. The latter two panels, with more than 300 in attendance, evoked some of the sharpest debate of the session.

Friday evening 100 persons attended a reception in honor of A. J. Muste, veteran pacifist and chairman of the AFSE.

Speakers included Lens, Tim Wohlforth, editor of the Young Socialist, Dorothy Rose Blumberg of the Communist Party, who read a statement from Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Communist Party national committee member now on a mid-west speaking tour, and Dr. Muste. Russell Johnson of the New England Friends Service Committee presided.

Responding to the speakers Muste emphasized the principle of non-exclusion, insisting that all socialist-minded currents, including Communists, had to be included in discussing the new problems of peace, automation and atomic energy.

Most of the panel discussions were tape recorded for future publication.

(Because of the wealth of material in the various panels the Daily Worker will seek to publish subsequent articles based on the detailed record.)

## Appeal Conviction Of Mrs. L. C. Bates

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Dec. 8.—Attorneys for Mrs. L. C. Bates, president of the Arkansas State Conference of Branches of the NAACP have filed notice of an appeal from her conviction under a new ordinance designed to make the NAACP reveal its lists of members in Little Rock.

Mrs. Bates was fined \$100 and ordered to pay court costs amounting to \$50.

Representing Mrs. Bates are Robert L. Carter, of New York; Frank Reeves of Washington, and