THE RANK AND FILE REVOLTS, BUREAUCRACY AND PRIMARY WORK GROUPS, AN INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

This is Section II-D of a larger document still in the process of being written entitled A New Socialist World-View: The Role of Consciousness and Questions of Psychological Oppression in Current Marxian Analysis -- By M. Wyatt.

Submitted in conjunction with S. Weir's document, Problems Of, Background To, and Questions For a Labor Perspective -- With Some Beginnings.

I would like to give a brief, interpretative sketch of the process involved in the "bureaucratization" of the trade unions in the US, and of the rank and file working class revolts which took place in the 1950's and 1960's, as a partial response to that bureaucratization process. I would like to do this in the light of some of the industrial sociology covered in the previous section, centering, in particular, on the notion of the primary work group.

In order to understand the extent and limitations of the process of the "bureaucratization" of the unions, it is necessary to know that the structure and functioning of the local union, its bargaining strength and its degree of democratic representation depends heavily on the pre-existent informal structure of social relations in the plant or office organized. This means that the strength, cohesiveness and mutual relationship of primary work groups on the job are a critical factor in determining the real effectiveness of a union's collective bargaining efforts as well as to what extent, and in what ways, the union will be representative of its membership. I would like to quote a few authors who talk to this point:

"Of course, in organizing and establishing a local union the international organization will feel the impact of the internal structure of the plant. Where strong groups are lacking, so may strong leaders be absent and attempts at organization may fail. In the early contact stage, the union may even have difficulty in securing men who can speak for any sizeable proportion of the plant."[67]

"Many successful organization drives and NLRB election victories have not yielded permanent results because of the difficulty of finding capable workers willing to serve as shop stewards. This was a major factor in the failure of the Southern organizing campaign, but it is true everywhere that the union dies or lives in the shop -- not in the local office or national office, which are built upon the place which the union holds in the shop society."[68]

In understanding why and how it was possible for the unions to become "bureaucratized," and to what extent this was actually the case, one has to have a general conception of the extent to which the formal union structure is relevant to the day-to-day concerns of the membership and connected to them. (For a more detailed, introductory exposition of some of the basic results in the body of knowledge about the extent to which union functioning is affected by the informal work group structure in the plant, I refer the reader to an unpublished paper, by Michael K. Guttman, entitled "The Rank-and-File Work Group: Its Dynamics Within Union-Organized Industry." I am attaching this as an addendum at the end of this section, for reference.)

As a generalization, and first-order approximation, it is probably true that the local union structure in the United States, based on a strong shop steward system and a strong grievance procedure, allows for an at least potentially greater connection between the rank and file concerns and problems, and the leadership of the local union than in other countries. Thus, for example, in Australia:

"In Australia, the accepted procedure is that union activity is carried to the shop floor by the officers of the unions. These officers are, in general, the only official union representatives and consultants on the shop floor level ... Shop stewards are rarely part of the official union organizational structure, and they are rarely delegated more than a limited role in the activities of the organization."[69]

As another noted industrial sociologist puts it:

"We are beginning to comprehend that the unique contribution of American unionism is the shop level grievance procedure. In other countries trade unions have tended to concentrate either on the political front or on industry-wide or nationwide collective bargaining...one of the most important factors in explaining the kinds and numbers of grievances entering this process is the strength and determination of the work groups involved."[70]

Despite the overall first impression that the American local union structure has more room in it for direct rank and file representation, when looked at in a comparative context, important differences emerge when the historical origins of craft unionism, represented by the AFL, and industrial unionism, represented by the CIO are compared. The crafts were apparently characterized by strong informal workshop organization which undertook the bargaining over conditions of work and wages with management. The advent of the craft unions occurred, in most cases, at the expense of this localized direct-representation phenomenon.

"The roots of rank and file union leadership spring from the soil of 'primitive' workshop organization. Before the advent of craft unions and the development of centralized organization on district and national levels, workers organized on a shop basis. To gain improved conditions of wage and work, shop employees elected their own representatives to 'speak' for them to the employer... Craft unionism sought to establish uniform wages and working conditions in the district for workers of a given trade. Hence, craft union leadership bitterly assailed 'primitive' workshop organization as a major obstacle in achieving this area-wide uniformity. In most cases, the expansion of craft unionism was dependent on the elimination of workshop organization. The peculiar conditions of work in the printing and mining industries are the historical exceptions... The chapel organization in the printing industry provides the oldest form of recognized workshop committee. Beginning with the advent of the industry itself, skilled journeymen printers organized themselves on a shop basis in order to effect control over their conditions of work... The mining industry has also been characterized by the historic existence of workshop organization. Pit committees have retained a recognized status in the eyes of both management and the union. Legitimized committee-of-the-whole meetings at the pithead have been a typical feature of trade unionism in the mining industry.... The chapel and the pit committee still retain their historic significance nad have served to provide models for the structure of union organization in mass production industry."[71]

In mass production industries, the narrative unfolds in a different way.
The first widespread origin of "shop committees" in these industrial jobs oc-
curred through the pressures and policies of the government and many busines-
ses, in the period following World War I, as an attempt to forestall unioni-
zation efforts by, in effect, creating "company unions." However, ironically,
many of these management created shop committees served as the focal point for
the mass organizing drives of the CIO during the 1930's. These management
created groups became transformed and incorporated into the structure of the
local union steward system and the local grievance committee.

"The (US) government, through the National War Labor Board, authorized
the introduction of the shop committee as the method by which workers would
collectively deal with the employer. It is recorded that between January,
1918, and the spring of 1919, over 120 shop committees were set up by federal
agencies in large industrial companies. As a matter of fact, the War Labor
Board 'forced employers to meet and deal with committees of their employees re-
gardless of whether they were composed of or elected by union men.' ...the end
of the war saw the great expansion of the shop committee system by anti-union
industrial groups. By 1919, employer-organized worker representation schemes
covered more than a million workmen. While unions affiliated with the AFL gen-
erally declined in membership, the shop committees expanded nearly fourfold...
Where management did not feel threatened by union organization, the employee
representation system was soon discarded... The great union organizing cam-
paigns during the thirties utilized existing or ad hoc shop committees as the
base for unionization of the industrial plant. The main open-shop weapon of
the employer had been transformed into an important organizational instrument
for the worker...

> 'Of great significance was the organizational structure of the Auto
> Workers Union. Like English and German trade unions, the local was
> organized on a foundation of shop stewards. One shop committeeman
> was elected for every ten workers; they handled the grievances on the
> shop level, or if necessary, boosted them 'up the ladder' to the lo-
> cal. The shop committeemen were also represented in the leadership
> of the local. This type of organization was adopted by most locals
> of the UAW-CIO and has been one of the most important factors in that
> union's history.'[72]

The genuine institutionalization of collective bargaining as a permanent
feature of the American political economy did not gain its real impetus until
the Depression and Roosevelt's New Deal politics finally convinced a majority
of the strongest sections of the corporate centers of power that it was defi-
nitely in the long-term interests of the capitalist class as a whole, to ac-
cept the existence of unions. Even so, it took several years between the pas-
sage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, and the actual subsequent or-
ganization of basic industries by the CIO. It took years of direct life-and-
death resistance by the rank and file, and the upswing in the economy caused
by World War II to finally clinch the acceptance of unions into the political
economy. The institutionalization of collective bargaining necessitated that
a certain inherent bureaucratizing tendency be displaced onto the unions.
Collective bargaining implies a mutual agreement to the terms of the contract,
which must be adhered to by both the union and management. Given the assump-
tion that over any protracted perio of time, dissatisfaction, resentment and
frustration will be generated by the outmoded social relations of production.

under capitalism, it is clear that to the extent that the union acts to enforce
the terms of the contract, it is, in general, often aiding management in deal-
ing with some short term problem that arises among its workers. However, more
importantly, the union is aiding management in the long-term sense that the en-
tire underlying terms of ·conflict, of the disputes which come ·up -- in short,
the entire world view which the union leadership transmits to the membership --
are determined by an orientation to the limited framework of the contract. In
particular, the company's necessarily competitive orientation towards other
firms and other industries gets reproduced among the union leadership:

"It is difficult for a manager, faced with an aggressive group of union
leaders across a bargaining table, to realize that the trade union performs a
vital function for him. All he can think of is that, because of the union, he
has lost some of his power. And to a great extent this is true: he cannot
fire a man at whim, promotions are on the basis of seniority, a foreman cannot
make job transfers -- these are performed by the union. But in taking over
these powers the unions also take over the difficult function of specifying
priorities of demands, and in so doing, it not only relieves management of many
political headaches, but becomes a buffer between management and rank and file
resentments... The second fact is that the ·union often takes over the task of
disciplining the men, when management cannot... During a time of layoffs, the
question of which type of seniority is to be followed (whether by particular
type of work or by a plant-wide list) becomes a bread-and-·butter struggle.
But the major headache arises when workers, in order to keep a company compet-
itive, and thus safeguard jobs, cut their wage rates, tighten their time as-
signments, and accept increased production loads. In effect, they disrupt
the uniform patterns which the union has been seeking to impose throughout the
industry... The question of 'my company first' has its counterpart in this
'my industry first' attitude of different unions. The Teamsters oppose gov-
ernment favors for the railroads. The coal union seeks higher tariffs against
foreign oil production and unites with the railroads -- since the railroads
gain a large share of their income from hauling coal -- in joint lobbying ven-
tures. The machinists, whose strength is in the aircraft industry, will lobby
for more planes, while the boilermakers, who construct ships, ·urge a larger
navy."[73]

Perhaps the general transition and "bureaucratization" involved when the
union becomes recognized as a mutual beneficiary and enforcer of the terms of
a contract with management is most clearly seen in terms of the manner in
which the shop steward is affected by the developments:

"In the early days of the union, shop stewards in the industrial plant
controlled the workaday negotiations with management. If grievances were not
informally settled on the spot, production in the department (or plant) would
soon halt. The stewards formulated policy and initiated action. They organ-
ized the department and collected the dues. They protected the worker and po-
liced the company. They conducted sit-down strikes, slow-downs, and walk-outs.
They were recognized shop leaders and they asserted the power of their posi-
tion... The militant character of the early industrial union local partially
reflected the power and prestige of the industrial union steward... The de-
cline in labor militancy can be linked to the diminishing power of the union
steward. Now the industrial union steward is a technical griever whose primary

function is to process shop grievances. He must be thoroughly familiar with
the labor contract in order to distinguish between a complaint and a grievance.
In many local industrial unions, there is a tendency to by-pass the steward and
seek counsel from the local union functionaries. The shift to front office
leadership is a well-established fact of trade union life."[74]

At this point, I would like to sketch out a theoretical critique of the
concept of "bureaucracy," which I will then attempt to apply to an understand-
ing of what the concept means in relation to developments in the trade unions.
I will return to the whole question in more detail in a later section of this
paper. My criticisms of bureaucracy stem from two basic directions. The first
is that the concept is often used in a very amorphous and analytically impre-
cise way. The second is that the concept is not understood for the very crude
and rough approximation that it is, even in cases where it is otherwise more
appropriately used. In this latter case, the error seems to me the kind of
systematic bias which conceals underlying political assumptions, which, as will
be analyzed in a later section, come to serve a reactionary political and his-
torical function, in this case.

Firstly, bureaucracy is not the same thing as hierarchy. Various differ-
ent kinds of power distributions are possible in a hierarchic form of organiza-
tion. Moreover, there are many different degrees and types of hierarchy, which
may involve much or little democratic participation at various levels of the
hierarchy. Now, it is however also true that the concept of bureaucracy itself
does not imply one particular distribution of power, but is rather an "ideal
type", for a whole spectrum of power distributions, which have some common, de-
fining characteristic, which they all possess in greater or lesser degree. The
essential characteristic which intuitively seems to suit the meaning of "bureau-
cracy," when abstracted from the historical context of other characteristics
with which it is associated, is the following: an organization is bureaucratic
to the extent that at each level of the chain of decision-making, there is a
very high probability that the actions or decisions of people at a given level
will follow specific patterns determined by those in immediate authority above
them. This bureaucratic transmission of decisions and policies, exists not on-
ly relative to those areas of activity and decision making in people's lives
which are directly involved and affected by the formal and "legitimately" pro-
scribed bounds of organizational authority, but also with respect to the infor-
mal social relations within the organization. Thus, in talking about bureau-
cracy in any organization it is necessary to specify the areas of activity and
decision-making power within the organization which are presumed to be subject
to a "bureaucratic" transmission of authority. Depending on the situation, and
varying historically within every organization, generally, such areas of "bur-
eaucratically constrained" activity may be very broad or very narrow in scope.

The more different levels of the organization at which the above is true,
and the higher the "crude" probabilities of this "bureaucratic" transmission
of authority, the more "bureaucratic" the organization can be said to be. Also,
the greater the areas of decision-making constrained or subject to this "bur-
eaucratic" transmission of authoirty, the more bureaucratic the organization
will be said to be.

The above definition was motivated to explain real phenomena. Certain
other important notions related to the meaning of the concept of "bureaucracy"

flow from it. First, no organization is even partially bureaucratic at every level. There must be a power center (usually a whole distribution of power centers) which functions autonomously to originate certain goals and decisions. This much is true, even if bureaucracy is considered in a more traditional sense, as in the following quote:

"Most bureaucratic structures are capped by a non-bureaucratic elite operating with greater freedom than the lower levels of the organization. Civil service systems usually recognize this explicitly by restricting the application of their rules to all posts below a certain rank (approximately that of a bureau chief in the federal civil service)."[75]

But it is more generally true that an organization is not generall equally bureaucratic at all levels, even leaving out for the moment the upper echelon power centers. In particular, the further down a decision travels along a chain of command, the more resistance it may encounter. Another key point is that areas of decision-making subject to bureaucratic directive can exist perfectly well alongside areas of decision-making which are much less constrained, are not constrained, or which are constrained for different reasons. Finally, I would like to criticize the fact that bureaucracy as usually conceived does not address itself to the possibility of the bureaucratic transmission of decisions, with respect to significant and large areas of decision-making, across conventionally-defined organizational boundaries. To define a bureaucratic structure, transcending the bounds of one organization, it is only necessary to demonstrate empirically a commonality of interests, between the appropriate members of each institution, over some given areas of decision-making.

The reinterpretation of the concept of "bureaucracy" sketched above has important applications for approaching developments in the trade unions. Firstly, it seems evident to me that in the case of the trade unions, a trans-organizational bureaucratic transmission of authority is set up with management over many areas of decision-making affection the union membership, and that the prime medium which is a measure of this inter-organizational, "bureaucratically determined" area of common interest is the contract, the collective bargaining agreement, and secondarily, the grievance procedure. By this interpretation it becomes clear that the upper-level labor bureaucrats are not usually the "power sources" at the top of the bureaucratic chain of command, but that this power source lies with management in most cases. Thus, a number of the long-term values and goals of the labor bureaucracy are those of management. In particular, the functioning of Samuel Gompers and other AFL and CIO leaders often acted as a bureaucratic agent, linking the decisions of the Federal government and the corporations with the individual union leaders within the AFL or CIO umbrella. The pathological abstention of the AFL from considering political questions was no accident. The fact that Gompers was vice-chairman of the National Civic Federation, founded in 1900 for the purpose of avoiding strikes and political unrest, was representative of the submissiveness of the labor leadership. For another classic example of their functioning, with respect to crushing dissent from the government policy of entrance into World War I in the member unions of the AFL, I refer the reader to Ronald Radosh's book, American Labor and United States Foreign Policy.[76] Another example of a situation where a crisis acted to crystallize into really concrete outward form, the underlying bureaucratic tendencies of the union leadership, was World War II. During the war years, the leaders of almost eleven million workers voluntarily relinquished

their right to strike, and cooperated in the setting up of joint labor-management committees to increase productivity. These were set up in most major industries, and numbered almost 5,000.

... The next point to be made is that if labor unions are "bureaucratic" organizations in the above-described sense, then different levels of the organization are not necessarily equally bureaucratic. The attitudes of the average shop steward are very different from those of the international executive, and even from those of the business agent or local union president. Even in those cases where the shop steward acts to enforce the contract and discipline the rank and file, very often the reasons for his doing so are different from those of higher echelon union officials. The ideology which catches the loyalty of most shop stewards is often an ideology of class interests, and of the need for collective seld-defense. Sidney Peck discusses this in his study of the consciousness and values of industrial shop stewards in Milwaukee, The Rank and File Leader:

"Not a single steward in the group discussions doubted the necessity for union organization among working people. The union was viewed as the basic organizational weapon of laboring folk to secure and protect their 'inalienable human rights.' ...The chairman of the USA 1258 steward council, a 37-year-old pipefitter, underlined this position when he said: 'I believe a union is necessary in the plant in order for a man to be able to exercise his rights as a citizen.' ...The worker-stewards also considered unions a necessary feature of community progress and development. In their view, the union movement was seen as the dynamic force behind the improved welfare of society... Trade unionism also contributes to the social welfare of the community as a whole because the benefits which accrue to the majority of people, i.e., the workers, are soon dispersed to other segments of society... Union loyalty compelled the majority of stewards to speak of their international leadership in glowing terms. In the current political context of conservative attacks against 'labor bossism,' many grievers consider it a prime class responsibility to counteract these negative images which they feel are being foisted on the public."[77]

The above quote is indicative of the important historical function which bureaucracy can play, arising in the context of a declining and increasingly outmoded class society, as it has. This function is one which is intimately tied up with the general shift in the forms in which psychological oppression manifests itself, as described in an earlier section. It is to mask the true power relations in the society. The union serves as a buffer for rank and file hostility at management. The shop steward plays a very crucial role in the buffer role of the union. It is he who is closest to the rank and file of any union official. He has to suffer the brunt of the hostility and frustration, which the enforcement of the contract generates among the membership. He is, at any moment, in a pivotal role. He can and often does amplify and channel this hostility against management and the union leadership. But frequently, when he sees no alternative, or when he becomes too highly inculcated with the ideology of the contract, he turns his own anger and frustration (generated by the impotence and disciplinary function of his own position), against the rank and file. He blames them for everything that is wrong with the union. In doing this, he echoes again an oft-used ideology of the union leadership:

"Consequently stewards located the source of corruption in the apathetic character of rank and file behavior. In the words of a 37-year-old brewery worker, union corruption was the natural result of generally lax rank and fil-ers who 'don't go to meetings, don't know what is going on in their locals and internationals, and they don't know who to vote for and what side to vote on...' Hence, in their view corrupt unionism may be 'blamed on the people' who are not concerned about problems of organizational structure that are vital to their interests... In the acceptance of this perspective, stewards clearly adopted the political language, ideological image, and status posture of top union leadership."[78]

There is a significant difference between this view and the general atti-tudes of top labor leaders, in that this view is at least strongly directed to-ward the rank and file as agents of social change, and the very anger which stewards direct toward them, flows from the fact that they expect and look to the rank and file for the initiative and self-activity which will force change. The upper level labor leaders, on the other hand, consistently and seriously looks to the government and the officials of management for direction.

"Two habits of labor leader policy facilitate this trend (toward bureau-cracy under state capitalism). The first which began on a large scale under Roosevelt and was strengthened by the wartime setup, is looking to the govern-ment or to particular politicians rather than to the workers. The second is thinking of his movement essentially as a minority affair, which must balance its power against others, rather than as a potential majority movement with which to reorganize modern society."[79]

At the level of the shop steward more than at any other level of the un-ion officialdom, the chain of "bureaucracy" breaks down, or at least is forced to coexist with strong opposing tendencies which are generated among the rank and file membership. A genuine "dual power" situation exists as a constant psychological struggle within the consciousness of the shop steward between forces representing opposing class interests. Despite the influence of bureau-cratic directives and modes of thinking, the steward remains organically tied to his rank and file constituency, in most cases. He must face his constitu-ency everyday within the shared experience of the actual work situation. The degree to which the steward job will remain representative of the ranks of la-bor depends strongly on the power, cohesiveness and the consciousness of the work group to which he belongs. Thus the possibility of fully bureaucratizing the role of the steward would only exist to the extent that it was possible to "bureaucratize" or cancel out the fundamental power of the primary work groups:

"As the 'grass roots leader of the people in the plant,' the steward can never forget that he too, is a worker. He can never escape his men. Their judgments are constantly upon him. A steward can be tried on 'like a pair of shoes,' and if he pinches or slides or squeaks he will be quickly discarded or go through a long breaking-in process. But eventually he comes to fit the de-partment -- its interests and character -- so that the steward, more than any other union leader, reflects the concerns of the people in the shop... In his study of the UAW shop steward, Herbert Levine writes that the steward's strength 'as an independent power center is enhanced by the fact that he is never di-vorced from his source of power...'"[80]

"The primary work bond that unites the steward to the rank and file work-
er also establishes a self-generating source of power for the shop leader. In
other places and other times, this power of the rank and file worker leader
has been tapped full measure. On the American scene, this power source has
usually manifested itself in the form of wildcat strikes, unauthorized produc-
tion slow-downs and small-scale protest movements against bureaucratic leader-
ship. In this country, the political power of the steward has rarely been
utilized to its full potential."[81]

Now, if the fullest possible bureaucratization of the trade unions depends
upon cancelling either the strength or the consciousness of the primary work
groups on the job, it would appear that both of these means were employed in
an accelerated manner as a result of World War II. The war mobilization itself
and the drafting of men tended to fragment the strength of the work groups,
while the massive patriotic fervor which was aroused in the society at large,
and the ideological role played by the joint labor-management productivity
councils, as well as by groups like the Communist Party, acted to neutralize
dissatisfaction on the job. As with most half-truths, there is a degree of
truth to the claim of many stewards that the rank and file are responsible for
the bureaucracy in the unions. Although neither factor is the simple cause
or effect of the other, it is clear that the phenomenon of "bureaucratization"
of the unions is tied up with the phenomenon of decreased membership partici-
pation in local union affairs and meetings, and an attitude of general apathy
toward the internal life of the unions:

"Along with the danger of professionalization at the local level runs the
obtruding fact of declining membership participation. If current trends con-
tinue, they can only result in more intense managerial controls created by the
vacuum of indifference. When a general meeting in most locals attracts 25 per
cent of the membership, the officers are jubilant, for the percentage usually
freezes at a figure anywhere from five to fifteen. The members seem to re-
spond only to those rallies where strike action is voted or collective agree-
ments are approved."[82]

But it is essential to understand that this apathy on the part of the
membership toward their unions, institutions which are supposed to represent
them, was only a reflection of a larger-scale generalized social apathy in
the US which followed in the wake of World War II. This apathy is probably
best expressed in terms of the political alienation of the population:

"Only a little over half of the people eligible to vote do so, which
means that the United States is a government by default as much as by posi-
tive election."[83]

The key point that I am getting at here is that the apathy, and submis-
siveness, characteristic of "bureaucratic" developments in the trade unions,
are an excellent social index for the degree of susceptibility to bureaucrat-
ic developments of the entire population. In other words, the general deter-
minants of social consciousness and attitudes, which include the schools, the
mass media, political and world developments, changes in the family and home
life, etc., all have their effect on the consciousness of the primary work
groups, and through them, on the shop stewards. In this general way, develop-

ments such as cold-war anti-communism had their effect on neutralizing the
power of the work groups, and extending the bureaucratizing process in the
unions during the 1950's. But even during the 1950's, the rank and file
work groups could not be abosrbed into the schemes of management and the
labor bureaucracy, as attested to by the frequency of wildcat strikes, slow-
downs, and sabotage.

During the post-war period, the concrete material basis for the increased
bureaucratization of the unions arose from the increased disciplining of the
workforce required by corporate capitalism:

"Driven by intensified international competition and a decrease in its
share of the world production -- from 65% after World War II to about 35%
today -- as well as by its need to accumulate capital, American capital has
sought to increase its production of surplus value by heightening the pro-
ductivity of labor. Indeed, while employment in manufacturing rose only
about 30% from 1950 to 1968, the manufacturing output index (1957-59 - 100)
rose 120% in the same period."[84]

The implementation of increased productivity necessitated further increas-
ed attacks on the remaining democratic aspects of trade union structure. In
particular, attacks on the power of the stewards have been mounted in many
forms. In some cases, the right to elect stewards has been removed from the
membership. In some cases, attempts have been made to "buy off" shop stewards
by giving them supervisory positions. In some cases, the steward -- member
representation ratios have been changed from the order of 1:10 or 1:15 to the
order of 1:100 or 1:200. However, it has been impossible for the labor bur-
eaucracy to thoroughly cancel out the power of the stewards, and through them
the ranks, in union affairs, since they represent the independent base of po-
wer on which the continued existence of the labor bureaucracy depends. Without
the control which they exercise over that independent base of power, the labor
bureaucracy would soon lose its usefulness to management.

Nevertheless, the relative propserity which characterized the post-war per-
iod allowed the trade union leadership to successfully perpetrate upon its mem-
bers a trade-off, in which the ranks lost in terms of the quality of their work-
ing conditions, but gained in terms of wages, fringe benefits, and standard of
living. But during the 1960's, as the standard of living of the working class
began to decline, it became clear that this trade-off was becoming more and more
clearly a fraud. At the same time, the incipient militancy of the 1950's was
becoming more pronounced and more political, as evidenced by the more political
nature of some wildcat strikes, and the high turnover which began to take place
in the international offices of the unions, many of which had been uncontested
for years before. For excellent discussions of this rank and file revolt in
labor in the 1960's, I would refer the reader to two pamphlets, A New Era Of
Labor Revolt, by Stan Weir, and The American Working Class in Transition, by
Kim Moddy.[85] Here, in the 1960's, it again became apparent that the ability of
the bureaucracy to stifle rank and file resistance was closely attached to gen-
eral changes in the economy and to changes in the general field of social con-
sciousness, as reflected in the resistance expressed in the civil rights, stu-
dent, and anti-war movements.

The emergence of a highly militant, widescale, and increasingly political rank and file revolt certainly demonstrated that the rank and file work groups had definitely not been effectively neutralized. Over the entire post-war period, it became clear that limitations existed on the extent that the labor bureaucracy could neutralize its granss-roots support through the steward system, without losing the very basis of its bargaining power with management. Thus, a major share of the task of devising effective methods of coopting and neutralizing the power and consciousness of the industrial work groups reverted to or remained with management. The development of the rank and file militancy during the 1960's simply intensified and heightened the importance of the tasks now facing industrial sociologists, a rask which came to involve, once again, the continued development of new and better forms and techniques of perpetuating psychological oppression. It is in this context that I would like to briefly examine the significance of the new "human relations" approach in industry, in particular, the increased use of techniques of group control, through things like "participatory management" and "industrial democracy."

Footnotes

67. Leonard R. Sayles, Behavior of Industrial Work Groups: Prediction and Control (NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), pp. 141-142

68. Joseph Kovner and Herbert J. Lahne, "Shop Society and the Union," in Industrial and Labor Relations Review, October, 1953, pp. 6-7.

69. Kevin W. Hince, "Unions on the Shop Floor,"·Journal of Industrial Relations, Sydney, Australia, Vol. 9, No. 2 (March, 1967), p. 215

70. Sayles, op.cit., p. 135

71 Sidney M. Peck, The Rank-And-File Leader, (New Haven: College and University Press, 1963), p. 23-24

72. Ibid., pp. 27-30

73. Bell, op.cit., The End of Ideology, pp. 215-216

74. Peck, op. cit., pp. 31-32

75. Caplow, The Sociology of Work, op.cit., p. 66

76. Refer to Ronald Radosh, American Labor and United States Foreign Policy (NY: Vintage Books, Inc., 1969), pp. 7-29

77. Peck, op.cit., pp. 124, 125-126, 128, 130

78. Ibid., p. 120

79. C. Wright Mills, New Men of Power, America's Labor Leaders (NY: Harcourt & Brace, 1948), p. 237

80. Peck, Op. cit., p. 33

81 Ibid., p. 32

82. Maurice F. Meufeld, The State of the Unions," House of Labor: Internal Operations of American Unions (NY: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1951), p. 22

83. Mills, White Collar, p. 331

84. Moody, op.cit., The American Working Class in Transition, p.4

85. Refer to Moody and to Stan Weir, A New Era of Labor Revolt (NY: The Independent Socialist Clubs of America, 1966),