Everett Kassolow, "New Directions in European Unionism."
New Directions in European Unionism

A Speech by Everett Kissalow

My talk tonight, as the chairman knows, is entitled, "New Directions in European Unionism," and I guess it's quite fitting in a way that it's a very contemporary kind of subject. I will try to convey to you a lot of what has been happening in European unionism. In my own mind this really can't be separated from what's going on in the American labor world as well.

I say it's fitting, because as you know Frank himself was such a vital person. I can recall quickly two recollections I have. I was in France a couple of years working with the Marshall Plan in the mid 1950's and Frank came over on a visit and he was going to strive for some sort of a labor education conference. I was very hesitant about that because this was a meeting to which all of the French trade unions were sending representatives. I'd been invited but I, of course, couldn't go, because not only were the Christian trade unions and the Socialist trade unions going, but the Communist trade unions were going to be represented as well, and of course in those pure days we had no meetings or intercourse. This didn't inhibit Frank, of course, who went off and gave us a fine report of the meeting, but it just struck me as one recollection.

And then I can think of another -- about eight or nine years ago in a labor education meeting in New York -- whatever the subject was, Frank seemed so tiresome to me that day because he kept rising to introduce resolutions which somehow related to an immediate halt and
to getting out of a war called the Viet Nam War. As usual, he was, of course, premature in his bitter hostility and criticism of the war we have practically all learned to regret even more deeply than he did.

But in any event, I think he would have been interested in the subject I'm going to talk to you tonight. Thinking about it, after reviewing what's been happening in European trade unionism, I was struck by the fact that I don't know why it is so many observers keep burying the trade union movement everywhere. As I was preparing this material I was struck by how alive, how interesting (whether you like what unions are doing or not) how relevant and how consequential they are. I mean I still expect to read any day another article in the *New York Times* Magazine section or in *Commentary* magazine about how the American labor movement is deteriorating, decaying, and dying. Professor Galbraith, no doubt will add a new chapter to one of his books that trade unions are irrelevant, unimportant.

It would be pretty hard to write such book. or article these days, given the prominence of the American labor movement, typified particularly in the actions of George Meany in kid against the President's economic policies. I might tell you since I'm talking about foreign labor that this business, of burying labor movement periodically, I must say, is primarily an Anglo-Saxon trait or habit. You read about this in British journals & magazines, of how the TUC is reactionary and is obsolescent, It ought to be buried because
its unimportant. discovered from a little bit of work recently that you read the same sort of articles on Australian trade unionism. I even found one on New Zealand trade unionism and another on Canadian trade unionism. So I say the tendency to down grade or bury the labor movement seems to be something built into the Anglo-Saxon world.

I think it probably has something to do with the fact that the Anglo-Saxon trade union movement had no particular ideology, at least not a very formal ideology and perhaps writers and intellectuals are always dissatisfied with organizations which do not have a very formal doctrinal based kind of ideology and perhaps that's why they're periodically burying unions in America and in Great Britain. Somehow these unions won't stay dead, but that's another story. We don't find the same thing true on the continent of Europe. Writers take unions more seriously. Perhaps they are more established. Most of them are ideological. Perhaps that helps them gain acceptance as well.

But in any event let me turn now to the main body of my subject: new directions in European unionism. Keeping in mind I think that much of what's going on may have relevance for American labor, some of it is quite parallel, some of it is ahead of American unionism. It is my impression, quite frankly, superficially, that whereas American unions ten or twenty years ago were clearly the most innovative in the world in terms of changes in collective bargaining, new programs, as I review the situation I think the Europeans in many ways have caught and in some areas passed American unions. And I think that the shoe
is sort of on the other foot now. There are some things that American trade unions could be learning in terms of industrial relations programs and activities.

Let me first, though, go to the factors underlies the new directions or new trends in European trade unionism. You'll see that they're not so different from what goes on in the United States.

First and foremost, or if not foremost certainly among the most important underlying changes in the European scene is that there is a kind of a new working class. Just as, if you think about it, there is a new industrial working class in the United States, wage and salary working class as well, the same is true in Europe. How do I mean new? Well first and foremost is that we now have a force of workers, with exceptions, but by and large who have no serious experience of a great depression. You can't really emphasize that too much if you're taking any sort of historical perspective and want to understand how workers feel and how unions are behaving and even more how they're likely to behave in the future. If you compare the present situation, the ordinary worker -- what is he; 35-40 years old he has almost no memory of the great depression. Certainly he did not have any work experience from the great depression. And I think this has a very profound effect upon the worker's attitudes.

I know when I talk to young workers, when Bob is kind enough to let me teach the school for workers during the summer I find very greatest contrasts between the younger workers and the older workers.

The older workers just can't understand the flippant attitude of
younger workers. They're just not afraid. Maybe they ought to be afraid. If we get enough recessions, such as the current one, maybe they'll learn to be afraid again. But they just don't have the same fear of losing their job, and they just don't have the attitude toward management and discipline that the older generation had, and this reflects itself in what they do and are willing to do on the job. I think it underlies some of the new demands, some of the new strikes we see in Europe, and I think it's likely to be an even greater and greater factor in the future. That old fear of losing the job, which haunted and hung over practically all the industrial work force right on up to 1940 and those who worked after 1940 and still had a vivid memory of the depression, has no parallel in most of today's work force. And in ten to twenty years from now, hopefully, if we do not again go into deep depression, we will have nobody with that kind of experience, except perhaps some labor leaders who may still date back from the 1930's.

Secondly, the new work force is better educated than was the work force of a previous era. If you look at figures on educational trends, the most striking figures you find (I know them best for the United States) are that it is above all in the manual work class that the number of years of education of the typical industrial worker is so much higher today than it was ten or twenty years ago. In the United States over a period of about eighteen or twenty years we have added an average of about two years to the amount of education that the typical or average industrial worker has. In other words, the typical industrial worker twenty years ago had nine or ten years of
education. Now he has about twelve years of education with many having more, of course. That's just the average. But you have not only a young work force without a depression psychosis, but one which is much more educated.

Now if you look further, if you look into the unionized force who's organized, who belongs to unions -- of course this varies a great deal from country to country, but keep in mind that in Western Europe the percentage of union organization is generally much higher than it is in the United States. If about one third of the wage and salary force in the United States is organized, typically in Europe it might be forty-three or forty-four percent. In Great Britain its fifty to sixty percent; in the Netherlands sixty to seventy percent; in Belgium seventy percent; in Austria eighty percent, something like that in Sweden, etc. So the degree of organization is much higher, giving labor numerical power in the society.

Again -- change here, too, though. Increasingly white collar people are unionized, so this, too, changes the nature of trade unionism to some degree. Public employees are highly unionized, as well. Now, these are some of the foundation changes which are going on among the unionized work force, which it seems to me will have and are already having considerable changes in the demands, the needs, the desires of union members. And we're really only at the beginning of this process in terms of what it's likely to do to collective bargaining and union programing in the years to come.

Let me mention, too, that it is only in the past war period that trade unionism has gathered and built very deep institutional strength
in most of the European countries. If you go back to the pre World War II period, unionism was struggling, always sort of hanging in a somewhat difficult position, perhaps better established in most European countries than in the United States, although I'm not sure about that, but certainly today its position is firmly institutionalized in the society. This is reflected in any number of ways. The political parties with and through whom the trade unions work in most European countries, usually the Socialist party or the Labor party, have been in government, out of government, in government constantly throughout the post World War II period. There is no country in Europe that I can think of, Western Europe, off-hand, which has not had a Socialist government or Socialists participating in almost every government or every other government. And this, too, has immeasurably strengthened the position of trade unionism in the society, ensured its successes, enhanced its general social and political power in the society in which it has been living.

Along with this kind of institutionalization there have grown up a series of commissions, councils, all sorts of bodies in which trade unions have come to participate in the post World War II period that have further extended their power and standing in society. There are things called Economic and Social Councils, for example, in the Netherlands and in France in which unions are partners along with management and public members. These are permanent bodies to which are submitted all kinds of social and economic legislation or decrees on which they
are allowed to pass and vote. Their power varies from country to country. There is a similar body in Austria. Here they participate directly. They have a share in the economic and social decision making in these countries, a kind of power which we are slowly coming to here in the United States, as witness the present participation of the American trade union movement in the Wage Board. My own feelings is that these kinds of controls go on indefinitely. Not only will Labor participate on the Wage Board, sooner or later they'll want to participate on the Price Board and other vehicles through which economic policy will be exercised.

Don't misunderstand me. In participating in these Economic and Social Councils in the Netherlands and France and Austria (and they have their counterpart in a country like Sweden and elsewhere in Scandinavia) trade unions have not played a very great role as yet. It varies a little bit from country to country. I think they've been more significant in the Netherlands and in Sweden and in Austria than they have in some of the other countries, but this is just the beginning. These are relatively new institutions. It has become clear that a modern modified market society, such as typifies western Europe and is coming more and more to typify the United States, needs these large aggregate bodies, labor, management, to help in the decision making. Consensus has built up among these groups and I can only see a larger and larger role for trade unions because you've got to find some vehicle
or device whereby workers are consulted, represented, participate, have some role in these major decisions which are at least modifying if not replacing the old market which we customarily identify capitalist societies as centering around. They're no longer centering around the market so exclusively. These kinds of control institutions are playing a larger and larger role. Unions are very important in them.

If you look at countries like Italy and France, which are always to some extent the the exception, there you find a different phenomenon. In Italy, and that's the most dynamic and volatile labor case in Europe at the present time, the unions have become so powerful in the last couple of years that government now deals more with unions than they do with subordinate political parties in the making of important social policy. The Italian labor movement split into three different union groups, one Socialist, one sort of Christian by tradition, another Communist, acting in more unified fashion. This labor movement has been dealing directly with government on such matters as housing reform, social security reform. The political process has proven inflexible, unable to respond to the demand for change in Italian society, and the union has become almost a substitute force for the parliament in a way. The government deals with them.

It seems significant to me that during the period of De Gaulle, and even in the government that succeeded De Gaulle, De Gaulle chose to ignore rival political parties in the making of economic and social
policy in France. He did not ignore the trade unions, continual consultation with the trade unions. Now the French unions are weak and they're rather divided and yet De Gaulle was very respectful and very careful to consult them in some of the economic and social changes which he sought to make in France during his regime and administration.

Finally, I might just mention one or two other cases. I just read a new national agreement of the Belgian trade unions. There are two large Belgian trade union federations, one Christian, one Socialist, and they just signed a new agreement with employers. In a way it staggers me -- I expect it and I'm half used to it -- the comprehensiveness and the sweep of this kind of an agreement! In the agreement are written modifications of the social security laws of the country. In other words, they make an agreement with management contingent on both of them persuading the government which means they 'll be successful in changing the pension the law of the country, in changing the sickness insurance law of the country. If they are not successful then the collective bargaining agreement is to be opened.

Included in the same agreement are provisions negotiated at the national level whereby management agrees to release periodically trade unionists for several weeks of training at management expense, training in safety committees or training in grievance committees, etc., a kind of transcending national agreement. It's called an inter-occupational agreement. It reaches into the legislative field; it reaches into the
training field, etc. And here it is negotiated by the labor federations and the employer federations.

The Belgian unions already enjoy a cooperative relationship with industry on large industry councils in which they have a right to question and pass upon new investment programs. We think of these kinds of things only in Germany, but here at an industrial level, not a corporate level, an industrial level, they engage with management in a good deal of economic planning, passing on whether new steel facilities should be built, etc. And yet, they have not used these powers fully and effectively. These are new institutions. They have to learn, but I see no reason to think that they will not learn. So, as I say, a great deal is going on at the national level.

And in a level which is of interest to us, too, unions in Denmark, in Austria, and in some other countries are also caught up in a kind of wage policy with which we are now getting experience participating with government, with management in trying to set new wage and price policies. And as a consequence I find this activity, trying to reconcile full employment and some form of stability, this activity is not only leading them into collective bargaining negotiations with management at the national level and with government, but it's no longer confined just to collective bargaining. The deals, the bargains that have to be made take in taxes. In Denmark they call this a block agreement.
wage prices, management agrees to try to stabilize prices. At the same time they insist that government be party to this deal. Government moves in because it wants to be party to the deal. They also try to settle tax policy at the same time because the trade unions say, "Look we don't want to negotiate a wage policy and then have taxes change in the course of the coming year, which will reduce our real wages.

Well, it sounds very strange and exotic, but it's almost what happened in the United States beginning on August 15 when President Nixon proclaimed his new wage and price freeze and then eventually developed his new policy. He had to combine it with tax policy. I don't say that he consulted the trade unions very deeply about the tax policy. I suspect in the future when this kind of economic policy making goes on, however, there will be a tendency for the president, if he's smart about it, to consult all groups in the population if he hopes to get this legislation enacted. This kind of block agreement, this devise or this necessity which seems to take hold as you try to make national economic policy, as you try to affect industrial relations, at least the economic side on the national level, expands union power. Inevitably to bring it into the taxing field, social security Legislation and a whole series of related activities. This is going on in Europe. I have a feeling we shall see more of it in the United States. I think are many more difficulties which make the path of such a development in the United States face more obstacles.
But it seems to me in one form or another we shall be doing more of this in the United States.

All of this, I should say, only adds to the health, if you will, of the labor movement -- health in the sense of membership. Groups will find increasingly when Labor has such an important role, as it will I think, more and more in Western society, probably including the United States, though it is a little less clear as yet, that union membership tends to rise under these circumstances. Groups find they can't participate, either in wage making or wage setting for themselves very effectively. They certainly can't participate in social and economic policy making unless they are organized, and usually unless they are organized in some kind of a national level.

Just think, representing only thirty percent of the labor force, even less, who sits on the Wage Board making wage policy for the whole of the United States? George Meany, I.W. Abel, Smith of the Machinists, Leonard Woodcock of the Automobile Workers, and the president of the Teamsters. And where are all the other groups in the population? We're at the mercy, if you will, to some extent of these labor representatives. Well, the only way to beat them is to join them, and I suspect more and more groups will want to make their way inside of that power structure.

It may not be I.W. Abel or Leonard Woodcock. It may be the head of the National Education Association, but I suspect they won't let him get at that main table until he is somehow more legitimately ensconced in the trade union world.
I'm reminded of several years ago when the British Conservative government was experimenting or trying to put into practice a new system of economic planning, and they were setting up industrial committees for different sectors of the economy. And they had brought the Trade Union Congress, which is the British equivalent of the AFL-CIO, in to sit on one side of the table, management representatives on the other. They said to this Trade Union Congress, "You know there are some groups, like some of the teachers, who are outside of the Trade Union Congress. We feel that they ought to be on some of these committees as well, along with you trade union fellows."

The head of the Teamsters said, "It's perfectly all right. You bring them up to the table. It's just that we can't participate if they're sitting there as well." Well, the choice was presented. Who would you have? Would you have George Meany or the head of the American Nurses Association if you were trying to make wage policy in the United States? So I suspect this will have a certain effect all the time. The United States is not Great Britain, it's not Sweden. All of these groups won't be assimilated into the AFL-CIO but they will act, I think, increasingly like unions in order to represent their members in these kinds of processes. This assumes that these kinds of controls and institutions are likely to grow. I think they are like to grow in one form or another based at least on the European experience.

But it's not only in these National activities that there's a good deal of movement and change in European unionism. In their collective bargaining activities (by industry usually they do it, it, sometimes by
nation) all kinds of interesting new things are going on, and perhaps here even more directly are some things which can and should be of interest to American trade unionists and to labor educators for the same reasons. Take the wage structure. To me one of the most interesting things that's been going on—and it hasn't gotten a good deal of publicity. The Europeans sort of take it for granted. It had its main beginnings in France and is now spreading, especially in the chemical industry, has been the transformation which is going on in the shift from wage work to salary work. Another way of putting it is that there are now national agreements existing in France and then in the chemical industries, the whole chemical industry in Switzerland, in Germany, I think in Luxembourg, I'm not sure about Belgium, to convert industrial blue-collar workers to monthly salary workers.

It is no longer considered appropriate or sufficiently dignified or equal for a blue-collar industrial worker in France to have the Status of an hourly worker. Why should he be paid on an hourly basis? He is now under new collective agreements that have been negotiated in France, and are being implemented, converted to a monthly status. What does this mean? Well, if you remember in a country like the United States, in many large industrial establishments workers are still paid on the basis of units of ten minutes of work. In other words, you could be paid for ten minutes and then not paid for the next ten
minutes for one reason or another under some circumstances. Certainly you could be called in one day and then told to stay home the next day in a typical American establishment. There are exceptions if you're a blue collar industrial worker.

The conversion of status first and foremost will mean that the blue collar worker will be put on a monthly basis, pretty much on the same terms as a salary worker is in France. And the same is going on in Switzerland; it's going on in some of the other countries. I expect it will take over nearly everywhere within the space of a few short years. Not only does it mean he will be guaranteed his wage, his salary for the month, but other things go with that. He'll have the same sick leave privileges that the white collar worker now enjoys, something which has always been very inferior for the blue collar worker in the past. If he needs personal leave for a day he'll be able to take a day off and not lose his pay. His vacations are being equalized; his pensions are being equalized with white collar workers in other words there's an effort to equalize the status in industry of the blue collar worker and the white collar worker, not equalize their wages, they're doing different jobs, but equalize the surrounding working conditions. It strikes me as interesting thing that to an important extent most American unions have neglected this area of activity. And it seems to me it continues to exist as a rather glaring bit of inequality between the white collar worker and the blue collar worker. In steel, in auto, in rubber, where they have the guaranteed annual wage or something like it, they come close to this sort of
equalization of status, but even there it doesn't seem to me to be fairly equal with the white collar salary status.

Then hours are being transformed quite substantially. The Europeans are on the verge of getting down to a forty hour week. That doesn't seem like much to us; to them it represents a considerable decline in the regular work week, which used to be forty-eight hours, starting in the post World War II period. We were already at forty.

On top of that they enjoy in many instances four weeks of vacation for one year's work. Where they don't have four weeks, I can't think of any country that doesn't have three weeks of paid vacation for a worker with a year's seniority. And this they have accomplished also in recent years.

Another area where I think they have exceeded us or cut us some -- in a number of countries they are also providing extra vacation pay. Not only do you get the time off with your regular salary but you get extra vacation pay so you can make more truly a vacation out.

Most recently on the hours level, in Germany in a few places they have begun to experiment with more flexible hourly arrangements. In keeping with what appear to be the demands of a good part of their work force some establishments, and obviously you can't do it everywhere, but some establishments have begun to make the starting and closing hours flexible. Where the work can be arranged, no one has to report in at seven o'clock in the morning if the work is adaptable. And this,
Another proposal which is in the wind is to change the whole approach towards work life. The thought goes: Why must a who's now forty-five years of age, who did not have the chance to have as much school, let's say, as today's youngster, why is he shut off from additional schooling? Why can't we encourage him, for example, to take a year out, (given the rapid changes of technology, automation, what have you) why can't we encourage him to take a year out and reschool himself or &train himself? Why must he wait till he's sixty-five to draw out his pension rights, his social security rights? Why can't he draw a year out now and even take a reduced pension at sixty-five or perhaps work an extra year and enjoy a year mid-way. in his occupational life? This is difficult to work out and you can't find much evidence, but this is another idea which is under some serious discussion. I guess this is particularly true with Sweden where they've been thinking
about the nature of work life, and is it conceived of too rigidly.

In a way this is somewhat a twin of the proposal the steel workers made and successfully negotiated some years ago in their own industry of thirteen-week sabatical years. In other words, once every five years a steel worker is entitled to a thirteen week vacation under the steel agreement. Well, this would provide a man with a year's leave with full or nearly full or half pay, particularly if he would agree to take it in some useful training or some upgrading of himself.

The French have signed an even more far reaching agreement for upgrading training. Practically any French worker is now entitled to time off, perhaps somewhat longer if he can produce evidence that he wants to take it in some sort of an upgrading program, new skill program. When he's said off from work, the same program, he gets a year at practically full pay to train himself for some new job. Now what's interesting about this, it was not passed as a government program but again negotiated by the trade unions and management in a national vocational educational agreement in France. Other unions are moving to do some of the same kind of thing to increase the range of the industrial worker.

Another area which is worth a whole evenings is what Europeans call Worker's participation in the management of industry.
Most of you, I guess, are at least a little bit familiar with the Yugoslav Worker's management system whereby councils are set up under which workers choose representatives to manage their own factories. In Germany, of course, for many years they have had their system of co-determination. In the steel and coal industry, as you know, under co-determination union members made up half of the Board of Directors of the large steel and coal companies in Germany, half of the Board of Directors for the making of top policy. This idea has begun to spread and be practiced to some extent to Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark. Sometimes its not one-half of the Board of Directors, sometimes its one-third.

The results are unclear for this sort of experiment. The Germans seem satisfied with it. Many Americans are skeptical about how useful or successful it is. It has always seemed to me that, while it presents difficulties, its hard for me to believe that it would hurt the automobile workers if half of the representatives on the Board of Directors of General Motors were worker representatives. It would present some problems perhaps, but it does seem to me that while it is true a man who is a member of the Board of Directors has to act like a member of the Board of Directors and be concerned with the welfare of the company, perhaps foremost, on the other hand, as a labor member, he could question some of the decisions, for example, on plant location or plant shut down, see that in these kinds of decisions humane considerations for the work force receive greater
emphasis than they do under even good American collective bargaining arrangements. These are the kinds of things that the Europeans hope to achieve with what they call participation in Boards of management. For better or for worse nearly every European union has this now as part of its program -- some form of co-determination, equal representation, partial representation on the Boards of Directors.

But the movement for seeking to obtain a share of what they call industrial democracy goes beyond that. In some respects European unions are trying to establish at the job level what we would just call ordinary trade union rights, control over the machine, control over the assignment, etc. European unions have been weak in this respect, and sometimes when they talk about worker participation it's that kind of rights that they're talking about.

But even beyond that there's a third area which seems fascinating to me: experiments that are new beginning go on in Scandinavia. They tried in Norway, for example, what the Germans tried having union representatives, worker's representatives participate on the top Board of Directors of given corporation. They found no very spectacular results with that for a variety of reasons. They felt when a man got up there he had to act like a member of the Board of Directors or he'd be ineffective. You know, that's the function of a Board of Directors -- to direct the company. Sure, he might be a little more humane about it than, on ordinary Board of Directors, but no great change seemed
to result as far as the ordinary worker was concerned in his day to
day life.

So in Norway they began a series of experiments which it seems to me could have some far reaching significance. These have had some counterpart in the United States and in England. These are experiments in worker participation right at the job level, decision making right in a man's own department. In a half dozen Norwegian establishments they turned the management of departments, twelve, fifteen, twenty men in a department, let's say the paint shop in an automobile factory, right over to the workers in that department. The workers would set the norms, set the standards, lay out the work, set the pace, etc.

Part of what they have to do under these circumstances is agree and understand that they will train one another in all the jobs in that department in order to remove the boredom and the tedium of industrial work life. They are engaging in what we sociologists sometimes call job enrichment or job enlargement, so that if there are six or seven jobs in a department a man will learn and know all jobs and he'll rotate on those jobs. Within the framework of that department these workers have the responsibility for the work pace, the work operations.

They are usually paid on a bonus system, but no longer an individual incentive system which has been so characteristics of Europe. They've switched in these cases to group incentives. No foreman! The
job of foreman is abolished in these particular plants. Contact men
have to be set up between different departments and between engineers who have some of the coordinating functions.

Now it strikes me that this kind of worker participation could conceivably have much greater impact and much greater interest for workers than have some of the Yugoslavian experiments that have been carried out in the past and some of the German experiments with participation at the very highest levels. When a man sits up at that high level he may look like a manager to you even though he's got a union card, whereas if you have something to say about arranging, changing, pacing, setting your own work down at your own departmental level, it is hoped that there can be a greater enrichment of the human being, a greater sense of responsibility.

At the same time they're trying to encourage these workers to also extend their education so they can go on to better jobs in the establishment. This is another form of worker participation Europeans, especially the Norwegians and the Swedes, are experimenting with. I hope it works. The notion that you can do something about the misery of the blue collar industrial worker, relieve some of it, strikes me as kind of an exciting idea. I realize quite well that many blue collar workers who perform repetitive jobs, there are some workers who seem to prefer that. But the studies we've had on the automobile assembly lines, for example, in Detroit indicate that most find it deadly, dull, boring, repetitious and somewhat killing. And perhaps
if you can get changes to some degree in the nature of work this, too, can enrich the individuals work life. I think these kinds of experiments are important and deserve careful attention in years to come, even more than the experiments with representation on the top managerial level.

One does not, of course, preclude the other. Perhaps to achieve full industrial democracy you will want representation at both levels. I admit that this poses some problems in the very philosophy of labor relations. Workers who are setting their own goals, their own pace down below, and workers whose representatives are participating in the Board of Directors can hardly, I suppose, be as conflicted, as hostile and aggressive in their union conduct as they can, let's say, in a more purely American kind of situation where the function of management is clearly separated, entirely removed from the worker and worker's control.

Don't misunderstand me, I still think there's a significant function for unionism even in these cooperative situations. There still has to be a bargaining about the share of who gets what of the output of the firm. But obviously that kind of bargaining will be going forward in a far more cooperative atmosphere, and this could have some significant repercussions on labor relations in the future.

I do think, a final point on this, that it would be increasing the educational levels of the work force in the United States and in other
countries. It's going to, I hope, be necessary to find ways and means of enlisting greater worker interest in the firm and giving workers an outlet for wider participation in their jobs and in decision making. This is speculative. It's just an opinion of mine. I can't give you a great deal of evidence. Do you know that to the extent that there has been interest in these kinds of experiments in the past, it has usually been the white collar workers who are more interested in participation than are blue collar workers? I think this is in part because of their higher level of education. And as your blue collar work force gets better and better educated, then they may demand some greater share of responsibility. I'm not sure -- not all of them, but some of them.

But let me finally turn to just one final aspect of the European labor scene, another evidence of change. There is, clearly, in Europe and perhaps in the United States (you all can judge that better than I in the United States) a new restlessness among the working class that goes along with these other changes which I have mentioned to you. The causes I have outlined already -- the end of the kind of depression fears that haunted earlier work generations, more education. And this is reflecting itself in more strikes in a number of European countries, more strikes than were certainly evident ten years ago. There have been significant and severe strikes, for example, in Sweden where strikes had practically gotten to be unknown. Beginning in '69 they're
having strike difficulties, '70, and then a severe strike of professional and white collar employees early this year in Sweden. Big strike going on right now in Germany among the metal workers. There was a strike last year among the chemical workers. There were unofficial strikes two years ago among metal workers, even more unheard of in Germany than official strikes, but substantial strike activity in Germany. Belgium - tremendous strikes in 1970, unauthorized, really what we would call wild cat strikes, but the union quickly took hold so they really did not get so labeled. The union didn't want to be outflanked by its own members. Denmark - serious strikes. Then one cites the May Days in France, the days of May '68 when strikes reached such a peak that they almost took the form of a social-political revolt in France. Strikes going on in Italy the last couple of years on a very wide and substantial scale, in metals, chemicals, public employees, all bespeaking a kind of new restlessness on the part of workers.

As I look into the causes of these strikes I personally am impressed over and over again with their economic basis. Strikes in Belgium, strikes in Germany, strikes in Sweden, it seems to me were overwhelmingly economic in character. Sociologists are inclined to read wider social and deeper social and psychological meaning into them and they're probably right. I, myself, think that the economic and the individual nature of these strikes, rather than any profound ideological significance to them, stands out. Workers are restless. They are dissatisfied with
with their economic lot. I think they're somewhat dissatisfied with their relative position in society but on an individualistic basis, not on any basis of a social revolutionary character.

It would be more interesting if we could be sure that there was some deep ideological meaning to all these strikes, that the social order was in danger, but I really can't find it that way. I think part of what's happening is that the working class is better educated the distance between the working class and other sections of the population is reduced, and whereas a worker in the past rarely looked above him in terms of what his aspirations were, how he felt about his job, or what he wanted out of life, his standard of comparison has now changed, and he looks at the professional employee, the freedom he enjoys, and he looks at the white-collar employee and his sense of what one British sociologist called "relative deprivation" has grown considerably. His standard of comparison is no longer, "Well, I'm better than the garbage collector," or, "I'm better than the postman," or, "I'm almost as good as the truck driver." I think his standard of comparison now is with the social order above him, so to speak.

This is leading to a restlessness and a militance which I think is somewhat new. He doesn't know his "place" anymore in the society. You know, he doesn't know that the thing you do in a good capitalist society is get up every morning, come in and punch in and work those eight hours with your nose to the grindstone. He has an increasing sense of freedom and he's exercising it and I think we can look for more of this in the years to come.
I was struck by the statement of a UAW organizer in California who participated in the UCLA conference a little over a year ago and the generation gap in labor relations. Maybe some of you saw this latest publication. He told of the attitudes he found among workers. He went in and he tried to talk to a group of workers about sickness insurance. He said, "Not only that, you women here, for example, do you know that we have full maternity insurance?". This has always been one of the ploys of the UAW, its great sickness program." We have full maternity insurance if you're ill. You get all the obstetrician's pay, hospital." And he said a couple of women put their hands up, "How about in the case of unwed mothers? Have you got that protection, as well?" These are the kinds of new demands he found they are making, and then he said its just a new attitude and I'm going to read the last paragraph of his remarks. He said:

I had lunch with a manager of an industrial plant up in Ventura about a week ago. This is a new plant built about two years ago and he told me in order to build up a work force of about 1,500 people he had to hire close to 6,000. The turnover was about 4 to 1. It happened to be a bright sunny day, and he said, "Today at lunch hour we'll have people go out. They'll walk around the parking lot; they'll see its sun shiny out there, they'll get into their cars; they'll drive away and we'll never see them again.

And quite honestly he was very frustrated and I didn't have any answers to help him. I think in a certain way this is a sort of commentary on something wonderful that's emerging. People do not feel as oppressed and threatened by the whole industrial system. And
I hope that we can go on with this expansion of a sense of freedom. I don't mean that everybody can go out on a sunny day and just lay down his tools, any more than I, as a teacher, can just walk out of any class. But it seems to me we are in a great era of change. Hopefully it's going to be a much better era for workers.

It certainly is going to be a very important era for the unions. There are going to be new demands, new pressures, and the very institutions and institutional structure of society will mean that trade unions are going to be called on to play, contrary to what pessimists had to say a few years ago, a greater, I think a more difficult role. One of the things they're going to have to do is be more flexible in their structure and their response, because leaders tend always to be older than members and it's pretty difficult for people, even of my generation, to emphasize fully and to understand this new generation of workers that's now beginning to man the plants of Europe and the United States.