

UAW WASHINGTON OFFICE
1126 SIXTEENTH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON 6, D. C.
EXECUTIVE 3-7761

TO: Mr. Walter Reuther

FROM: Mr. Al Hamilton



For your information

For your action

Per your request

Note and return to me

For Comment

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Interview of UAW President Walter P. Reuther

by Bob Considine

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Q.--Mr. Reuther, where does labor (generally the Automobile Workers) stand on the question of automation in industry?

A.--Well, Bob Considine, we've made our position on this important matter extremely clear. We favor automation. We want the best tools that science and technology can give us, and then we want to work out a way by which all of the people can share in the greater abundance that our developing technology makes possible.

We believe that, basically, this is our problem: not do we welcome the tools of automation and the new technology, but how do we (labor and management) try to work out sensible and constructive means by which all of the people share in this abundance so that we can all make progress together.

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Q.--Has industry met its responsibilities in facing up to the problems of automation?

A.--Well, we do not think that industry has fully met its responsibility. Industry tends to do a lot of wishful thinking about the problems, that industry will find solutions without practical and specific action.

We believe that the recession of 1958 is an indication that industry has not met its basic responsibility. We had 5½ million people unemployed at one time in 1958.

We had millions more who worked short workweeks, two and three days a week.

What we need to understand is that within the next 10 years the technological progress in America will be accelerating; we will make more progress the next 10 years than we made in the last 50 years. And, what we need to do is to try to find a way to relate this technical progress to human progress, to find a practical way to translate material wealth into human values. American industry has a tremendous responsibility, with American labor, to find answers to these basic problems. And, as yet, we have not found satisfactory answers.

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Q.--Now what's to be done to prepare for the eventual coming of automated industries? What are some of the steps, in other words, that should be taken?

A.--Well, there are no simple answers, Bob. There are many things that we need to do. Our union has proposed specifically that there ought to be created a technological clearing house in which labor, management, and government and the universities join in trying to bring together, in one place, the total information that we have with respect to what is happening to the American technology--where are we going, how fast and the nature of the problem?

Now, today, no one has a look at the total problem. We're really, in a sense, flying blind because no one really knows. What happens in the steel industry bears upon the auto industry; what happens in auto bears upon chemical; what happens in chemical bears upon electronics. All of these factors are inseparably tied together in a total pattern and we lack information about the total problem.

Only if we have this information can both the private economic decisions and the government decisions--in terms of policy--be worked out in the framework of the realities.

We obviously need provisions for retraining and relocating workers when they are dislocated and displaced. I believe that, morally, we need to make up our minds as free people that we have to devote greater effort and greater resources to education, to wiping out slums, to developing our resources, to providing better medical care. The problems of America can't be solved by making more gadgets.

What I think is needed is a list of national priorities in which we put first things first. We must recognize that bigger schools are much more important to the future of America than bigger fins on our cars. This set of values must be worked out and then we must commit our economy and our resources and our technology to the fulfillment of these priorities.

And then, of course, down the road there's a shorter workweek. We can all achieve not only higher living standards but more human leisure that's meaningful, that will give the inner man a chance to find outer expression.

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Q.--Well, now, assuming that an orderly transition is made which would result in more leisure time for the working man, will he know how to utilize it?

A.--Well, I think that this is perhaps the most challenging problem that our free society faces. There is no question that we'll continually make improvements in the art of manufacturing material things and automation is going to make that possible. Down the road the peaceful harnessing of the atom will add to our productive ability and capacity. But the big question is what can we do, as a free people, to prepare ourselves both in terms of facilities and attitudes of the individual for this greater leisure?

Now, no one wants more time off just to sit around and vegetate. What we must do is give greater attention to the depth of this problem. I think it requires the cooperation of labor and management, of people in the field of education, in the field of religion and government. All groups. We must look ahead and we must say to ourselves that we must start early in our schools and begin to create new interests,

new appetites, so that when people do have more leisure they will be able to use that leisure creatively and constructively.

And, I think that fundamentally this is the thing that will divide the free world from the communist world.

In our society and in our system of values, economic effort is not an end unto itself; it's the means to an end and the end product is the enrichment of the human personality, making it possible for each person to satisfy his material needs and then permitting each person's inner self to grow intellectually and spiritually and culturally.

This is really what human civilization is about in terms of our system of free values. I believe we need to look ahead. The 14-hour day was replaced by the 12, and then the 10, and then the eight. We're going to have leisure. The question is, will we be prepared to use it creatively and constructively? This requires a lot of thinking and planning and a lot of work by all groups.

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Q.--Mr. Reuther, do you feel business and industry have too little control or too much control from the government?

A.--Well, Bob, I think that really this is a question that is not one on which you can have a fixed idea in terms of a fixed dogma. This is a pragmatic problem.

I happen to believe, and the American labor believes, that the free enterprise system is the best system. We've made great progress and we're committed to that system. But too often we find that enterprise is neither free nor enterprising, and what we think people should recognize (whether they're in labor, or whether they're in industry) they've got to recognize that in a free society the only substitute for government action, or government control, is the voluntary discharge of basic social and economic and moral responsibility.

I think that we're in trouble in America in this area. You take the pricing policies of some of these giant corporations. The drug industry! We've had this terrible scandal where they mark up the cost of drugs fantastically and scandalously high. In the automotive industry, we have this big argument: can the industry pay the higher wage without a higher price?

We don't want to try to make progress at the expense of the American consumers because we know that we can make progress only as all Americans progress. So we got this problem: how can free labor and free management, without government control, with^{out} government dictation, how can we sit down at the bargaining table voluntarily and work out our economic relationship so that the worker, the stockholder, and the consumer can share in the progress made possible by our developing technology?

So this question of government control is not a dogmatic or an ideological matter with us. We believe that when people discharge their responsibility voluntarily, then you minimize the need for government intervention. But when people fail to discharge their responsibility voluntarily, government, in order to protect the interest of the whole of our society, must move in and fill the vacuum created by the failure of people to act responsibly on a voluntary basis.

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Q.--Now, how do you feel at the present time about government control over the labor unions?

A.--Well, this bears upon this point that I just made. Neither labor nor management can, nor do they, have a moral right to escape government control if they fail to discharge their responsibility. Now, I happen to believe that free labor and free management must work together to carry out their responsibilities. Labor can't carry out its responsibilities in a vacuum and neither can management.

When I sit at the bargaining table, obviously I have a tremendous responsibility to the members whom I have the privilege and the responsibility of representing. Management has a comparable responsibility to the stockholders, to the people who've

invested their earnings in a corporation.

But, what we need to do is understand that together, free labor and free management, have a responsibility to the whole of our society which transcends in importance our separate responsibilities. Therefore, the matter of control depends on how effectively we--free labor and free management--cooperate in discharging voluntarily our joint responsibilities to the whole of our society. To the extent we do that well, to that extent we minimize the need for government intervention.

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Q.--Now, some say that labor union influence in politics is diminishing. Others contend that lobbying and other political pressures by unions are being increased to wheel too much of an influence on government. What do you think is an objective appraisal of this situation?

A.--Well, I think that the role of American labor in politics is very much misunderstood and, I think, misrepresented. The major effort of the American labor movement in the political field is to try to create a greater sense of citizenship responsibility.

What we've really been trying to do is to get each American to recognize that with every democratic right that he enjoys, there is a corresponding responsibility. We want people to register and we want people to vote. How they vote is a matter of their own conscience.

What we've been saying is that politics is the housekeeping job of democracy and we want everybody to help keep democracy's house by being an active citizen and carrying his citizenship responsibilities. Now, I think the test to whether what one is doing in politics is good or bad cannot be measured by the degree of participation. It ought to be measured by the basic motivations that lie behind that participation.

I think if you will take the legislative issues upon which the American labor movement is concentrating (and we say workers ought to elect people who support these kind of issues), it's by these issues our political activity should be judged, by which we should be measured.

Take the question of aid to education: the American labor movement has been in the forefront of this struggle. We believe that every child should have the kind of educational opportunity that will enable that child to develop to the maximum of his capabilities and that that right to grow to maximum stature should not be limited by an inadequate schoolhouse that is overcrowded with an underpaid school teacher.

And, we're in there fighting and yet we're opposed by the same people who many times oppose us at the bargaining table: the spokesmen of big business.

We want social security improvement. We want this for all the people in America. Right now we're trying to get medical care in the social security structure. We believe that the richest country in the world ought to be able to have a system whereby, when a man has made his contribution, carried his share of the world's work, he can live out his life with a measure of economic security and dignity. We know that the burden of medical care is too great for people to carry and we must find a sensible, sane way to provide for this need. Here again, we're opposed by the same people who oppose us on the social issues.

There's the question of civil rights. We're working actively on that. We believe that legislation must be enacted to guarantee every American--regardless of race, creed, or color--his right to live his life unhampered and unharrassed by prejudice and bigotry.

We're not acting as a narrow pressure group, trying to get political power or political patronage. We just want good government, government that is responsive and sympathetic to the needs of the people, all the people. Democracy will be judged by what we do in this area.

Q.--Now, Mr. Reuther, you've said that labor is going backward, that the labor movement itself is flabby. How do you account for this?

A.--Well, what I really said, Bob, was that I think the American labor movement suffers in some respects from a general ailment afflicting the whole of America. I really think that the whole of America is a bit flabby, spiritually and morally...in a sense that our values are confused. Just look at the situation in America: community after community with two issues on the ballot: 1.--they need new sewers and 2.--they need new schools. The new sewers will win out, 10 to one over/^{new}schools.

Why, this is obviously a basic problem of our values being somewhat out of focus and this rubs off on the American labor movement. We get involved in this same situation and I think this is the end product of a society which tends to over-emphasize material values and tends to make the acquisition of sheer wealth too much a measure of success.

I believe the TV scandals, the payolas, all these things are a reflection of this basic problem that America must recognize. And, what I think we need (we need this in the whole of America) we need a sense of rededication; we need to achieve a greater measure of what I would call spiritual toughness. Know what we really believe in, what we really are fighting for in the face of this challenge in the world.

We need a greater sense and a greater singleness of purpose in national unity. I say to myself: why is it America can get a total commitment in war when we're fighting because we share common fears and hatreds? And, I ask: why can't America get that same total commitment struggling for peace, struggling for the values that free men cherish because they share common hopes and a common faith and dream common dreams?

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Q.--How, we'd like you to look into the future a little bit. What differences will there be in the labor picture, say 10 or 20 years from now?

A.--Well, Bob, I don't have a crystal ball but it seems to me that the whole question of labor-management relations and the kind of problems that we will be wrestling with 10 or 20 years from now depends almost entirely on how the whole of our society tackles the basic problems that we are going to be confronted with and are confronted with today.

I mean, what are we going to do with this productive economy of ours? It's going to be racing forward at an accelerating pace. How are we going to find a way to meet the problems of automation? How are we going to find a way to give our children greater educational opportunities and our older people full security?

You know, I happen to think that the measure of greatness of a civilization is not its technology, not its material wealth (the Russians will have all of these things) the real measure of greatness of a civilization is the sense of social and moral responsibility that provides to your economic and material effort.

I think that the kind of problems we will face in the future will depend in large measure, by what we, as a free people--all of us--labor and management and educators and religious people, everyone working together, what we really do with America.

Now, we start out, of course, with all the advantages. We have the most productive economy. We have developed technology. We have skilled people. We have tremendous material resources. We have a rich democratic heritage and we have a society in which there are no dogmas in the way.

Really, what we need to do is to recognize that there are challenging problems ahead and equally great opportunities. We must develop the means of cooperation so we can realize those opportunities together and meet the problems together. I happen to believe we need to recognize that tomorrow's problems will require new concepts, new approaches. We will not solve tomorrow's problems with

yesterday's tools.

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Q.--Some people who seem to be sympathetic to the labor movement have begun to feel that labor has gone too far in its demands. How do you feel about that?

A.--Well, this again, you see, is a relative matter. I mean, I think that labor should only ask for its fair share of the fruits of technology. I say this because that's the only way the economy will work. When either labor or management get a disproportionately large share of the fruits of our joint effort, then we begin to feed into the economy the forces that make for imbalance and create problems.

What we have really tried to do is find a way to cooperate in creating maximum abundance by the utilization of our developing technology and then work out a sensible, sane, equitable, and socially and morally responsible basis for sharing this wealth so that we can create the dynamics of economic growth.

Now, in this framework, (if you look at the facts) you'll find that labor is not asking for too much. As a matter of fact, we got into trouble in 1958 because we had too little purchasing power. The only way that we can have an expanding, dynamic economy is by achieving a balanced economy. Now this is a dynamic balance between greater productive power, matched by greater purchasing power; increased productive power, matched again; each time achieving a dynamic balance on a higher economic plateau that represents progress for all of the American people.

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Q.--Mr. Reuther, what can be done to lower unemployment?

A.--Well, the only way to lower unemployment, of course, is to gear the American economy to satisfy the unfilled needs of the American people, in terms of their basic needs for housing, medical care, more schools, building the roads we need, and ultimately reducing the workweek so that we can all have more leisure that we can use to try to better ourselves as human beings.

Our problem, it seems to me, is we have no trouble finding full employment and full production in war. When we're making the weapons of war and destruction, we get into high gear and we have full employment; we even have over-employment because we get people out of retirement and we have too much overtime. We've got to make up our minds that there must be a way to have full employment and full production in peacetime, making the good things of life for people.

There's no unwritten law that says you can't do this. All we have to do is just to set our minds to it. The only way to do it is to learn to manage abundance. And the only way you can manage abundance is to learn to share it.

I've been saying the fundamental difference between what we're trying to do in America and what Marx proposed is that Marx wrote his whole concept of the class struggle around this historically antiquated concept that a free society was inescapably divided between conflicting and warring economic pressure groups which could not reconcile their differences and, therefore, had to wage a struggle--what he called the class struggle to the death.

Now, Marx wrote his theory in the 18th century. He didn't know anything about automation. He didn't know anything about the tools of economic abundance. Now, instead of struggling to divide up scarcity (which was the situation in the 18th century) we have the challenge--free labor and free management working together within the framework of a free economy and a free system of government--we have the challenge and the golden opportunity of working together creating and sharing abundance.

This is really the key to full employment: learning to create abundance by joint effort and learning to share that abundance so that everyone can make progress together.

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Q.--Mr. Reuther, will you give us some of your ideas on the color barrier problem in unions.

A.--Well, Bob, this is a matter that I feel very deeply about, not only in the terms of problems in unions, but in the problems in the whole of our society. We're all children of God and every human being has a right to live his life and develop without any discrimination.

When the AFL-CIO merged to form the united labor movement, we wrote into the Constitution of the merged labor movement a clause that committed us against discrimination in every free phase of American life and specifically inside of the trade union movement. In my own union--the UAW--from the very inception of our union we have not permitted discrimination. We have accepted workers as workers, and we believe that each of them has the same right and equal opportunity. And, we believe that this should be true in every aspect of American life.

We think that civil rights and the right of every human being to live his life unharrassed by bigotry and prejudice is one of the most important jobs we need to accomplish in America. We put this very high in our list of priorities. We think that we must if we're going to be the kind of moral symbol in the world in the struggle against communism; that America must do something quickly to eliminate the moral gap between American democracy's noble promises and its ugly practices in the field of human relations.

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Q.--Some people feel that the rising cost of labor is pricing the United States out of the foreign market. What's your opinion of this subject?

A.--I think that this is a problem that requires sensible and serious consideration but I think that the problem has been exaggerated for propaganda purposes by many management groups. When they go to the bargaining table, they begin to exaggerate a problem.

It is real and serious and one that we need to discuss intelligently and try to do something about.

The basic problem grows out of the fact that we have no strong free world alliance, in terms of economic cooperation. We've got to encourage the free trade and the flow of goods and commodities between the free nations of the world, otherwise we will fragmentize the free world and the communists will exploit that division. The question arises: how do we do this? How do we achieve maximum cooperation and economic unity among the nations of the free world alliance and not victimize workers in countries where they have higher living standards?

Now, when there is a natural economic advantage, it gives one country the economic ability to produce certain things easier and at a lower cost than another country. But, when a country attempts to gain an economic advantage out of unsolved economic factors--such as the exploitation of workers, denying them a living wage, or making them work under conditions that are inhuman--then obviously we have to do something about that or we start an economic rat race that will drag all of us down by dividing the free world.

The free labor movement is working internationally to achieve what we call International Fair Labor Standards. This would mean that where industries have the same technology, in other words, where workers use the same tools and one hour's labor^{is}/equally productive, that in that area there must be some approach to develop basic income minimums--not maximums but minimums--otherwise the free world is deluding itself. We can't live on pious slogans about free trade. We believe that free trade is essential to the economic unity of the free world.

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Q.--Mr. Reuther, you have mentioned 'morality' several times during the interview. Do you think the labor movement is suffering at all from declining morality?

A.--No, I don't think so. I think that every person in the labor movement who is dedicated to the goals and the objectives of the American labor movement was saddened--as were the American people--by the headlines about corruption on the part of certain few in the American labor movement.

I think that we need to keep this in its proper perspective. This, I think is a reflection (this corruption which I think is sad and tragic although it's only in a few places in comparison) a reflection of the over-all problem of morality in the whole of our society.

As I said earlier, you can't, you just can't keep in one corner the corrupting influence and immoral erosion that flows from a society in which the dollar sign is the golden calf. A society which places the emphasis of success on the acquisition of material wealth sees its basic moral values corrupted. This is what can happen in the labor movement also. Now the labor movement is dedicated to human service and when people in the position of leadership in the American labor movement begin to use the movement for personal gain, when they begin to embrace the ethics of the market place, they are corrupt.

This is where we get in trouble. I think it must be said in all good conscience that no group in America has taken the kind of effective, forthright steps to establish a set of moral standards, moral ethical codes as has the American labor movement. And no group has moved as aggressively against people in leadership who violated those codes.

I don't see the Bankers Association doing that although there are many more bankers who go wrong than there are labor leaders--and the statistics are there to be seen.

I have a little feeling that we should work as hard on the management side as we work on the labor side and where we find a crooked labor leader who's in collusion with a crooked employer, we ought to send both crooks to jail for 10 years. You'll see how quickly this collusion can be stamped out.

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Q.--Would you like to comment on the special problems of the older workers?

A.--Well, this of course, is a problem that needs a great deal of attention in America because the number of old people is increasing very fast. This problem is already serious and it will become increasingly serious.

I think that we've made considerable progress in trying to satisfy the economic needs of our senior citizens. We haven't made sufficient progress, but we've made some progress. We've got to do more. We believe that every worker ought to be able to live out his life after he retires with a measure of security and dignity.

The problem that we feel needs the most immediate attention is that of his medical care. When a worker gets old and his wife gets old, when his medical needs are the greatest, he is cut off from a medical group like Blue Cross in the factory and the result is that at the very time when his income has been reduced, his medical needs have increased and the economic cost is so great that this creates a very tragic situation and is creating a tragic situation in the lives of millions of Americans.

We are currently working, the American labor movement and other people, trying to get Congress to enact an amendment to the Social Security Act which would provide that when a person retires and when they're eligible for Social Security, that in the Social Security benefits would be hospital and medical care. This is embodied in what we call the Forand Bill, which is now before Congress.

Now another point we've got to recognize is there is often a basic emotional problem involved. A retired person must be made to feel he still has worth and value. He still is an important member of society. When he gets pushed aside, when he's isolated, he feels he's been rejected. This destroys the inner man even though the outer man is being well taken care of and this, I believe, is the area in which we've done too little.

We need greater and improved facilities in the communities and then we need a pre-retirement training program. We've been trying to get industry to join with us in working these out (we have not been successful) so that a few years before retirement, people can be helped to make the emotional adjustment for this new kind of life, so that they can look forward to retirement, notwith fear and uncertainty, but as the great reward for having carried their share of the world's work. They should be able to live out the autumn of their lives in security and dignity and really feel that in retirement they remain an important part of society.

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Q.--We're doing a program on the American character and another on American philosophy. What basic character and what basic philosophy of life does the labor movement in America represent?

A.--Well I think that the philosophy of the American labor movement is a product of the American scene. I think that we are of and by the American, of America. The American labor movement (unlike some labor movements in the world) did not develop a philosophy, a rigid doctrinaire approach to its program or its basic philosophy in life. I happen to think that what we believe in can be best described as a philosophy of pragmatic idealism.

We're motivated primarily by a set of human ideals: trying to help our fellow man, trying to solve basic problems, trying to solve the needs of the material man to take care of the spiritual man the better. Now this is our philosophy and I

think that, basically, that's the sort of philosophy that underlies what we would call the American dream.

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Q.--How why do you think that the American labor movement has developed so distinctively?

A.--Well I think it's because it came out of America. Many of the labor movements in the world were shaped by preconceived ideas, by dogmatic philosophies, by ideological concepts. The American labor movement really grew out of the soil of America. And I think that its uniqueness, its distinct American flavor reflects that fact.

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Q.--Now on another subject, do you think the newspapers in this country are living up to their responsibility?

A.--Well, I think America has some great newspapers but I think they are too few. I think that many of the newspapers of America have pushed aside their responsibilities as guardians, as essential medias of mass communication, in the search for circulation and in the search of profits. And I think that when they do things just to advance their purely commercial interest at the sacrifice of some of their basic responsibilities, I think that's very bad.

ⁱⁿ Take/the early days: we used to have more small papers and a greater sense of independence. That's getting to be less and less true of America.

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Q.--Do you think the continuing trend toward consolidation in the newspaper business is becoming more dangerous?

A.--I do. I think that the concentration of the newspaper industry in fewer and fewer hands is wiping out of the voice of the independent editor. I think this is a real threat in America because it bears upon the free market place of ideas.

We should never forget that America gets unity in diversity and the communists get unity by conformity. Therefore, the free market place of ideas--where we can exchange points of view, where we can maintain unity although we disagree with each other--is vital to democracy. But this free market place of ideas must be kept alive, must be kept vital. The contribution made by courageous editors and independent newspapers represented an important factor in keeping that free market place vital and alive.

I think it's a great and tragic fact that more and more we are getting boiler-plate editorials. I can show you clippings from 50 newspapers. Each carried an identical editorial. That editorial was written in a propoganda office and had nothing to do with expressing the idea of the editor. He received a boiler-plate editorial and he ran it just as though he wrote it himself.

And the people in his little town probably felt that he sat down with his pencil and produced that editorial.

It was prepared in a propoganda office somewhere and sent out. I can show you 50 or 60 of these that appeared within two weeks' time, identical editorials. This, I think, is bad for American democracy. It's bad for the free market place of ideas. And it will make us less equal to meeting the challenge of communism in the world.

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Q.--Now what about radio and television--forgetting about the quiz scandals for the moment which we've already touched upon. Are they failing to live up to their obligations?

A.--Well I think that radio and television and newspapers suffer from the same basic problem. I think there's a tendency to struggle to get higher ratings in terms of the commercial objective, and I think that in the process programming and the public interest get lost in the shuffle.

I just happen to believe that radio and TV can be tremendous factors in raising the level of understanding of the American people. It seems to me that the industry has a responsibility not only to entertain, not only to earn a return on its investment (it has a right to do that) but to use television and radio for educational purposes. Only as this is done can the American people come to understand the great issues in the world on which they must make decisions.

We must understand that only an enlightened people comprehending the full dimensions of the problems in the world and the dimensions of the challenge of communism can intelligently make decisions affecting our survival.

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Q.--Do you think the government should impose or increase controls on radio and TV?

A.--Well, I think the government must, of necessity, make some improvement in the machinery to regulate this industry. Not to control it but to regulate it. I think that the abuses that have been exposed recently indicate that the industry itself does not exercise enough self discipline in the absence of some governmental help. I would hope that the government would intervene only in the areas where government intervention is absolutely essential and then call upon the industry to try to meet as many of the problems as it can.

Take the question of educational programs. Most American network TV serves up absolute intellectual junk and movies made 20 years ago are dug up.

This is an instrument that ought to be used to elevate the level of understanding, to educate as well as entertain. I think the government can help the industry achieve these objectives.

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MIKE WALLACE INTERVIEW, OCTOBER 17 & 18, 1960

MR. WALLACE: This is Mike Wallace with another television portrait in our gallery of colorful people. A Detroit business man once called our guest the most dangerous man in Detroit because no one, he said, is more skillful in bringing about revolution, without seeming to disturb the existing forms of society. Our guest is Walter Reuther. As President of the United Auto Workers and second in command of the AFL-CIO, he is one of the most powerful men in America today. What are Walter Reuther's views on the future of America and the American working man? How much of a welfare state is Walter Reuther after? We'll get the answers to those questions in just one minute. Now to our story with Walter Reuther.

Walter, first of all, let me ask you this: You have been a kind of a prophet, because a good many of the things that you have stood for from the beginning of your career have seemed to come about in the United States: Social Security, pension plans, minimum wage, unemployment benefits, union power. So, as a prophet, I'd like for you to project for us now, the next ten years. What are your specific social goals for the next ten years?

MR. REUTHER: Well, to begin with, I think we've got to first raise the question of whether or not America is going to have the kind of affirmative leadership that we need in order to mobilize the great potential of the American economy. If we can achieve full employment and full production, and then gear the abundance of automation to the basic needs of the American people, then I believe the American economy is equal to meeting our needs at home, and also to meeting our responsibilities in the world. On the basis of our ability to achieve full employment and full production, I think we need to work out a list of national priorities in which we put first things first. I would put first on my list of goals the achievement of the best and most adequate educational systems, so that every American child can have the benefit of educational

opportunities that will enable him to grow to his maximum stature. Second, we've got a tremendous job to be done on the medical front, and certainly what we have been working for in the last session of congress, which Senator Kennedy sponsored, of building into our social security system medical and hospital care for our aged, is one of the top priority items, because millions of older American citizens cannot afford the prohibitive cost of medical care.

MR. WALLACE: Do you want me to interrupt you as you go?

MR. REUTHER: Any time at all.

MR. WALLACE: All right, as far as education is concerned, do you mean college education for every American?

MR. REUTHER: I think that every American should have the kind of education that will facilitate his maximum growth. If a child has the capability . . .

MR. WALLACE INTERRUPTS: Government supported?

MR. REUTHER: When necessary; I think that one of the things we need to do is to avoid the tragic waste of human potential, and, --

MR. WALLACE INTERRUPTS: And if necessary --

MR. REUTHER CONTINUES: Do you realize that more than 250,000 of the most capable high school students are washed out without any opportunity to go to college because of economic reasons? Now if we had the kind of federal scholarship program so that these students on a competitive academic basis could qualify for a scholarship, they would be given the opportunity of developing their capabilities so that they could be more useful citizens, and society would get the benefit of their greater contribution.

MR. WALLACE: Understood. Now as far as medical aid is concerned, are you keeping it at medical aid for the aged, or do you think that 10-15 years from now the issue might be medical care for everybody?

MR. REUTHER: Well I think that the immediate urgency is the question of providing medical care for our aged, because they have the most compelling need. Their economic resources obviously are limited and they can't afford to pay the cost of the medical bills. So that's the first step. I think that the whole medical care program in America will develop quite differently than in any other country, because we come out of a different background. I am for encouraging the development of non-governmental voluntary group medical approaches, but where there are areas that cannot be filled by the non-governmental approach, I am for the government filling those areas of the total problem.

MR. WALLACE: Socialized medicine only if private medicine fails?

MR. REUTHER: That's right. I only want the government to do what we are unable to do on a non-governmental basis, but I do not want the vacuum to continue just because we are waging ideological warfare.

MR. WALLACE: What about minimum wage?

MR. REUTHER: Well now, here's the problem: In the last session of congress Senator Kennedy again took the lead in trying to raise minimum wage from a dollar to a dollar twenty-five. In other words, to raise the income of millions of American families from \$40 a week to \$50; I don't know how you can raise a family even on \$50, yet Mr. Nixon and Mr. Eisenhower, the Republican administration, fought against that.

MR. WALLACE: Let's not be too political, let's just talk about what Walter Reuther wants.

MR. REUTHER: I'm merely stating what happened.

MR. WALLACE: Yes.

MR. REUTHER: Now I hope that stating the facts is not political; I hope that this is a matter of making the record straight. Now these people are opposed to the government helping the lowest income families.

MR. WALLACE: How high a minimum wage would you like to see in 1970?

MR. REUTHER: Now this depends upon the level of our technology. Obviously, our basic economic problem in America is not that we don't know how to make things; we know how to make things. We're making tremendous technological progress in automation and the new tools of science and technology. Our problem is to learn to manage abundance by learning to share it, and the only way that you can have full employment and full production in our kind of free economy is by the achievement of a dynamic expanding balance between greater productive power matched by greater purchasing power. When you give a low income family \$10 more a week to spend they don't put that in salt brine and keep it. That's high velocity purchasing power that gets into the stream of the economy. I say that if we have full employment and full production, we ought to be able to look forward to 1970 for a \$2 an hour minimum wage. In terms of the economic realities, this is more than a matter of economic justice to the wage earner. This is a matter of economic necessity, because unless you expand the purchasing power at the base of the economy by giving people who have the greatest needs the purchasing power to translate need into demand, the economy gets in trouble.

MR. WALLACE: A few years ago, Walter, you wanted a profit-sharing plan for your union, the automobile industry, and you were defeated on the issue. Are you going to go after profit-sharing again?

MR. REUTHER: Well, we have made no decision; we will have a conference in our union in the early part of 1961, where the rank and file members of our union will make that decision. But what I tried to point out in 1958 on profit-sharing was that we've got to find a more rational and a more intelligent way of sharing the fruits of our developing technology between workers and stockholders and consumers. I happen to believe that this is the crux of where we're going in terms of the future of the American

economy. I think that the basic problem is to find a way to work out the competing equities between the three groups: the worker, the stockholder, and the consumer, so that we share the abundance in a way that would create the dynamics of growth and expansion.

MR. WALLACE: But according to our system the creativeness, the thinking, and the risk that goes into capital--all of that--is rewarded by profits. The working man is not responsible for any of that creative thinking, or for the risk. You want them not to be involved in the creative thinking and the risk, but you want them to be involved in the profits.

MR. REUTHER: You'd have a hard time convincing an unemployed automobile worker or unemployed steel worker, that he doesn't take any risk; they throw him on the street when they don't need him--that's about as great a risk as you can take. The point is, that this transcends the question of equity, and we will not meet the problem of tomorrow by talking about yesterday's concepts. The problems of tomorrow require whole new concepts of how a free economy can work. As the tools of production become more productive, it means that we've got to find the markets by which people can absorb this greater productivity. Unless the fruits of technology are shared between workers and stockholders and consumers more equitably, the economy gets in trouble because you develop a lag between the ability to create wealth on the one hand, and the inability of people to consume the wealth that we know how to create.

MR. WALLACE: In a minute, Walter, I'd like you to answer this one. This summer, I traveled around the country for about six weeks after the conventions, and I went to the Chevrolet plant in Cleveland where I talked to one of your United Auto Workers there. I think he said that he was making \$115 a week and I asked him if he wanted more--he said yes. And I asked him, "Do you think that you deserve more for the work you do?"

And he said, "No, the job isn't worth more, but I'm an American, and I feel entitled to improvement in my wage." I want to know if you share his views, and we'll get Walter Reuther's answer in just one minute. Now back to our story with Walter Reuther. It's not necessary for me to repeat the premise, or is it?

MR. REUTHER: I'm with you.

MR. WALLACE: All right. Do you share his views?

MR. REUTHER: Well, obviously, I don't share his views--the question here again, you see, is how do you share abundance so that the economy of America can maintain the dynamic qualities of growth and expansion. This transcends the narrow concept of economic equity between worker and investor, and it's a question of how do you gear the abundance so that in creating abundance you can maintain the dynamics of growth. The real key, I think, Mike, is the question of what are we going to do with abundance. Now, after we've met our basic economic needs of housing and medical care and adequate clothing and education and so forth, we will soon get to that point in American history, because of the onrush of technological progress, when we've got to make a very basic decision: do we want more gadgets, or do we want more leisure? I think we need now to begin to prepare for a reduction in the work week, so that when we do get a shorter work week, because the tools of production are so productive we can create all the material wealth we need with fewer hours of work, we've got to be certain that when we get this increased measure of leisure we can use it constructively and creatively.

MR. WALLACE: Do you look forward to a 30 hour week?

MR. REUTHER: Oh, in time--there's no question about it, because . . .

MR. WALLACE: And what, a 48 week year?

MR. REUTHER: Well, this is a matter of how we decide to work out the distribution of our leisure. This is, I think, the great . . .

MR. WALLACE: But, is that sensible--48 weeks, instead, out of 52 and thirty hour work week minimum wage of \$2 an hour . . .

MR. REUTHER: Well, I think this will take many forms; I think that the real problem will be that to provide leisure in meaningful packages so that you can do something. The reason I personally have felt that going, say from a 40 hour week on an eight hour day basis to a seven hour a day, five days a week--I think that's meaningless. Give a fellow one hour more leisure a day; it's not in large enough package so that he can do something with it. I think that maybe we'll work out a kind of industrial sabbatical leave every once in a while, so a fellow can really go out. Maybe he wants to study music. . . maybe he wants to study literature, maybe he wants to try to paint.

MR. WALLACE: Take a year off.

MR. REUTHER: Take the whole year off. The point is that. . .

MR. WALLACE INTERRUPTS: At full pay.

MR. REUTHER: That's right. When we get to the place in the development of our society where the tools of abundance can take care of the material needs of the outer man with less and less human effort--the real emphasis then has to be shifted to enabling the inner man to grow. In other words, we've got to develop new appetites, new interest in the non-material things. And this really, I think, means the first opportunity for the great mass of human beings to participate in culture.

MR. WALLACE: Won't the state have to get more and more into it, though, to effect that kind of thing--the kind of life that you're talking about?

MR. REUTHER: I personally believe very much in trying to encourage voluntary groups to do as much as they can in these areas, and I am for the state only doing what people are unable to do in the absence of the government's action.

MR. WALLACE: And if the people are either unable or unwilling to do it, then. . .

MR. REUTHER: Well then you have the choice between the vacuum of nothing being done, or the state doing it.

MR. WALLACE: Nothing being done the way you want it done.

MR. REUTHER: Nothing being done to meet the basic problem.

MR. WALLACE: Will you state the problem?

MR. REUTHER: Well, the point is, that if we're going to have the choice between mass unemployment, or more creative leisure, then obviously, I am for more creative leisure, because there's nothing so tragic as for an able-bodied man or woman who is willing and able to work but who can't find a job; there is nothing more tragic than the waste of human. . .

MR. WALLACE: Agreed. These able-bodied men and women--do you think that they like--do they take pride in their work?

MR. REUTHER: There's no question about it. The average American wants a job where he can earn a livelihood for himself and those for whom he's responsible, and he would like a job that gives him a sense of achievement--the sense of participation. Now this becomes more difficult as automation takes over. Here's a fellow that may spend his whole life pressing buttons. Now that isn't very creative, and this is why in his leisure hours, we have got to satisfy his creative urge.

MR. WALLACE: Two years ago a full-page spread was given in your own union's newspaper, SOLIDARITY, it was back in January of 1958, to an article which said this, and I quote the article: "The factory worker's attitude toward his work is generally compounded of hatred, shame, and resignation. The plain truth is that factory work is degrading." Now how do you reconcile that with your talk about pride, and. . .

MR. REUTHER: Now I say that a worker would like a job where he earns a good living and a job that gives him a sense of participating--a sense of creation, but

this becomes more difficult all the time. If you were just tightening five nuts on a wheel, eight hours every day, five days every week, you would find that very degrading. I think any human being would--even though they paid you quite well for doing it. I think that in addition to earning your bread and butter, that, that work ought to give you a sense of participation in the creative process.

MR. WALLACE: Is it possible to do that, though, Walter?

MR. REUTHER: It gets more difficult and this is why we've got to satisfy this inner need in terms of our leisure time.

MR. WALLACE: . . .Outside of the job.

MR. REUTHER: That's right, and this is why we've got to plan because if we don't plan for the constructive and creative use of the growing measure of human leisure that we're going to have based upon our technological progress, we can wind up as a well-fed nation of morons.

MR. WALLACE: I want to thank you very much for this twenty minutes; I wonder if I could persuade you to sit around for another twenty and we can go into some more of this.

MR. REUTHER: I should be most happy to chat with you further.

MR. WALLACE: Very good.

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MR. WALLACE: Now to our story with Walter Reuther: Walter, Jack Kennedy, your candidate, has said this; he said that "The goals of the labor movement are the goals for all Americans, and their enemies are the enemies of progress." Now that sounds as though it might just as well have come out of the mouth of Walter Reuther. Who are the enemies of labor--is Richard Nixon an enemy of your group?

MR. REUTHER: Well, I think the important thing is not who are the enemies of labor, but who stand in opposition to the things that the labor movement is trying to get America to do--I mean who are the forces that are opposed to adequate aid to education, or who have opposed medical care for our retired workers, who have tried to block the kind of adequate housing programs essential to clearing out the slums and the social cesspools. . . ?

MR. WALLACE: Certainly Nixon cannot be indicted for any of these. . .

MR. REUTHER: Except that you can't separate Mr. Nixon from the Republican Party. Every time there has been a tie vote in the United States Senate since Richard Nixon has been serving as the vice president, he has cast his vote along the lines of the Republican Party and in harmony and agreement with Senator Barry Goldwater. You cannot deny the fact, that in this election the contest is not just between Jack Kennedy as a person, and Richard Nixon as a person, this is a contest between two basically different concepts of the role of government in a free society.

MR. WALLACE: You believe, then, that Nixon is an ally, a real political and intellectual ally of Barry Goldwater?

MR. REUTHER: I think that the Republican Party is more nearly in the image of Barry Goldwater and that Richard Nixon has, in his public life, cast deciding votes in harmony with that basic concept of the Republican Party.

MR. WALLACE: Well, how do you account for the moonlight meeting last summer then, between Nelson Rockefeller and Richard Nixon?

MR. REUTHER: Oh, that was just. . .

MR. WALLACE: And the move forward that the Republican platform took after that meeting?

MR. REUTHER: That was just a clever piece of, I think, political manipulation to

try to create a more liberal image so that the Republican candidate could run in the election in the framework of that more liberal image.

MR. WALLACE: Well, he's running on the platform. . .

MR. REUTHER: Sure, but he's. . .

MR. WALLACE: It wasn't manipulation--he did it out in front of everybody--told everybody about the meeting. . .

MR. REUTHER: But look, there were really no basic concessions made. On the question of economic growth where Rockefeller agrees with Kennedy, 5% is essential to full employment and full production. Nixon didn't yield on that. The platform didn't reflect that. It didn't reflect increased military expenditures, it didn't meet the needs on medical care. Rockefeller agrees with the social security approach on medical care. Nixon and the Republican Party are opposed to it. I think you've got to get it down to this: There are two basic concepts of the role of government. Franklin Roosevelt put it quite well in 1932; he said that you've got to judge the worth of the government not by what it does to help the few who have too much to get more, but what government does to help the many to get enough. Now this essentially is the difference between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. Philosophically, the Republican Party believes that if you help big business to earn higher profits they will then invest more money in plants. That will create more job opportunities. That will create full employment. They've got this trickled-down theory that if you can build prosperity from the top down. The Democrats basically believe that you've got to build prosperity from the bottom up by expanding purchasing power, by doing the things that will make it possible for all the American people to participate in prosperity.

MR. WALLACE: By confiscating property in the form of taxes, too.

MR. REUTHER: Well, call it what you will--the fact is that we can't get our kids in school because there are inadequate schools. We've got a brand-new school in Dearborn,

Michigan, a wonderful new school, and it's not open. It's standing idle right now, and children are going to school on double shifts in other schools because we can't get enough teachers. Now why can't we get enough teachers? Because we aren't willing to pay the kind of salaries to attract more young Americans into the teaching profession.

MR. WALLACE: Well, as Dick Nixon points out, now wait just a second. . .

MR. REUPHER: Mr. Nixon cast his vote on that very issue when the vote was 44 to 44 in the United States Senate last spring, Mr. Nixon cast the deciding vote against aid to teacher's salaries. Now he covers up his position by saying he's opposed this because of federal control. Nobody wants federal control of education, and nobody thinks that if the federal government helps to provide funds, as the bill that Mr. Nixon voted against proposed doing, that would mean federal control. Under that bill, a state would have been offered "X" dollars per student, and whether they use part of it to help pay teachers' salaries, or all of it to help build classrooms was a decision the state would make. There was no federal control, but Mr. Nixon voted with Senator Barry Goldwater against aid to education. That's why we're against Mr. Nixon, because he's against the things we think are good for America.

MR. WALLACE: Mr. Nixon, I believe--I believe, correct me if I'm wrong, has suggested that he feels that the federal government should give money for the construction of school buildings, thereby freeing money on the local level which would go into the building of schools in order to raise teachers' salaries, so it's--he wants the same thing--it's just a question of method--it's a question of method.

MR. REUPHER: The bill provided that the state would make that determination. In other words, if the state of New York said we'll spend all the federal grant for classrooms, that would be their decision--this would be a local state decision. Now if Mr. Nixon believes in all this local autonomy and local authority, and local

responsibility, why didn't he vote for the bill, so that each state could have made the decision itself on how it would allocate the expenditures of the funds?

Mr. Wallace: Doesn't it really come down to this in the argument between Kennedy and Nixon, the argument momentarily between Reuther and Wallace, although you can see that I'm just playing the role of devil's advocate here. Doesn't it come down to this, though, the Democrats want the government to get more and more into the fabric--more and more into our social fabric. You want government to have more and more to do with us as individual human beings, it's as simple as that.

Mr. Reuther: No, it is not.

Mr. Wallace: Fulton Lewis--Fulton Lewis, has written this, perhaps we should put it this way, and have you answer Mr. Lewis rather than Mr. Wallace. He has written that you are bent on winning control of the Democratic party, and then conceivably, control of the federal government. Lewis has this to say about Reuther: He says the government that you will produce would make the Nazi dictatorship of Adolph Hitler look namby-pamby. Now in just a minute, I'd like to come on back after a commercial, Walter, and have you answer Fulton Lewis, Jr., and we'll be back with Walter Reuther in just a minute. Now back to our story with Walter Reuther. Walter, you don't want me to repeat the Fulton Lewis, Jr. quote, do you?

Mr. Reuther: No, it sounds like some of the things that Barry Goldwater would be saying. The point is, that if America followed the political and economic philosophy of the ultra-right, the Fulton Lewises and the Barry Goldwaters, America would default in doing those things which essentially are the responsibilities of the whole community. Now I share the basic philosophy of Abraham Lincoln when he said that the purpose of government is to enable the people to do together through the instruments of government what they are unable to do without the aid of government.

Mr. Wallace: Dwight Eisenhower feels the same way.

Mr. Reuther: Yes, except that he hasn't been implementing that philosophy very effectively.

Mr. Wallace: Not the way you would implement that philosophy.

Mr. Reuther: Just take education. That's the test. Here we are, the richest country in the world, and yet, no one can deny the fact that millions of American children and American youth are being denied the kind of education that will facilitate their maximum growth. We want the government to do what must be done to fill the deficit on the educational front. We want the government to take affirmative action on the medical front so that our aged citizens will have medical care in the autumn of their lives. We want the federal government to do what it must do to help the local communities to wipe out our slums, because the tax structure of the local community is not adequate to take care of the decay in the cores of our big metropolitan cities; the federal government must help do this job. And doing these things is not a matter of extending the power of government as an arbitrary thing over the lives of people. Helping a child to get more adequate education, helping an old person to get adequate medical care, helping a family to escape the the...

Mr. Wallace: Everybody's for that, Walter, Everybody's for that, it's the means.

Mr. Reuther: The test is not whether you give lip service to it, but whether you're willing to agree to affirmative action to deal with the problem. Now you take the social security approach to medical care...

Mr. Wallace: Under those circumstances why bother with free private enterprise at all, why not simply socialize the government, and have a good government that will do all of these things and achieve these ends and forget about the whole thing.

Mr. Reuther: There are many, many, many things that free enterprise can do better than government.

Mr. Wallace: What? What?

Mr. Reuther: Well, I'm in favor of General Motors making automobiles. I'm opposed to government doing it, but I know that General Motors is not going to meet the medical needs of the old-timers.

Mr. Wallace: Why are you, why do you want General Motors rather than the federal government to make automobiles?

Walter Reuther: Well, because I only want the government to do the things that you can't do without the government, and General Motors seems to do quite well building automobiles.

Mr. Wallace: Well, you can give power to people--the government felt it was necessary to step in to give federal power--the federal government could do all kinds of things, probably do it just as well.

Walter Reuther: Well, I'm in favor of the government building a power dam--take the Tennessee Valley Authority--the private utility industry had a hundred years of opportunity, they could have gone down there, they could have invested the capital, but they opposed the development of the hydro-electric power potential of the Tennessee Valley Authority, why? Because they wanted to have a limited supply of power so that they could exact the highest possible price for the power that they were selling in a market where their supply was inadequate to meet the demand.

Mr. Wallace: But your opponents will tell you that you will destroy individual fiber, you will destroy individual initiative, you will destroy the very freedom on which this country was built if you continue to let the government infiltrate more and more and more as it has infiltrated in the quarter of a century in which you've been working.

Mr. Reuther: The question of the degree the government gets involved in the activities of a society is not an absolute thing, but a relative value. It depends upon the complexities of the problem that a society is dealing with. Obviously, government intervention into the lives of the people was less necessary in certain

economic areas in a very simple agrarian economy than it will be in the economy based upon automation and electronics. In other words, as the problems of society become more complex, then government is the only instrument that could help solve certain of the problems...now...

Mr. Wallace: Wait a minute, wait a minute, who opened up this country...

Mr. Reuther: Barry Goldwater is for abolishing social security, Barry Goldwater is for abolishing federal aid to education and all.

Mr. Wallace: Let's talk about Walter Reuther. Who opened up...

Mr. Reuther: Now that you're talking about Fulton Lewis, Jr., and he and Barry Goldwater are political bedfellows.

Mr. Wallace: Who opened up this country, industrially, the government or free private enterprise? Are you not grateful to the capitalists, the businessmen of the United States for anything, Walter?

Mr. Reuther: I'm grateful for the contribution they made, but even in the early days of capitalism the government helped a great deal: the railroads got tremendous land grants, the steamship companies got subsidies--they still get subsidies--the airlines got subsidies; none of these great industries developed without some assistance from the government. The whole question here, Mike, the whole question is not are you opposed, or are you in favor of government intervention into certain areas of our free society? The question is, whenever people are either unable or unwilling to do what must be done to maintain the health and advance the well-being of the whole of society, then government is the only instrument that the whole people have to look to do that job. Now, I'm for limiting that; I'm for encouraging voluntary non-governmental approaches. This is why I try to do everything I can at the collective bargaining table; this is why we fought on the social security front, on the pension front--but when you've got a problem like education or medical care for

the aged that you can't solve on a non-governmental basis, then the government must do the job.

Mr. Wallace: Perhaps I'd better get Barry Goldwater here instead of me to effect it.

Mr. Reuther: Well, it would be interesting.

Mr. Wallace: How do you get along with, ah, don't you talk at all, you two?

Mr. Reuther: Well, you see, I have nothing against Goldwater. I think he has the finest eighteenth century mind in the U. S. Senate.

Mr. Wallace: But you don't talk, either socially or professionally, do you?

Mr. Reuther: I have no basis for it. I mean that this is not a personal thing. I just think Barry Goldwater just doesn't understand the forces at work in the world. If you took his book, this little book that he's put out called THE CONSCIENCE OF A CONSERVATIVE, and translated that into governmental action, the Communists would take over the world in the next five years, because we would make the free world impotent to meet the basic economic and social forces that are changing the world in revolution.

Mr. Wallace: Walter, we have just about a minute left, and I want to put one question to you, maybe two. Is Jimmy Hoffa an enemy of labor?

Mr. Reuther: I think Jimmy Hoffa is bad for the American labor movement, because I believe that he is surrounded by forces who are interested in a fast buck, and I think that anybody in the leadership of the American labor movement has got to be dedicated to the advancement of the well-being of the rank and file and their families, and whenever they're interested in a fast buck, they ought to be on the other side of the table.

Mr. Wallace: Is Mike Quill an enemy of labor?

Mr. Reuther: No, I do not, I think that Mike Quill, while I may disagree with him on many things, I think that Mike Quill sincerely is committed to advancing the welfare of his membership.

Mr. Wallace: You thought that Pen...well now, wait, so is Jimmy Hoffa.

Mr. Reuther: Now I say that Jimmy Hoffa...

Mr. Wallace: Is Mike Quill any less interested in a fast buck than Jimmy Hoffa?

Mr. Reuther: Oh, I think there's a difference between night and day between Mike Quill and Jimmy Hoffa.

Mr. Wallace: You were in sympathy with the Pennsylvania Railroad Strike.

Mr. Reuther: I don't know the details of that strike, but I know this, that if the company would have been willing to make the offer in advance of the strike what they finally made as a basis for settling the strike, the strike would not have taken place. I don't know why they didn't do that; I don't know why management doesn't have that kind of common sense.

Mr. Wallace: Maybe we ought to do a third show. Thank you very much Walter Reuther, for spending this twenty minutes. Be back in a moment with a footnote to this interview.

Once a working man himself, Walter Reuther is now an executive, a union executive; he shares a good deal of the drive, the energy and the aggressiveness of the individual business man, although his goals are different from theirs. It may be that this conflict in goals is our most significant national issue, certainly the main issue in the campaign. We thank Walter Reuther for adding another portrait to our gallery, one of the people other people are interested in. Mike Wallace, that's it for now.