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to the editor

'Industrial democracy'—VI

I cannot understand why Tom Lash (SN: 8/19/72, p. 114) deplores the publication of the letter from Ralph Muncy in SCIENCE NEWS. Mr. Lash was not analytically scientific in his response. Mr. Muncy analyzed the situation of which Mr. Fierre complained and drew the scientific conclusions that Mr. Lash objects to as being political propaganda.

In our complex society, which is suffering from innumerable social diseases, it is time to recognize that social science is as much a subject of reporting by SCIENCE NEWS as are the physical and natural sciences. We should not be concerned whether Muncy's ideas are Karl Marx's or Harpo Marx's. The question is are they correct? Mr. Lash fails to combat them. . . .

Mr. Lawler (SN: 8/26/72, p. 130) is living in a dream world. What chance has the average worker got to become a capitalist? He says invest one's capital. What worker can accumulate enough money on his meager wages to start a capitalist enterprise? Can Mr. Lawler's workers "who work half heartedly, if at all" and who also absent themselves from their jobs as he claims ever accumulate enough from the wages he pays them to become capitalist? The American workers are not the miserable caricatures that Mr. Lawler describes. The industrial machines of America were built and are efficiently operated by the workers of blue and white collar and it is they who have made millionaires and billionaires of the capitalists and paupers of themselves. If our civilization is to be saved it is they who will do the saving.

Sam Brandon
Bronx, N.Y.

Several writers, fearful of industrial democracy, have labeled discussion of the subject "political propaganda" and, therefore, inappropriate for a scientific journal. In support of an existing industrial-political oligarchy, they have fallen back on the myth that massive unemployment and widespread poverty are the consequences of laziness. This, surely, is both a despicable libel and unscientific lack of consideration for the unemployed aerospace workers, assembly line workers, mechanics, machinists, teachers and others whose plight Mr. Fierre likened to "being tossed in the garbage can" (SN: 7/1/72, p. 4).

Surely, discussions of the causes and possible cure for poverty in the midst of plenty, for wars which people do not want and other social ills are appropriate subjects for a scientific journal. Surcease or escape from the demoralizing pressures of a profit-oriented society have been sought in alcohol, tobacco and drugs, the consequences of which have been dealt with extensively by scientific journals. The supporters of an industrial-political oligarchy, which has its roots in the profit system, should, therefore, oppose inclusion of articles which deal with alcoholism, the dangers of smoking and of the widespread

use of drugs, since such articles pose threats to large and profitable enterprises.

The science of society cannot be adequately expounded in a letter. The remedy an industrial democracy offers for the inequities that have deprived millions of willing workers of their livelihoods and of opportunities to enjoy, to the full, their shares of the wealth which their labors have helped to create should have provoked intelligent discussion rather than invective.

Ralph Muncy
Ann Arbor, Mich.

The letter of W. Young (SN: 9/16/72, p. 179), commenting on the letter of Ralph W. Muncy, illustrates the thinking of socialized confusion. He uses a hypothetical example of "Blivet Corp." using automatic machinery and asks—what is the responsibility of the company toward the 900 people displaced by automation?

The aim of the economic system is not to create work, nor is it designed for social reasons. It is organized to produce material things and to utilize full and logical application of technology (Mr. Young to the contrary). The advantage of the present system is the great volume of things for individual consumption, the products of private enterprise. . . .

Samuel D. Foster
Wayne, Pa.

Young's parable on lay-offs due to automation omitted its historical preface. Two years ago the Blivet Corp. had an annual profit of \$2 million, while each of its 1,000 employees earned \$6,000. Striking, the employees demanded a divvy of the profit and shotgunned a raise to \$7,000. Automating with a 90 percent lay-off, Blivet retained its profit margin and minimized the hazard of future coercive collective bargaining. The moral of the parable is that even if labor holds four aces at the bargaining table, management may hold a joker with its four deuces. Blivet's joker was automation. Young asked, "What is the answer?" Obviously wages must be geared to the relative capabilities of men and machines, and escalated only in proportion to productivity.

R. Robinson Rowe
Civil engineer
Naubinway, Mich.

(We've been intrigued by the series of letters on this subject that we've published in six different issues of SCIENCE NEWS over a three-month period. Regrettably, space is limited, and we will undoubtedly have to give preference in the future to letters on other subjects discussed in SCIENCE NEWS.—Ed.)

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