



Cultural Exchange As the Soviets Use It

GEORGE BAILEY

THE NEW Cultural Exchange Agreement with the Soviet Union was reached after only ten days of negotiation—in remarkable contrast to the forty-six days of desperately stubborn hassling that were required to conclude the one of 1964-1965. When that agreement expired on December 31 the Soviet government showed a distinct disinclination even to discuss a new one until the bombing of North Vietnam had ceased—if then. Before the expiration it had abruptly canceled the Russian engagement of *Hello, Dolly!* and followed up by refusing to accept six American writers and artists scheduled to go to the Soviet Union under the Exchange Program and by canceling the American tours of Soviet writers and artists.

When presented with the new agreement, the President, who had been understandably nettled by the capricious and oblique behavior of the Soviets, was at first unwilling to authorize its signature on the part of our government unless a clause could be inserted guaranteeing that each party could cancel the whole program upon unilateral violation of one of its features. He did not lack good reasons for this guarded attitude, but finally, reassured by the State Department lawyers that any binational deal of this kind can

be voided when there is an act of non-compliance on the other side, he decided two days later that there was no harm in giving the pact a trial and having it signed as it was.

Paying the Price

From the very beginning, the Exchange Program with the Soviet Union had proved to be at best a thorny by-product of coexistence that we were eager to accept. But the fact that the Americans were anxious to build a bridge between American and Soviet culture put the Soviet Union at an advantage. For their curiosity to know more about life in a totalitarian state, the Americans had to pay a price. The first Exchange Program, the so-called Lacy-Zarubin Agreement, was signed in January, 1958, after almost a year of intermittent negotiations. The delay was due mainly to the reluctance of the Russians to enter into a program at all. Molotov had rejected outright the idea of establishing United States reading rooms in the Soviet Union, calling them "spy centers." There was also apparently a genuine lack of interest: "Cultural exchange—bah!" said one Soviet official. "We send you our Jews and you send us yours!"

This was before Sol Hurok succeeded in persuading the Soviets

that substantial sums of hard currency could be earned by sending concert artists and groups on tour in the United States. Midway in the second Exchange Program (1960-1961) the Soviets had perceived the advantages of exchange and had defined their goals, namely: to gain as much scientific and technical knowledge as possible, to propagandize the American public and nongovernmental institutions, to increase trade and obtain credits, and, above all, to promulgate their own brand of peaceful coexistence as a basic tenet of international behavior.

For their part, Americans wanted to learn as much as possible about the Soviet Union in virtually all fields, to broaden contacts and thus "open up Soviet society." In order to co-ordinate and control the development of exchange, a Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff was set up in the Department of State. This staff advises and sometimes warns various private organizations dealing with the Soviet Union, particularly the three chief sponsoring and administrative organizations: the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the National Academy of Sciences. In August, 1961, the Soviet Union established its own bridge-

head by founding the Institute of Soviet-American Relations as a "nongovernmental organization." The State Department's exchanges staff refused to regard the institute as anything but a pure Soviet governmental organization and warned American scientific and cultural groups against dealing with it without the assistance and knowledge of their own government.

THE FIRST OBSTACLE encountered by American students and scholars traveling to the Soviet Union was the Russians' restriction limiting access to their archives to a minimum. To justify the restriction, the Soviet authorities plead basic differences in archival systems: in the Soviet Union archives are separate institutions not dependent on or subordinated to the institutions of higher learning they serve. Peculiar habits in the use of archives and in the approach to research in general were soon noted. In the Lenin Library in Moscow, for example, the library cards show the field of research of the cardholder, and librarians have been known to refuse to give access to materials which they themselves consider "irrelevant" to the applicant's field.

Generally, the traditional Soviet obsession with security has eliminated entire areas of research for foreign scholars or scientists and resulted in the wholesale rejection of American candidates interested in any aspect of advanced science or technology or of social problems relating to recent history or current events. Not one American economist has been accepted by the Soviets in the last four years. Only two were accepted in the first four years of the program. No American historian specializing in the Second World War and no political scientist interested in the Soviet government and party executive has ever been accepted.

To justify these wholesale rejections, the Soviets from the outset have adopted the ruse of nominating their own candidates to sensitive or security areas of study in the United States in the full knowledge that such nominations were bound to result in the denial of visas by the U.S. State Department. Having thus provoked a series of American

rejections, the Soviets proceeded to reject a corresponding number of American nominees, specifically all those whose projects touched or concerned areas of Soviet study nominally open but actually closed.

The most effective Soviet ruse is delay—particularly in correspondence. A report of the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants dated March 1, 1965, states that the Soviet authorities had "not yet informed the Committee of its ability to receive five of the thirteen American scholars nominated for research visits during 1964-1965. Their reply was due on June 15, 1964." This was a delay of nine months in excess of the three-month time limit fixed in the Exchange Agreement.

These delays are of little moment compared to the psychological influence achieved by the "routine intransigence of Soviet bureaucrats." As the writer of an intra-committee report put it recently: "We face continuously, in the selection process, the question of how to balance our own interest in expanding knowledge against Soviet sensitivities. The



appeal of many interesting and useful proposals is often offset by a feeling that the proposal will be unacceptable to the Russians and that the applicant may be unaware of Soviet sensitivities. Should the applicant be asked to alter his project? To what extent have applicants already chosen insignificant topics to avoid this difficulty?"

The pressures created by the Soviets in the deliberate maladministration of various sections of the Exchange Program have borne heavily on American academic administrators accustomed to a considerably different atmosphere. "When you come right down to it," one commented, "we are acting as Soviet agents in our own country because

we are, consciously or unconsciously, applying Soviet selection standards instead of our own to American applicants."

As They Wish

The Soviets have, of course, been even more effective in influencing and controlling the work of American participants in the Soviet Union. "In effect," said one of the American directors of the program last year, "we have surrendered the control and direction of American exchange students in the Soviet Union to the Soviets." The committee has long since recognized that the chief characteristic of the Soviets' administration of the program is the apparent desire to control both sides of the exchange. It is this same desire, manifested as "a basic disagreement on whether it is the sending or receiving country which should have the primary role in choosing which individuals go as participants," that has wrecked the researchers and lecturers section of the program.

The Soviets have managed to have it both ways. Ninety per cent of the Soviet participants coming to the United States have been in the fields of mathematics, science, and technology. Ninety per cent of the Americans going to the Soviet Union have been in history, linguistics, literature, or the social sciences. The ten per cent of Americans in the scientific exchanges are still less representative of success than the percentage would indicate: a committee report notes with gratification that a low-temperature physicist managed to achieve satisfactory access to research and laboratory facilities in 1964.

On the American side, the exchange has had its own special process of elimination. "Some of the applicants simply do not meet the general standards of quality." Many of those who do qualify on these grounds do not have adequate training and preparation for the research projects they designate. One of the most common problems, of course, is the lack of proficiency in the Russian language—"not only in speaking and understanding, but also in the applicants' ability to read and translate." More disturbing: "There is a feeling on the part of the selection committee that we are now

getting fewer really excellent applicants." This is particularly true of the scientists, who were never enthusiastic as a group about study in Russia. The number of applicants to the National Academy of Sciences for the exchange has been dwindling year by year.

The same seems to apply to specialists in Russian studies. A committee report of last year noted that "Very few Foreign Area Fellows, presumably the best young men and women of the Russian area, apply for the exchanges. No more than a fifth of the three hundred persons who received their Ph.D. degrees from American universities in some area of Russian studies since 1960 have applied to the committee." The committee wonders why this is and wonders whether the eighty per cent of the most qualified potential applicants have been "discouraged by the reports of previous participants."

They may well have been. The reports of previous participants seldom appear in the public domain: all, according to several previous participants recently interviewed, are "strongly admonished to write nothing for publication which might endanger the Exchange Program." Nevertheless, the hardships, indignities, and general frustration attendant upon living and working in the Soviet Union are notorious among all area specialists.

Definitions of Espionage

The particularly flagrant entrapment of Professor Frederick C. Barghoorn of Yale by Soviet security organs very nearly discredited the Exchange Program outright. Professor Barghoorn was not a participant in the exchange when he was arrested in Moscow in November, 1963, and held incommunicado on charges of espionage, but he was a member of the program's advisory board. Furthermore, his arrest took place on the eve of the scheduled negotiations for the period 1964-1965. The U.S. authorities, in the wave of public outrage that followed, canceled the negotiations. It was only after Barghoorn's release sixteen days later and after the Soviets had given assurances—not as such, to be sure, but in the form of deploring that "isolated instances should be allowed to influence the

context of relations between our two countries"—that negotiations were eventually resumed and the program continued.

Despite the "assurances," all of them oral, the committee feared that "Some American educators and researchers will now be hesitant to travel in the Soviet Union or will feel inhibited in their work if they go." (The only written assurance resulting from the Barghoorn case is in the form of a clause guaranteeing "immediate access" to prisoners in the consular convention negotiated and signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in June, 1964, but still not ratified by either the Senate or the Supreme Soviet.)

But the Barghoorn case was not the first instance of espionage charges by the Soviets in connection with the Exchange Program. In 1960, spy charges were leveled at a graduate-student participant but only after he had returned to the United States. Nor was it by any means the last. In the course of 1964, at least three exchange participants were held for varying periods by the Soviets on charges connected directly or indirectly with espionage. The first was the target of a recruitment attempt by the Commission for State Security (KGB). The American was approached for a clandestine purpose by a Soviet acquaintance who was working for the KGB. The approach was then used as leverage by the KGB in an attempt to recruit the participant. The second case involved an exchange participant who was jailed in Warsaw after being victimized by the KGB operating in Poland. The third, an American implicated in a homosexual episode staged by the KGB, was bound over and threatened with photographic evidence of an offense that carries an eight-year maximum penalty.

To date, no Soviet participant in the United States has been charged with espionage. As one State Department official put it, "Soviet participants are engaged in what the Soviets would call espionage but not in what *we* would call espionage." Not that the Soviets, in their enlargement of the term, have lost sight of the classical concept of espionage. One young Soviet economist participant in an exchange program with the Netherlands, Peter

Smirnov, was caught red-handed in an old-fashioned act of espionage, arrested, and charged accordingly in June, 1960, at The Hague. He was deported a few weeks later.

The Soviets were greatly embarrassed by the affair and took considerable pains to pass it off in their own and the satellite press as a provocation engineered by the Americans to distract attention from the U-2 incident. In the United States the Soviets restrict their participants to comparatively harmless intelligence-training assignments.

THE Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants is not able to compile reliable statistics of espionage cases involving participants in the Exchange Program. Participants who have been badgered into accepting intelligence assignments from the Soviets generally make a clean breast to the FBI once they have regained safe haven on home soil, but there is little likelihood that such episodes will be revealed to colleagues or superiors in the academic field, particularly if a sense of shame or lack of integrity is involved.

In early 1962, Natalie Bienstock, a naturalized American of Russian parentage, was recruited by the KGB while a tourist in Moscow. Since she was employed as an interpreter and road-company secretary by Hurrok Attractions, Inc., Miss Bienstock was given the assignment of reporting (in secret ink) to Soviet officials at the United Nations in New York on the conduct and activities of Russian stage performers touring the United States under the Cultural Exchange Program. Before she signed statements to the Justice Department more than a year and a half later, Miss Bienstock submitted seven secret reports to the KGB, including the name of a Russian ballerina whom she regarded as "a possibly disloyal citizen of the Soviet Union." In the agreement she signed with the KGB in Moscow, Miss Bienstock undertook to submit reports "concerning the activities of persons connected with the Soviet group in the United States on the Cultural Exchange Agreement, if the activities of such persons are detrimental to the Soviet Union and therefore to the Cultural Exchange."

Miss Bienstock indicated in an interview with the press that she had been recruited by coercion. She was credited by American authorities with having turned herself in voluntarily, even if at a regrettably late date.

The majority of Americans in every Exchange Program have been subjected to at least one recruitment attempt by the KGB. Sexual provocations are usually the first stage of such operations. This is the main reason why the Soviets have always balked at American insistence that wives accompany program participants to the Soviet Union (officially the Soviets plead inability to provide family quarters because of the very real housing shortage). For exactly the opposite reason, the Soviets refuse to allow wives to accompany Soviet program participants to the United States. The danger for the Soviets is the defection of the family unit, particularly if there are no children. Thus Soviet wives stay home as hostages.

However, the hostage system is no guarantee. Despite the presence of his wife in the Soviet Union, one young Soviet participant enrolled at Harvard tried to defect in 1963. He found himself confronted by both Soviet and American officials with the common interest of preventing his defection. The Americans were constrained to make a common cause with the Soviets because of their interest in the continuance of the Exchange Program: it is a foregone conclusion that one Soviet defector in the United States would spell the doom of the program. The man was soon transferred to a psychiatric ward. He was ultimately returned to the Soviet Union as a mental case (State Department officials explaining that he could not be cared for properly because there was no Russian-speaking American psychiatrist in the United States; there was and is).

THE Soviet authorities' standard method in dealing with foreign residents and tourists is administrative harassment. Participants in the Exchange Program are particularly exposed to this technique because of the very nature of the pursuit in which all are professionally engaged—free inquiry. In short, their reason

for being in the Soviet Union is the same reason the Soviet authorities do not want them there—and will not tolerate their presence unless they practice strict observance of terms imposed by the Soviets in direct contravention of the spirit and the letter of the Cultural Exchange Agreement.

A case in point is the experience of Professor Lewis S. Feuer, profes-



sor of philosophy at the University of California, who spent four and a half months in the Soviet Union as a lecturer in the Exchange Program in early 1963. An eminent sociologist, Professor Feuer was accorded the rare honor (although the honor is an agreed requirement of the Exchange Program) of admission to the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy of Scientists in Moscow. He was scheduled to give five lectures to the research workers of the Institute. However, the reception of his first four lectures (his subject was trends in philosophy in the Soviet Union and the United States) was such that he asked to be excused from his fifth, in which he had intended to sum up his findings on his travels in European Russia and the southern Soviet republics.

Persuaded to carry on by the Institute director, Professor Feuer contended that Soviet social science had failed to confront four important problems: the conflict of generations (which the Soviets deny exists), anti-Semitism (the existence of which the Soviets vehemently deny), the cult of personality (Stalinism), and Soviet mass culture. In treating the problem of anti-Semitism, thereby prompting a heated discussion which dominated the question period following the lecture, Professor Feuer produced and cited an article on anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union

written by Moshe Decter which had appeared in the magazine *Foreign Affairs*.

Shortly afterward, Professor Feuer was prevented from boarding his plane for Western Europe and subjected to four and a half hours of interrogation by KGB officials. He was informed that he might well have to face charges of dealing in anti-Soviet propaganda, specifically of smuggling an anti-Soviet tract into the Soviet Union. Professor Feuer pointed out that he had brought the Decter article into the Soviet Union as part of his source material for his lectures, and had indeed produced it and discussed it openly in them. ("The Soviet negotiators," runs the State Department's summary report, "rejected all efforts to widen or increase informational exchanges and, in particular, refused to consider the commercial sale of American books, journals and newspapers and, despite the section on radio and television exchanges, to give clear indication of any increase in this field. . . ." In practice the only American publication allowed in the Soviet Union is the official United States government magazine *Amerika*, which is published once a month and has a circulation of 62,000.)

The KGB officers made persistent attempts to extract incriminating statements from Professor Feuer about Soviet citizens he had met during his stay. When the futility of these attempts became evident, he was allowed to depart.

PROFESSOR FEUER'S treatment at the hands of his hosts is by no means the most arbitrary or the most unpleasant in the long list of unpublished harassments against American participants in the Exchange Program. These incidents have remained unpublished not only or even primarily because all participants are enjoined not to publish anything detrimental to the program. A more important factor is the desire of the participants to protect Soviet citizens whom they have met privately and by whom they have been befriended.

Another effective silencer is the fact that in the majority of cases the participant's profession is itself hostage to the Soviet Union. Most of the Exchange Program scholars

are specialists in Soviet-area studies. To a very large extent their careers are dependent on continued access to the Soviet Union and thus directly dependent on the good will of the Soviet authorities. Scholars and students who have suffered acute discomfort and distress at the hands of the Soviet authorities and have also been put on notice that they would never be allowed to return to the Soviet Union are apt to refuse to release their stories for publication for fear of prejudicing their chances of re-entry into the Soviet Union at some future date.

Unbalanced Reciprocity

But it is the field of U.S.-Soviet press relations that offers the most striking contradiction of the myth that reciprocity is the first principle of exchange. Theoretically, the U.S. press corps in Moscow and the Soviet press corps in Washington were established and are maintained on the basis of strict reciprocity, with twenty correspondents to each corps. In practice the status of the two corps has become wildly lopsided. Three American correspondents were expelled from the Soviet Union in the course of 1965 alone. One of them, Adam Clymer of the *Baltimore Sun*, was expelled on grounds of his own conduct (Clymer tried to make his way through a Moscow police cordon in an effort to reach safety in the American embassy when he came to after being knocked unconscious by Chinese student demonstrators). The others were avowedly treated as hostages by the Soviet government and made to answer for editorial decisions of their publications or networks. The most recent expellee, Stephen Rosenfeld of the *Washington Post*, was given seven days to leave after he was asked to have his newspaper halt publication of the last Penkovsky papers.

No Soviet correspondent has ever been expelled from the United States—this despite the fact that on the occasion of every expulsion of an American journalist from the Soviet Union, the State Department punctiliously asks the U.S. news organization affected whether it desires to invoke reciprocity of expulsion. No such desire has ever been expressed. The reason is that, in the field of

press relations, the Soviet Union long ago achieved its primary goal in any and all exchange programs with non-Communist countries: the equation of Soviet organizations (all of which are necessarily state owned and strictly controlled) with private foreign groups. It deals on a direct bilateral basis with individual U.S. news organizations. Each U.S. news organization believes that it has—and in fact, it does have—a special arrangement with the Soviet government. No editor-in-chief or publisher would dream of prejudicing the privileged position his organization enjoys as a result of this special relationship; regardless of the treatment received from the “senior partner” in the relationship. Managing editors and vice-presidents in charge of news will explain that Soviet officials have informed them “privately” of the impending resumption of their



Moscow bureau's accreditation or acceptance of their candidate to replace the hapless correspondent recently expelled for no fault of his own.

In its foreign press relations with capitalist countries, the Soviet Union has been able to secure maximum leverage from the mere fact of competition among independent private news media. The intrinsic news value of the Moscow dateline is comparatively small; its extrinsic

value is enormous. Because of this combination of circumstances, U.S. news organizations invariably reject the offer of intercession by their own government for the privilege of dealing with the Soviet government directly. They avoid the shackles of government interference at home in order to accept it unqualifiedly abroad. This arrangement worked so well for the Soviets that in 1961 they were able to lift the highly unpopular and embarrassing formal censorship of dispatches filed by foreign correspondents and replace it with the honor system of self-censorship. Since then the correspondent must be doubly careful to do nothing that might undermine his employer's special relationship with the Soviet government.

Thus as a group, the correspondents are the foreigners most exposed to Soviet administrative harassment. Largely deprived of diplomatic or organizational protection, he—or she (the Russian security services prefer to harass women)—is moreover engaged professionally in the activity the state fears and detests most: inquiry into current events. To protect against inquiry, the Soviets spread a net of administrative and statutory restrictions and requirements so intricate that the correspondent will become involved in the commission of irregularities as a matter of course.

U.S. television bureaus in Moscow, for example, manage to receive permission from the Soviet Foreign Office to ship out film on an average of once for every ten applications. They must try to expedite the remaining ninety per cent of their film footage as best they can, resorting to diplomatic pouches or prevailing upon departing tourists or businessmen to carry film to the nearest western dispatch point. In necessarily resorting to these practices, the correspondents automatically render themselves liable to expulsion at the convenience of the Soviet authorities.

The routine forms of passive and active harassment have never been relaxed. Correspondents are placed under constant surveillance for the first three to six months of their tenure—that is, until the pattern of their activity and ports of call becomes

clear, at which time spot surveillance is substituted. The authorities take it ill when a correspondent oversteps the set pattern.

The Trap-Net

There are worse countermeasures than expulsion: the penalty for overzealous reporting is provocation and entrapment. There have been cases of journalists being required to have their visas extended every few months and in which each application for an extension involved an elaborate ceremony where the granting of the extension was guaranteed as a simple matter if only the journalist accepted a KGB assignment to report the moves and contacts of his American colleagues.

In 1961 an American correspondent was administered knockout drops in a Moscow café, transported unconscious to a sobering-up station, and photographed in helpless disarray from various angles. One of the most prominent Soviet newspapers thereupon published a lurid article against the journalist and the American press in general.

When Priscilla Johnson, a writer who had been in the Soviet Union for a United States news agency in the late 1950's, returned to Moscow in 1962 on a limited story assignment for *The Reporter*, she was obliged—as visiting journalists always are unless accompanying a state visitor—to travel on an ordinary tourist visa. In fact, however, this is part of the administrative trap-net: if the journalist oversteps the narrow limits set by the Soviets, he is reminded that he has only a tourist's and not a journalist's visa. If he refuses to take the admonition to heart, he is expelled for conduct inconsistent with his normal status as a tourist. Because Miss Johnson refused to stop cultivating her relations with Soviet artists and writers (since this was the purpose of her visit), she was told that she was suspected of "ideological espionage," was placed under conspicuous surveillance, and finally tricked into leaving the country via Leningrad, a fact that deprived her of the minimum consular protection afforded by Moscow. At the Leningrad airport, customs officials confiscated all her papers, including eighteen notebooks (many of them compiled dur-

ing previous trips or outside the Soviet Union), Soviet press clippings, and two of her own manuscripts that she had brought along for reference and correction. The customs officials explained that all this material would have to be ex-



amined to determine whether it constituted "anti-Soviet propaganda." She was then bundled onto her plane.

Anyone visiting or residing in the Soviet Union is subjected to highly efficient police-state treatment. From the moment he enters the country to the moment he leaves, the tourist is guided, observed, and recorded. Hotels in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev have closed-circuit TV cameras, infrared photographic equipment, two-way mirrors, and plain old-fashioned peepholes installed—in addition to the permanent fixture of the microphone. All the electronic gimmickry of the *roman d'espionage-policier* is brought to bear on the tourist.

But more effective still is the network of human eyes trained on the foreigner. The KGB is the most highly organized and ubiquitous security organization in history. It has effectively commandeered all the institutions of Soviet life—service and cultural as well as academic. The technique of intimidation by administrative harassment is most effective as applied against Soviet citizens, who are the prime targets of the KGB. The very fabric of Soviet society is a mesh of interlocking "voluntary" surveillance systems—vigilantes anonymous.

THE IMMEDIATE PURPOSE of setting up an exchange program with a police state was to lay the bases for co-operation in defined areas of common interest and gradually expand from there. The general assumption

was that if enough air holes could be opened into the Soviet system, normality would gradually assert itself. The assumption was correct as far as it went. "There is growing evidence," runs last year's report by the Inter-University Committee, "that Soviet scholars are more willing than ever to co-operate with American graduate students and scholars. Thus, as opportunities for successful academic work show a general improvement and scholarly contacts become more normal, administrative problems created by the Ministry serve to constrain these developments." In other words, as scholarly relations improved, administrative constraints increased.

The cultural agreement that has just been signed (if we can forget the Soviets' hesitancy in starting negotiations, the tirades against the American war of conquest in Vietnam, and the stupid cancellation of *Hello, Dolly!*) has been reached in record time, and cannot be called substantially different from the previous one. If anything, it could be called more realistic: some of the agreements have been curtailed to conform with the number and types of exchanges that actually took place under the former agreement. Even so, and considering the experience our government has acquired, it doesn't leave much room for optimism. There has been no retreat, explicit or implicit, from the position defined so many times by Khrushchev & Co.: coexistence is a political concept that cannot possibly be extended to what they call the "ideological sphere."

Peaceful coexistence for the Communists means a pre-ordained historical process by any method short of total war. Any initiative uncomfortable to the Soviet Union is thereby branded as a "threat to peace." Peaceful coexistence thrives on prolonged negotiations and temporary agreements with our side—all considered in the Communists' mind as steps toward the ultimate aim. But they have never deviated in considering that nothing is negotiable, no compromise is possible in the realm of ideologies and culture—not in their land and not in their relations with the rest of the world. The punishment inflicted on Sinyavsky and Daniel is just the latest evidence.



Labor's Political Frustrations

A. H. RASKIN

A MOOD of frustration grips organized labor, and the thing that frustrates it most is the absence of any effective way to express it. Union leaders are angry at the White House and Congress. They are convinced that the administration's wage-price guideposts short-change unions; they are equally convinced that their pet bills get kicked around on Capitol Hill with no meaningful effort by President Johnson to save them.

Yet threats that labor will strike back by boycotting Democrats at the Congressional elections this fall have a hollow sound even to those who make them. In only a handful of districts will labor have anywhere else to go. The heads of the AFL-CIO and of its maritime and construction departments spent two rainy weeks in Florida in February, and their remarks about labor's political tribulations in Washington were as doleful as the weather. But a few days after they all got back to the capital, George Meany was at the White House to assure the President that they didn't mean any of it personally. Walter Reuther had already been there with the same message.

Despite these assurances, the reversal of political sentiment in recent months has been both abrupt and startling. Meany opened his presidential report to last Decem-

ber's Federation convention in San Francisco with this ebullient passage: "At no time in the ten-year history of the AFL-CIO has the United States seemed more surely on the road toward fulfillment of the American dream—the creation of a national society whose every member can fully and equally pursue his own destiny; a society from which poverty and economic fear has been banished; a society of true abundance for all. The New Deal proclaimed by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 has come to belated maturity under Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965."

Less than three months later, in a news conference after the mid-winter meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, Meany wound up an acid review of labor's 1966 political disappointments with a flat declaration that it could get along quite well "without the Democrats and without the Republicans." That sounded for a minute like the prelude to formation of an independent Labor Party on the British model, but Meany lost no time in making clear that was not what he had in mind—at least not yet.

As he defined it, his idea was that unions could make their own way politically by being "choosy where we spend our money." He rejected the notion that labor had

no option except to depend on the Democrats for political handouts. "Some of the Democrats seem to feel that we've got to go along with them, that we've got no other place to go," Meany said. "But if to go along with them means we go along with the Eastlands, the Sparkmans, the Herman Talmadges, Holland, Ellender, etc., we've always gone along without them. I don't buy the idea that we have to toady behind any political party."

BEFORE looking deeper into this proclamation of political emancipation, it is worthwhile to examine how much validity there is to labor's current complaints. On the guideposts, there is a good deal. The concept underlying these wage-price regulators remains sound, but it was always questionable that they could be made to work without excessive rigidity or unfairness. Labor has strong grounds for feeling that their application is hurtful to unions in a period when they are having a hard enough time demonstrating that they have not run out of function.

The guideposts were introduced in the 1962 report of President Kennedy's Council of Economic Advisers, with the expressed hope that they would spur widespread discussion of what standards the public could apply to judge whether wage-price decisions in major industries were "in the national interest." Since then, unratified by anyone, the guideposts have become institutionalized as the measuring rod of labor-management responsibility. Their fundamental tenet is that price stability can best be maintained by gearing total wage increases to the over-all increases in the productivity of American industry.

That idea was not invented by President Kennedy or by Walter W. Heller, his chief economic adviser, or even by that most active of activists, Arthur J. Goldberg, then Secretary of Labor. It got its first important acceptance in collective bargaining in 1948 when Charles E. Wilson, as president of General Motors, broached it as a means of giving workers and consumers a direct stake in expanded industrial efficiency; every Big Three auto contract since