INTRODUCTION

The trilogy U.S.A. composed of The Forty Second Parallel, Nineteen-Nineteen, and The Big Money offers a vivid picture of society dominated by monopoly-capitalism and the sabotage of the workers' rights by business interests dominated by the profit motive. Throughout the novel, Dos Passos was most concerned with the way in which the system of monopoly capitalism exploits and destroys the working class. The working-class hero is the class which does not own the means of production and distribution. It is made up of a number of urban people including such as unskilled workers, clerical workers, sales workers, and the like. (Source: U.S.A., 1982: 36) The capitalists control wealth and power under the laws of the land, while the working class are shut out from the good that Américas stands for.

1) Fakultas Sastra Universitas 17 Agustus 1945, Surabaya
2) Fakultas Sastra Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta
My interest in this novel is in its content as a panoramic social novel particularly its strength in showing the life of the workers. In the midst of the country’s prosperity, there was poverty throughout its working class. The book being written in a distinctive American pattern of literary creation adds one more point to choose the novel. It is written with four structural devices: newreel, narrative, biography, and camera eye. Above all, this novel is chosen because it can enrich our understanding of America in the first three decades of the twentieth century.

In order to analyze Dos Passos’ concept of the American working class, this study used interdisciplinary studies, and it is carried out by library research.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Industrializing America

During post-Civil War era, the idealism, ethics, and moral values of the former Puritan Americans were no longer applicable to business practices. People began to admire the success of “Robber Barons”. They tried to understand views of success which were the implication of the economic and social theories of the time: Laissez-faire and Social Darwinism.

Notably, the late nineteenth century showed the development of America into an industrial state industrialism had advanced with mighty strides in this country. It enabled this country to rise to a position of dominance in the world.

The triumph of materialism and business values brought prosperity to America. It created a competitive atmosphere in which the survival was determined by the success of getting profit. The economic system of the United States was later identified as a capitalist system characterized by “the concept of private property, the rights of ownership and the use of wealth to gain income” (Davies and Ovard, 1975: 260).

Capitalism encouraged the rise of industrial concentration. Small companies merged to form large firms. Some corporations faced others out of business by legal or illegal means. Major industries came under the control of a few companies. Consequently, a monopoly was established.

Under monopoly-capitalism, the means of production, distribution, and exchange were operated for private profit. The resulting drive for profits led the global competition for new markets as well as for technological innovation to expand productivity. Since the business competition was not coordinated or regulated on a national basis, a crisis of overproduction appeared on large scale in the 1920s.

The Impact of American Industrialization

The unrestrained industry growth created some problems. It was
no longer feasible, in many cases, for the employee to manufacture goods at home and to supplement his income by rising agricultural commodities as he had done under the domestic system. The ordinary worker who had owed his tools and produced his outputs could not survive in competition with capitalists who have vast aggregated of money and machines. It resulted on the immigrated of dozens and villagers and small town folk into humbling industrial cities.

The compelling attraction of the cities was basically the opportunity to earn more money and become a sophisticated city dweller. Americans emoted with unskilled factory jobs. The fact was that when they entered into industrial society, their habits and values were not associated with the industrial ethos that brought about the subordination of human values to property values. They were regarded as merely a means of production. This situation created suffering at various time.

Beside the drift from rural to the city, industrializing America also turned to the masses of Europe for factory labor. This great stream of immigration affected the labor force because most of immigrants were willing to work for lower wages and under less favorable conditions of employment than the "native" labor force. The increase of the supply of labor force pushed wages down. In this case, workers faced complex problems such as maximum hours of work and minimum wages. Overcrowding, slums, and municipal corruption appeared between the urban workers.

Industrialization and urbanization in the states also impacted education. As cities develop, children came to be raised and socialized outside the home in school, and other institutional settings. Commitment to get an education soon occupied an important place in basic American values. The education offered the chance to maximize one's mobility in the society. In addition, inflation apparently forced women to enter into the labor force to help their families.

Under the impact of industrializing America, workers likewise received new understanding of the importance of the unions. Unions functioned as an instrument to advance the economic status of workers: for higher wages, for the reduction in the number of working hours. Boycotts, strikes, and political actions were the weapons of unions.

Beside the aforementioned, American industrialization also influenced the American literature. The promise of mobility became a central cultural theme of articles and books. Shabby business practices, corruption in government, and poverty in the cities were exposed.

With high-tech industries, the United States achieved more prosperity. "The standard of living in the States had shown considerable important. The prosperity had tended to improve the conditions of life for the great majority of Americans" (Allen, 1931:51). Although the economy was booming and prosperity was spreading, the wealth...
still needed to flow into a few people's pockets, up to half of all workers still lived in poverty. The working class struggles to gain a better standard of life will be the main central topic Dos Passos tried to expose through the trilogy U.S.A.

ANALYSIS

Under the system of monopoly capitalism, it is in the interest of the capitalist class to maintain the existing political-economic system that they substantially control. In contrast, the broad working class fundamentally want to improve capitalist control of business, industry, and politics with far more democratic system. Consequently, working class struggles exist. They struggle to achieve a better quality of life.

The Worker in Capitalistic Society

The industrialization has polarized society into two groups of capitalist and labours. Capitalists place individuals in their fullest capacity to achieve the most possible expectations for individual profits. The workers who have very limited capability in competing with big business inevitably become the victims of capitalism as the accumulation of wealth also means the accumulation of power.

Apparent, the dolce vita of Dos Passos' characters derive from the suffering, unsatisfied, and despair working class. They have less access to life, liberty, and property. The good examples of this situation is Pop. He no longer works for himself as he did in the past. He works for capitalists, the social class that owns the means of production such as capital, tools, and raw material. He sells his labor as a night watchman at the Chadwick Mill in the Middle town, Connecticut. He depends entirely on his wage income for livelihood. As a labor he is paid less than he can produce for the capitalist. He only earns very small income that is only enough to buy his life primary necessities, while the capitalists reinvest the resulting profit passed in the exploitation of the workers to expand their business.

On account of his low income and inadequate work condition, Pop's housing is at best noisome dangerous to human health. He lives in an abject and small house where "the air is choking all day with the smell of whale oil soap" (FP, 5). Ugliness is ubiquitous in working class society.

One day Pop has been compelled to drop out of the labor force because of joining a strike. As he feels that he does not do it, he refuses the accusation, "I ain't going to join any strike" (FP, 8). He tries to find a help to his brother, Tim O'Hara, a social democrat. In fact, it does not yield a result as his boss does not want to hear his approval. The ability of powerful boss to dominate economy to his own advantages frustrates Pop.

Shortly after he becomes unemployed, his wife has to work hard for "boilerful of wash to survive in the family's life. She faces the
double burden of household and working woman. And that her chil-
dren, Mac and his sister, go to labor to help make ends meet when
they come home from school. All members of her family pool their
earning to achieve the family economic stability. As she works so hard,
she dies.

Jobless due to a strike he did not want, paired by his wife's death,
Pop is forced to leave town to seek job opportunity as he cannot
obtain an adequate job from local sources. He starts a new life in Chi-
ago. He enters into the urban labor force. As he was born out of the
industrializing society, his traditional social habits and customs sel-
dom fit into the patterns of industrial life. He has no skills in the
industrial sense, so he finds himself economically obsolete. It is diffi-
cult for him to find any other jobs.

Knowing Pop's frustration, Tim O'Hara comforts him that lives
of the laboring class in America are seldom prosperous. He blames
it on the nature of economic system. "... is the fault of the
system that don't give a man the fruit of his labor" (PP 14). The expe-
rience of Tim O'Hara shows the extended development of this idea.
He is forced to bankruptcy by his creditors because of printing a so-
cialist handbill. He has no power to fight against that system.

It seems that the social pressures being about naturalistic
selection in the jungle of capitalistic society. The working class are gen-
ernally exterminated because they lost in the struggle. They become the
victim of the natural law. For them, poverty is an inseparable fact of
life in an economy blighted by rapid technological development.
Shortly, this poverty is caused by the American economic system.

The Struggles of Working Class

Success

The most significant cluster of narratives in U.S.A. is that of
Charley Anderson, J. Ward Moorehouse, and Margo Dowling. Charley
Anderson represents a figure of the American success myth. He
aspires to Henry Ford. A country boy comes to the city, he work hard
in order to build up a business. Pop starts to face the cruel
nature while siding mankind through his ingenuity. But he soon discov-
ers that hard work, honest do not bring the rewards promised by
the myth. He learns that ruthlessness and deception are also required. He
tries to see these qualities. Seeking the big money, he is almost caus-
ally devoured by more rapacious birds of prey. He himself helps
destroy those who are poorly honest and faithful thus he himself, notabil
his old mechanic friend Bill Cornak. So Charley Anderson becomes a garrulous and drunken hulk, a corrupted honest workman.

Moorehouse's life is an ironic fulfillment of an Horatio Alger's
rise. Born on the Fourth of July, a reader of Success magazine in his
youth, he works hard. He starts his life in a real estate office. He
moves to be public relation. He is a man of great refinement and
distinction of manner. Influence is his profession. His only product is
the manipulation of people's thought. As he grows more powerful, he
becomes a supreme manipulator who exploits language for profits.

His upward-moving career, from selling real estate to public relations, touches upon the major areas of American life in which a false rhetoric of Americanism can be used by the wealthy and powerful capitalists to exploit the poor weak. Morehouse rises by luck and pluck to eminence because he has been able to manipulate the naive faith in the 'American' myth.

Like Morehouse, Margo Dawling is poor and likeable. She discovers that success requires the perversion of one's salable commodity. Her rise to stardom is a parody of the Hollywood version of the rags to riches career of the movie star. This rise is achieved not by hard work, but rather by the open exploitation of her sexuality and her ability at every stage of her rise to achieve an effete level of promiscuity. Somewhat different in technique, but similar in effect in biographies. The significant biographies for this proper explanation are J.P. Morgan, Minor Keith, and Andrew Carnegie. They are chosen in relation with the cultural trend and common attitude of that time that is to extoll people who did things for the good culture. They are the examples of emulated people.

Failure

The representative character is Mac. Ritter experience as working class who has material disaster encourages him to have a better quality of life. He stars his life by getting a job in his uncle Tim's print shop. It is in his uncle that he first confronts the brazen and confident rhetoric of revolution. Unfortunately, he loses his job as his uncle is forced to bankruptcy because of printing a socialist handbook.

After losing one job to another and moving from one place to another, he begins to feel that he has to do something to improve his lot. He thinks that his future is a labor lays in industrial unionism that is in organizing workers. He joins a group of radical unionists and socialists called the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Being one of IWW's members, he hopes that IWW can give him a sense of dignity and selfworth. He joins the miners who are on the strike and then becomes one of the leading socialists. His wife can never understand his radicality. In the rest of his life, he follows the slogans of revolution to Mexico where a revolution occurs.

Similar rhetoric pervading Mac's narrative is Joe Williams. Mac and Joe have basically similar characters. Both represent the life of the working man is its empty and futile. Their lives are constant movement. Mac throughout America is a laborer, while Joe throughout the world as a seaman. They are archetypes of rootless American workingmen in permanent transit not because they wish to be but because their marginal lives prevent them from putting down roots. They are beaten up, robbed, deceived, and cheated wherever they go because they are weak.
CONCLUSION

During the early twentieth century, American industrialism, the law of nature still rules. Life is a struggle for survival. The working class who lost in these struggles are generally exterminated. Although they work hard, hopefully and faithfully, they are unable to take pride in their work, and finally to profit significantly. By it. They are rootless laborers constantly searching for some outlet for their ideological hope of restoring power to the worker. They become isolated and frustrated in industrial society.

Dorothy's villain is big business. The entrepreneurial system is not only suspect, it has been convicted. Capitalism is the sin and only working class are free from this. Dorothy refuses to adapt the general creeds of success for capitalists because it destroys the working class. Apparently the Indonesian working class at this moment seems to have similar experience with the American working class in the early twentieth century. The rise of Industrialism also fastens the shift from rural to an urban society. The industrial ethos brings about a subordination of human values to property values. Workers become a cog in the industrial machinery which created suffering, unemployment, and poverty. The working class then struggle for "regional minimum wages" to achieve a better quality of life. The Indonesian government which is inspired by values embodied in Pancasila should not let any groups or individuals to dominate or to monopolize its economy. Monopolize economy will create social jealousy between the rich and the poor. Hopefully, the course of Indonesia development promotes businessmen who have social solidarity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Elizabeth and Tom Burns, 1973, Sociology of Literature and Drama, Middlesex:


