On the labor front: Communists as Union Officials?

(In a previous article—C.D. Feb. 29—we discussed the effects of revolutions under capitalism and communism in unions, and concluded that unions under capitalism are not revolutionary organizations. Their main interest is to make capitalism better. But we also pointed out that communists working in capitalist unions should try to make capitalism better, for revolution and being an official in a trade union under capitalism is, by definition, revolution.)

AT ONE TIME WE IN PLP developed the idea that once workers elected communists to lead what was called the unemployed sections of the labor movement, then we could use that strength to lead the whole working class towards a genuine power. However, now we see that...

(1) The ruling class would never allow the situation to reach that point. Long before communists lead the labor movement or even workers in one industry, the bosses would use their state apparatus to violently attack such a movement.

(2) To prepare workers for such violent opposition to their class interests (which the bosses see as moving towards workers’ state power), communists would have to explain the need to seize state power (and how far sooner than the point at which workers might choose to lead large unions or the whole labor movement; and therefore...

(3) Winning union leadership is the key factor. Rather than losing their union leadership at the point of production—power over production—is a key factor in uniting workers to work together to move for state power and thereby for power over production through their independent struggles, etc.

Jamaica

Milk Products were on strike against a wage package handed down by the government’s Industrial Disputes Tribunal: sugar workers in New Turmout were on strike, demanding an increase of wages during the last crop and at the start of this crop; cash crop drivers in Kingston were on strike; and the rise of the price of gasoline, joining a series of protests by transport drivers. Spanish Town and May Pen already in progress, (drivers must pay for gas on their own pockets) and there had been wildcat of road crews following the suspension of a driver who was fighting a fire with an extinguisher in Kingston.

So long as the profit system remains, the class struggle is an important factor in the drive for socialism.

A COMMUNIST ELECTED to a union office while putting forward the revolutionary ideas of the immediate issues and the need to destroy capitalism would be the first one to question that or use that position to fight for the interests of the working people. Whether it is as a worker or as a union official, there is an important difference in the perspective of the political interests of the worker. Since a union in a reform organization does not limit itself to trying to make capitalism better, it is the job of a communist elected to a union official to make sure that all the workers know who and what they are electing to burst those refraintocratic bonds. A communist should point out how and why capitalism sets those limits and thereby perpetuates a class system which creates the basis for grievances and the need to have a union in the first place (to defend against capitalism) and for collective and package labor agreements (which are built into a profits-first economic system).

A communist functioning as this kind of union official (as described in the previous article—striving to make capitalism better when capitalism causes that grievance) would draw violent attack by a counter revolutionary. We know, now we see that...

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Possibly, the severely disturbed murderer, rapist, and thief from Utah is well-prepared to be able to forget him. In the bosses’ attempt to make him a hero, and win favorable for themselves, the bosses’ buttons, caps, TV specials and movies are in the planning. So along with the obvious fascist move that brought back the death penalty, we are going to see more and more communizing and sick individuals (both as individuals and as collectives) as an outgrowth of the capitalist and fascist thinking. Clearly the U.S. bosses are getting closer and closer to overthrowing the Natio in the near future.

RACIST “HONOR” — The Junior Chamber of Commerce, the racist “anti-busing group,” originated in Los Angeles. The name became known as a racist “anti-busing group.” It was the reason why a black member of the organization strongly protected the election, recognizing it as an “endorsement of racism.” The name has been disapproved of by the black community in Los Angeles. The group has been labeled as a racist “anti-busing group.” It was the reason why a black member of the organization strongly protected the election, recognizing it as an “endorsement of racism.”