

went onto the field. Others were disappointed that the speeches could not be continued. Most labor officials, predictably, blamed "the radicals" for disrupting "their" rally.

LESSONS OF APRIL 26TH

The April 26th rally in Washington clearly demonstrated the inability of the labor bureaucracy to direct and organize a truly representative protest of rank and file workers. Political action for jobs for so many union leaders has been confined to "lobbying" in the halls of Congress and State legislatures.

Times demand the mobilization of their membership, but the union bureaucrats fear this, for the rank and file, once set in motion is likely to begin by shouting down and removing those very same bureaucrats and their Democratic Party "friends."

The April 26th action, as timid a conception as it was, was still too strong a medicine for the likes of George Meany and the right wing of the AFL-CIO brass. Now Meany will be telling the IUD sponsors "I told you so",

Undoubtedly the militancy of the rank and file and the visible strength of the left wing, will give the IUD leaders pause before they call another action. But it's doubtful that the rank and file will give these leaders any excuse of inaction.

TASK FOR THE LEFT

For the left wing of the workers movement, the class struggle oriented rank and file forces including the new Communist organizations, the April 26th demonstration was an indication of the growth of influence and strength.

Class struggle slogans (for a shorter work week with no loss in pay, an end to racism, militarism, and aid to reactionary puppet regimes abroad, for union democracy) were in evidence throughout the stadium and contrasted sharply with the timid half measures and vague slogans put forward by the rallies sponsors.

Yet the rally remained too fragmented and politically immature to mount an effective challenge to the Labor bureaucracy. The col-

lapse of the rally before the militancy of the ranks created a vacuum that the organized left forces were unable to fill. Out of the chaos on the field, no clear credible voice emerged that was able to rally the rank and file forces and stamp a real political direction on the spontaneous demonstration.

The task for Communists and class struggle forces in the workers movement is to fill the vacuum in the coming period and wrest away leadership of the struggle for jobs from the discredited labor bureaucracy. This will require unity of action around a clear set of demands to end the crisis capable of winning the support of broad masses of working people.

We must step up our work in the unions, among the unorganized, and among the unemployed to bring masses of workers into the struggle for these demands. And we must break down the fragmentation of the movement by building strong local, regional, and national coalitions capable of building mass mobilizations around the question of jobs.

THE UAW BUREAUCRACY Which Side Are They On?

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"General Motors and the UAW have a greater community of interest than of conflict."

"I have nothing but the kindest feelings for the General Motors Corporation."

—INTERNATIONAL UAW PRESIDENT
LEONARD WOODCOCK

Many UAW members know that the leadership of our International Union has given up the idea of taking on the Auto Companies head on. The days of the sit-down strike and the mass picket line are over, as far as Woodcock is concerned. When a strike is called, an all-out effort to force the companies to grant our demands is dropped in favor of half-stepping and passivity.

In explaining the Leadership's approach to strikes, UAW International Secretary-Treasurer Emil Mazey says that a strike takes the wind out of the membership and makes it easier to sell them a bum contract. In his words, "I think that strikes make ratification easier. Even though the worker may not think so, when he votes on a contract he is reacting to economic pressures. I really believe that if the wife is raising hell and the bills are piling up, he may be more apt to settle than otherwise."

(Mazey misses the point that many

thousands of striking auto workers are women with husbands at home and still thousands more wives aren't sitting at home griping about the bills but are out working or perhaps even striking themselves.)

The leaders of the UAW are much more sophisticated than the bureaucrats who dominate the AFL-CIO. Woodcock and Co. are good at looking like fighters while they sell the workers mediocre contracts and praise Jimmy Carter as the saviour of the working class.

When you look below the surface, though, the UAW and the AFL-CIO are basically the same. Lack of democratic control over the leadership and its policies, high salaries, powerful positions in the government, and social status from hob-nobbing with the rich -- *all these things form the foundation of the UAW bureaucracy and its pro-company stand.*

WHAT MAKES A BUREAUCRAT?

UAW International officers earn far more than the average autoworker. Leonard Woodcock makes about 40,000 dollars a year, plus expenses. International officers direct a staff of one thousand employees, and control a treasury that stood at 162 million dollars in 1974. The strike fund alone was up to 170 million dollars in 1976.

Occasionally they supplement their income with payoffs and cash from the union's till. International Vice-President Richard Gosser, long-time buddy of Walter Reuther and the senior UAW Vice-President, resigned from the union in the early 60's after being investigated by the Senate and convicted of income-tax evasion.

UAW officers often serve on government boards and commissions, and sometimes are offered high-paying government jobs when they leave the union. Jack Conway, former President Reuther's right-hand man, left the union in 1961 to take a job with the Federal Housing Administration. Soon after, Leonard Woodcock (then a UAW vice-president) was offered an ambassadorship or a sub-cabinet post.

More recently, Woodcock has been named to the National Productivity Commission and the National Commission for Industrial Peace. And it's an open secret that if Jimmy Carter becomes president of the US next January, Woodcock will be named Secretary of Labor or Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE = "LABOR PEACE"

The US National Commission For Industrial Peace is a good example of the close ties between the top leaders of the

unions, big business, and the Government. This Commission, created by President Nixon in 1973, included Woodcock, President George Meany of the AFL-CIO, I. W. Abel of the United Steelworkers Union, Frank Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters, Chairman of the Board of GM James Roche, Vice-Chairman R. H. Larry of US Steel, W. Riston of the National City Bank, the Assistant Secretary of Labor, and the heads of the Cost-of-Living Council and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Two of the final proposals made by the Commission were that Federal law should be changed to allow International Unions to take direct control of locals that buck the International, and that strikes no longer be used to resolve disputes between labor and management. GM Chairman Roche could hardly ask for more cooperation than that!

There are also ties, kept secret for the most part, between the UAW bureaucracy and the CIA. Shortly after Victor Reuther publicly denounced the AFL-CIO for working with the CIA, a former CIA agent came forward to reveal that he had personally handed \$50,000 in cash to UAW President Reuther for CIA operations in Europe. Reuther admitted taking the money, justifying it on the grounds that the funds went to "fight Communism."

The UAW leadership is also closely tied to the Democratic Party. The Democrats, although they like to portray themselves as the party of the "common people," are both financed and run by the same class that controls the Republicans -- the capitalist class.

Many UAW officials, from the International on down, use their union office as a stepping stone into important Democratic Party posts. Recently, Woodcock was the main organizer of the "Labor Coalition Clearinghouse"; this group secured more delegates to the Democratic National Convention than did the AFL-CIO.

If Carter wins the Presidency and names Woodcock Secretary of Labor, the UAW International will be drawn even closer to the top ranks of the Democratic Party. All this is quite a contrast to the fate of militant unionists in the 40's and 50's, when militant unions refused to toe the Company line and were smashed by the Taft-Hartley Act and other anti-labor legislation. Woodcock and Co. have no intention of giving up their present cozy relationship with the corporation's government for anything so dangerous.

HOW DEMOCRATIC IS THE "DEMOCRATIC UAW"?

The UAW, although more democratic than most AFL-CIO unions, is still a long way from being really controlled and directed by the rank and file. International Officers are elected every three years by convention delegates, and they have bitterly fought rank and file demands that the UAW Constitution be changed so officers are elected by a referendum ballot of the entire membership.

Contract ratifications in the UAW follow the so-called "unit rule" -- where each local votes to accept or reject the contract, and 100% of the local's membership is then counted as a block. Using the unit rule, and concentrating on a few large locals, the International can get a contract ratified without a majority vote of the members.

Although the leadership would like to hide it, they have a well-organized and well-financed national caucus to protect their positions. This caucus functioned continuously since the 1940's, first led by Walter Reuther, and now by Leonard Woodcock. You don't get elected to any important positions in the union unless you're the candidate of the Reuther-Woodcock caucus. A conservative estimate of the funds collected "voluntarily" from UAW officers for the caucus is \$150,000 per year, *not counting* the funds collected in the local unions.

For a rank and file candidate to beat this well-oiled, national machine would take a great deal of time, effort, and organization. No single individual, or even a single local caucus, could successfully take on this machine -- only a national caucus, rooted in the locals and well-organized and led nationally, could recapture our International union for the rank and file members.

We have seen how the UAW bureaucracy is made up of highly paid officials and staff members whose earnings, as well as their social status and career ambitions, depend on their willingness to steer the UAW in the direction of "industrial peace" and "labor-management cooperation." If they behave themselves, they'll be rewarded by big business, whose tremendous wealth and power in this country allow for some pretty sizable rewards.

In order for the rank and file to eliminate these traitors and rebuild our union, union democracy must be one of our main demands. If we were to succeed in electing a new slate of honest and militant officers, but left the union structure as it is, our gains would almost certainly

be only temporary. As soon as those new officers were elected, they would be subjected to the same heavy pressures from government and big business that have corrupted or broken many an honest trade-unionist. The only way to insure that our union would remain in the hands of the rank and file is to tie our leaders as closely as possible to the rank and file with real trade union democracy.

As long as a few control the wealth and the government of the country, there will always be a tendency for union leaders to become bureaucratic and corrupt. But we can build important protections against bureaucracy into our union. Here are some of the most important reforms we must demand:

- 1) Referendum election of all officers by secret ballot of the entire membership.
- 2) A recall election must be held upon presentation to the International Executive Board of petitions signed by 20% of the membership, or upon passage of recall resolutions by 20% of the local unions.
- 3) All elected officers shall receive a salary no higher than the top pay scale of working UAW members.
- 4) All major national UAW policies, including proposed contracts, must be submitted for ratification by a referendum vote of the entire membership.

Finally, rank and file UAW members and honest union officers must build a united, national caucus to fight for militant unionism, unity and an end to racism, and for trade union democracy. This caucus must never be disbanded, even if its candidates win election, in order to continue and broaden the fight for real rank and file unionism.

