

EDITORIAL: TWO LINES ON TRADE UNION WORK:

An Analysis of April 26th

The pressure of the economic and political crisis inflicted on the working class has spearheaded spontaneous discontent and actions by the working class and oppressed people. These have included strikes, union-led as well as wildcats; actions condemning the imperialist policies of war and aggression; student uprisings; and so on.

Everyone, from the bourgeoisie itself, to its henchmen in the labor movement, the labor leaders and labor aristocracy, are trying to divert the anger away from the cause of the suffering and misery of the workers and toilers--capitalism--by trying to promote either that the crisis is "temporary" and that we (meaning the bourgeoisie) will soon be on a tranquil and peaceful road to prosperity again; or by trying to blame the cause of the crisis on the liberation struggles of the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian peoples.

But as the burden of the crisis continue to weigh on the backs of the working masses, and the working class begins to get into class battle with the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie organizes every attempt to suppress this revolutionary upheaval. This was the purpose for which the labor leaders organized the April 26th March to Washington under the banner of "Jobs for All" and under the pressure of the rank and file. The demonstration brought out approximately 40,000 to 60,000 workers in one of the biggest rallies around unemployment since the years of the great depression in the 1930's.

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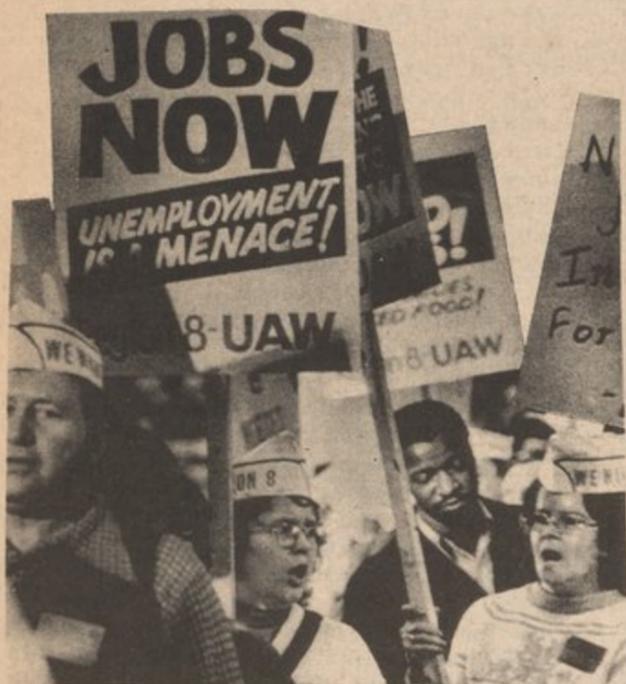
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Most of the workers went to the rally expecting to be able to participate and protest actively and militantly, expressing to the bourgeoisie their class hatred and determination to struggle against the injustices and to do so in the spirit and tradition of the American working class in its fight for social and political liberty.

UNION BUREAUCRATS DIVERT
WORKERS' STRUGGLE AND PROTECT
CAPITALISM

The demonstration was marked from its very outset by various contradictions presented by the various class forces. The labor hacks sabotaged it from the "git" by promoting a peaceful and passive march with no slogans and by pouring vast numbers of workers straight from the busses into the stadium. They limited the issues to the economic issues, covering up the cause - capitalism. The demand for "U.S. out of Indochina" was completely excluded. At the stadium itself, leaders scheduled speakers representing the bourgeois class itself to address the rank and file, such as Hubert Humphrey, Bella Abzug, labor "leader" Abel.



The working class has responded to the imperialist crisis being laid on their backs - but the trade union leaders consciously defend the existing order.

The rally which was scheduled after the march never really got off the ground. The workers spontaneously disrupted the speakers, refusing to listen, for they had nothing to say of interest or importance to them. Others just sat in their seats, bored to death; while some workers, communist forces and some trotskyites tried to lead the workers to break off and pour onto the field. But this too was met with no great response from the majority of the workers because of its spontaneous and unplanned character.

The labor hacks had tactical conflicts among themselves on how to best sell-out the march and the movement of the working class. Many refused to support the rally at all; while Abel wanted an affair

similar to the recent UAW rally, where Kennedy was promoted to the workers as the man they should vote for in '76! This was their solution to the crisis and the answer to the fulfillment of the "American dream" life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.



The union bureaucrats limit the struggle to the economic issues, covering up the cause - capitalism.

The leaders of DC 37 and 1199, on the other hand, tried to pass themselves off as "militant" leaders, and organized the march. They saw this as "militant" and therefore gain respect among their members; But in the real world, Victor Gattbaum, of DC 37, organized the march with one hand and with the other was signing away the jobs of city workers. The contradictions among the trade union leaders exist not because some are more "progressive", or better than others. These contradictions are inherent in their class nature of greed and power.

"In addition to fat salaries they receive from the trade unions they direct, many trade union functionaries receive large incomes from the important functions they have in the bourgeois state as Congressmen, parliamentarians, directors of officials in institutions controlling pension schemes, social insurance, workers banks and so on. That is why there is great rivalry for power among the trade union leaders to stay in leadership of the trade unions. In order to hold their posts as trade union leaders, they resort to all kinds of skulduggery, ranging from deceit, threats and intrigues to murder."

(2 Opposing Lines in the World Trade Union Movement pp 70-71 Albania)

Such was the case of I. Yablonsky, leader of American miners who was murdered.

These treacherous trade union leaders have no difficulty in moving from their trade union positions to work for the bourgeois state or the monopolies. Again, here we would like to note Arthur Goldberg, former representative of the AFL-CIO in Indonesia, who later was appointed to represent the USA in the United Nation Org. Their high salaries of \$50,000, 75,000 a year and more, and their lordly and comfortable life with all the bourgeois comforts compels them to more greed and corruption.

These trade union leaders base all their activity on class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and the capitalist state by actively defending and preserving the existing order. This is in their interest, and as such, these reformist and revisionist leaders serve the bourgeois class directly to continue perpetuating capitalist enslavement of the working class by disarming it ideologically and politically. This was witnessed once again on April 26th.

While the labor hacks peddled support for Liberal Bourgeois, Ted Kennedy, the bourgeois ideologists and class enemies of the working class, the "CP"USA revisionists and their front organizations were also busy trying to confuse and disarm the working class movement. They trumpeted their usual class collaboration line of "peaceful road out of the crisis" by participating in bourgeois government and "voting Socialism in". The "CP"USA is part and parcel an appendage of Capitalism, first like the trade union leaders, they tried once again to nullify the sharpening and antagonistic class contradictions in the April 26th demonstration.

THE ROLE OF THE CONSCIOUS
ELEMENT AND APRIL 26TH

Although Communist forces participated in the April 26th activity and marched along side the thousands of angry proletarians, the communists were a weak force; and as such were unable to give overall political guidance to the rank and file. We were weak, not because we were small in numbers; but because of the present state of affairs in our movement - which finds us divided by opportunism. As a result 2 opposing lines on every vital question facing the proletariat are in fierce battle with each other, the proletarian line vs. the bourgeois line. Failure to have unity on a correct Marxist-Leninist line in relationship to the trade union movement, which is becoming more and more a pressing and vital question, makes easier the revisionists' and reformists' efforts to make a field day out of the mass upsurges and spontaneous battles of the proletariat, and to lead the working class down the road of least resistance-reformism.

The reformist line was most vividly represented by the O.L.R.U., and PSP, on April 26th. Their contingents, organized under an economist line, did no more than praise and glorify the ideological root and essence of all opportunism, the worship of spontaneity, such, all they had to offer the masses of workers at April 26th was to spontaneously take over the field and chant their economist slogans which were no different from the trade unionists slogans. The trade unionists cry "Jobs for all;" the reformist within our movement, "Jobs or Income Now", "Fight don't starve", "The riches belong to us all."

These slogans do not point out the enemy, the sharpening class conflict or the bourgeois state as a tool of oppression. In fact these slogans just spread illusionary ideas among the masses and do not do the Marxist-Leninist work of combining the short range with the long-range objectives. They just maintain the struggle within the narrow confines of trade unionism, within the confines of economism.

Communists must fight for economic demands of the class, but as Comrade Filip Kota says, "Certainly the economic struggle, as one of the known forms of class struggle, has its own place in the arsenal of the forms of struggle used by the proletariat in its clash with the bourgeoisie. But it has been and remains one of the lowest forms, which must be combined and increasingly more connected with various other actions and forms of struggle for social and political rights, the starting point to lead to political, final battles, the seizure of political power and liberation from oppression and wanton exploitation by the bourgeoisie." ("Reformism and revisionist trade unions in service of the Bourgeoisie" Albania Today Jan-Feb, '75)

While all these forces were preaching how we had to go to April 26th and lead the workers, none did, nor do, the everyday work of consolidating the advanced and exposing the bureaucrats.

It is this same reformist and erroneous view that has led, in theory and practice, to the dangerous line of "unite from above with the union bureaucrats to facilitate the work from below."

Even communists forces within the genuine wing of our movement have fallen victim to this erroneous line, such as the comrades from Workers Viewpoint - who say that because the "misleaders" of the unions control the union apparatus and the workers, we must unite with them to facilitate the work from below. Unite with them firstly, and secondly support him (the union bureaucrat) with a noose. Let them pull out the base of workers to us communists, and then we can defeat them in front of the workers.

First of all, the union leaders are not just "misleaders," being misled by the bourgeoisie; they are not free from ideology or neutral. They are class enemies of the proletariat. They are bourgeois agents representing the interest of the bourgeoisie within the trade union movement and leading the rank and file under the wing of the bourgeoisie.

As Marxist-Leninists we must wage an uncompromising struggle against the trade union leaders and what they represent. The Marxist-Lenin-

ist line is not one of uniting from above but one of placing all our energy and strength in our concrete time and conditions to building an independent and political movement of the rank and file by bringing the science of Marxism-Leninism to solve and answer questions and problems facing the worker in their fight with the bourgeoisie. To quote comrade Hoxha: "The awakening of the working class and its coming to the forefront of the revolutionary struggle, cannot be achieved without waging a determined struggle also in the heart of the reformist trade unions themselves against the line and stands of their bourgeois bosses, so as to expose and isolate them from the masses of workers."

We must expose to advanced workers that the trade union leaders are consciously not opposed to the desires and demands of the bourgeoisie. A clear example of this is Victor Gatlbaum head of DC 37. He stated, in spite of threats of layoffs, that he will not call for a strike; because "the city is in enough trouble as it is". Or his recent statement that he will ask his members to accept some layoffs. This is outright class collaboration, working to save the capitalists decaying system by selling out the workers.



Above, police escort construction union bureaucrats off CCNY campus in NY after union-paid goons attacked Black and Puerto Rican workers demanding end to discrimination in hiring.

HOW COULD COMMUNIST TALK OF UNITING FROM ABOVE WITH SUCH A TREACHEROUS "LEADER"?

We don't need the trade union leaders to bring the masses of workers to us. We need to bring the science of class warfare, Marxism-Leninism, to the working class, most specifically in this period to the masses of advance workers. The trade union leaders are not just "misleaders" in the trade unions. They are, as we pointed out earlier, entrusted with important functions by the state apparatus; they are the social basis of opportunism and reformism in the working class movement.

This treacherous line must be defeated for it denies the role of trade union leaders and our role of winning the advanced in the everyday fight for union democracy, against cutbacks, and unemployment, and against the Imperialist wars of aggression.

Marxist-Leninist's must prepare the class to distinguish friends from enemies and to become militant in carrying out the principles of class struggle within the trade union movement consistently and systematically. "Unite from above" will lead to surrendering this task and surrendering Marxism-Leninism to reformism. It negates the need to consolidate cores of advanced workers and negates the factory nuclei style of work-replacing these with broad united fronts with trade union bureaucrats, hospital administrators, and sold-out local "poverty pimps" and conscious anti-communist forces. Such has been the case in the recent demonstrations against the cutbacks in hospitals in N.Y. These forces have led these activities to chaos, and confusion, have promoted bourgeois illusions and have completely dampened the revolutionary zeal of the rank and file workers. (This is how in practice they serve their bourgeois masters.)

Practice is the criteria for truth and only a blind person cannot see how this erroneous line put to practice causes setbacks in our work in the trade union movement.

SUMMATION AND CONCLUSION

We must learn from the April 26th demonstration and others before where thousands of workers came prepared to exhibit their anger and discontent and who because of no political leadership were left in the main without direction. The mass character of April 26th and the militancy of the workers showed the sharpening class contradiction on the one hand while on the other it also showed for communists and advanced workers the demands that the spontaneous movement makes on us to do our work and guide, organize and give it a politically conscious character. The masses of workers were there starving for political clarity and direction. Historical experience has shown that the working class does not become aware of its mission all by itself and as such we must take up our tasks seriously learning from the summed-up historical experience of the international proletariat.

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We must take up our task: bring scientific socialism to these spontaneous movements; disclose all opportunist theories and actions along the twists and turns of the struggle, by defeating incorrect forms of struggle with correct ones, incorrect slogans such as "Jobs or Income now"; with slogans that syntheizes the ideas of the masses and give political direction- "Fight for jobs and don't retreat the ruling class we must defeat." We must combine the short range with the long range goals and aims, the achievement of political power.

We must in the trade union movement build a strong political movement of the rank and file that opposes the trade unionists' bankrupt program of class collaboration. We must defeat their organs and bourgeois press with independent newsletters that sum-up the concrete issues, give direction and take the struggle away from just the confines of economic issues. We must applaud the courageous victories of the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian and the rest of the world's people rising in arms against U.S. Imperialism and Social Imperialism and imbue the rank and file with the proletarian internationalist spirit of: Cambodian People learn from them - Dare to struggle, dare to win!

Fight for jobs- Do not retreat- The ruling class we must defeat!