

Internal Distribution Only

Hoesler Hills Branch

Report on

AFT Local 2254

#1. HISTORY.

Local 2254 is the second AFT local IU has had. One existed in the immediate post-WWII period. Recent attempts to organize started in Spring, 1969; these first attempts were made around the deep frustration liberal faculty felt at the greater power the administration got for itself in dealing with the events of the student movement. Attempts to form a local were given up by Spring, 1970. In Fall, 1971, MF and DS, now a comrade in SL, neither of whom were involved in the 1969 effort, called a meeting to read the sentiment of the faculty on a proposal for a group that would defend education from the administration and the establishment faculty and that would enter into the community and student political arenas. Prior to the first meeting in September, information was obtained from the AFT headquarters in Washington in hopes that AFT would be seen by the faculty who might be concerned with such issues as a way of gaining a position of strength from which to fight on them.

MF and DS were implicitly split on the way the group should go. MF was using the wider appeal to the faculty as a means to inject the idea of unionism, whereas DS was interested in a group that would raise faculty consciousness on matters of the narrowness of conventional scholarship, interdisciplinary study, and community involvement. MF was at the time acting in the spirit of an NUC resolution, adopted at the June, 1971, National Conference in Ann Arbor, to urge all faculty members to do union organizing, where progressive. Contacts with KM of Fla and WK of Pa, both of AFT, in the context of NUC, between the Baltimore and Bloomington NC's in early 1971, were crucial.

The first meeting of faculty in Sept. 1971 at IU of 20 people indicated a majority was enthusiastic for unionism. MF tried to hold the group together, but by agreeing to report on the implication of unionism at the next meeting effectively split off those primarily interested in consciousness raising on educational matters. MF and MV, also of NUC, were the only socs active in the emerging union group. After an abortive effort to get 250 faculty to sign pledges, and after visits by state and national leadership, the group decided to apply for a charter in Nov. 1971. Of the 65 who signed pledges, about 40 took out membership. There was considerable attention to the fledgling union, simply because of its novelty. Collective bargaining would be very different from the Faculty Council, in which faculty and administration work together to govern the university. The administration did not attack the idea publicly, but most faculty were ready with the response that unionism was fine for industry but not for the ivory tower.

Local 2254's first problem was to create the impression that it could do something. AAUP then had a national membership at IU of over 500, which dropped 100 by 1973. It was solidly committed to "collegiality" of the form represented by the Faculty Council; it is

still unwilling to initiate an election for CB without a law for collective bargaining for universities. As it is, since the administration runs the Faculty Council, the AAUP does little more than to talk about giving advice to the administration. If Local 2254 was not to be another AAUP, it must do something. But with its numbers it could not enter an election to become exclusive agent for a faculty of 1500. MF's leadership was uncertain to say the least. Instead of economist demands, he still laid emphasis on the idea of the union as an instrument of educational reform--as a tool for changing the class composition of the student body and for changing the nature of academic research.

The Arts and Sciences College had conspired with the chairman of the Home Economics Dept. to allow for a change of that department to a department in applied sociology. This would involve eliminating or retraining most of the eleven women in the department. Local 2254 showed up along with AAUP at open hearings in Feb., 1972, on that matter, but all the women went to AAUP to have their grievances handled after the original plan for overhauling the department was given up. Many members in the union thought it was a bad issue, since no one respected the women in Home Ec for their academic virtues. But it was an issue that established the local as ready to fight for jobs. AFT pressure on the administration did not let up till the plan was changed.

By the time of the April, 1972, membership meeting, it was clear that AFT had to start setting some goals, and it was clear that these would be economist goals. Raises were going to be low for 1972-73, so the issue of across the board cost of living and productivity raises seemed a natural one for the next academic year. At this time, PZ had the best perspective for giving the AFT a programmatic image. His formulations were penetrating and he saw the pitfalls of non-economist issues for an organizing committee.

The charge by a black student that SR, an anatomist, was racist in the classroom caught MF without preparation as to how to deal with such an issue. The attempt of the administration to cover up the issue made him feel that the union should insist that it not be covered up. Consideration of SR as a co-worker to be protected was not uppermost in MF's mind. Faculty generally were responding with the ignore-uppity-niggers-where-faculty-privilege-is-concerned line, and to this MF responded by asking the exec com to approve a statement that said that faculty privilege cannot be above racism when and if racism is demonstrated, and that in this case it was right for the Blmgt. Equal Ed. Opportunity Committee to have made every effort to see whether it could be demonstrated. Approval of the statement came with later regrets. For an organizing committee of 55 to flex its moral muscle seemed to the membership counterproductive. Through this period MF was in touch with Comrade MH, whose wife testified at the BEEOC hearings. The Chancellor had packed the hearing committee with many new members and with blacks who had demonstrated in SR's class. He was then able to have an excuse when he did not take decisive action on the committee's claim that there was racism and that SR should be dismissed.

By June, 1972, the AFT had the image of an anti-sexist and anti-racist ginger group but not that of a union. Its second year,

however, saw it start acting like a union. It urged departments to recommend 5.5 percent across the board raises as the goal their chairpersons should petition the administration for. It hit the administration on its cut of faculty travel expenses. In a meeting with the administration it proposed compensation for those already committed to meetings. Shortly thereafter the administration adopted this proposal. The AFT was making a beginning at showing it could do something. In the early months of 1973, it lobbied successfully to keep faculty out of the public employee CB bill 261; and unsuccessfully to get faculty into the teacher CB bill 255, which is now law. In Feb., 1972, it caused quite a stir by publishing faculty salary figures. The figures had been copied by union brothers and sisters in the State Office Bldg in March, 1971; Comrade RM did the statistical work; printing was arranged with the publisher of Common Sense. With this publication, AFT reached its highest point of visibility. It became obvious that many people were for no good reason being paid poorly and that administrators were being highly rewarded. The press was generous with space and sympathy through 1972-73. PP was publicity conscious and instructed MF in the use of media to present an image of growing activism. However, formal recruitment activity was hobbled by the fact that participation in activities was minimal even for committed members. Still, by May, 1973, the local had 60 members, indicating that the second year had not been a slump.

## #2. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

It is important to understand the role of university faculty in the capitalist economy in order to develop priorities for a soc working in a faculty union. Universities are not run for a profit; an auto plant is. Comrade KM defined "productive labor," not just as labor that makes something useful, but as labor that also is supposed to make a profit for those who buy it. Professors generate skills for which there is a demand, and they transmit culture for which there is an audience. But the usefulness of a faculty does not make it productive in a typically capitalist way. Moreover, it follows from the fact that professors are not hired to make a profit for their employers that they were not hired with capital. For, "capital" is what goes to work for surplus value. Rather, professors are employed by "revenue," and it is not particularly important in understanding their status whether this revenue comes directly from capitalist profits, directly from workers wages, or indirectly from surplus value through taxes.

KM's classical definition of the "proletariat" as those who live only by finding work and who find work only by increasing capital does not apply to unproductive workers, who can create use values but not capital. Workers in state industries, which sell products or services to private persons in order to cover interest on loans and to expand state operations still further, are productive workers; they work only to create capital controlled by the state. The important distinction in understanding the proletariat is, then, not that between state and private workers, but that between unproductive and productive workers. Faculty, hospital workers, makers of bombs, bank clerks, and salaried attorneys are unproductive workers. (Bombs are produced with tax revenue, which is simply part of the surplus value created by productive workers. The owner of the bomb factory is then to be viewed as sharing state revenue with his

employees, rather than literally selling bombs for a profit to the state.)

The most striking thing about unproductive workers in developed capitalism is that they are integrated into an effort to uphold the present form of society - the present relations of production. This is not to say that they fail to create use values whose usefulness goes beyond merely the present form of society. These workers are concentrated more and more in large institutions that play an overtly "political" role, a role that is not neutral toward the continued existence of the relations of capitalist production. These institutions play the conservative role of perpetuating the present relations of production.

Unproductive workers are exploited, at least at their lower and middle ranks. That is, the time socially necessary to produce the use values their wages will buy is less than the time they work. The difference is called "surplus time." Unlike the productive worker, the unproductive one does not create a surplus value component in a commodity during the surplus time of his or her work. Rather, the smaller the fraction of surplus value created by productive workers that is used to support unproductive workers, the more unproductive workers are exploited, assuming no change in the length of the working day. Behind this lies the fact that the wages of the unproductive worker are not recovered as part of the value of a commodity he or she makes, but those wages come from the surplus value that is part of the value of the commodity made by the productive worker. Both types of worker are engaged in a struggle for more of the surplus value embodied in the productive worker's product. The capitalist encourages each to see the other as a main competitor for surplus value. The capitalist himself stands back from the fray, giving the impression that his share of surplus value is fixed at high enough a level to make the "abstinence" he indulges in when investing worth while. Property tax revolts are, typically, battles in which the capitalist watches productive and unproductive workers weaken each other's collective force.

Given this conflict between the two groups, the consciousness of the unproductive worker tends to develop a supportive attitude for current relations of production and hence for the aims of the capitalist, who has a controlling role in those relations. The unproductive laborer feels supportive of a system that tends to maximize surplus value, for he or she lives off someone else's surplus value. This consciousness is strengthened by the objective development mentioned above--that unproductive workers are concentrated in institutions that are not politically neutral but explicitly serve the goal of the maintenance of the capitalist system. Both subjectively and objectively, the unproductive worker is a "functionary" of the ruling class. Such workers function to preserve the system that makes the capitalist class a ruling class. Because these functionaries have a different economic role--they do not earn capital and hence do not produce it--they do not belong to the class of productive workers. They live only in so far as they find work, but they find work only in so far as there is revenue to pay them to protect the capitalist system from its self-destructive tendencies.

Despite the conflict between functionaries and proletarians, they have a common interest in the elimination of exploitation.

True, the surplus value the proletariat is exploited to produce is the source of the revenue that supports the functionary. But, in the present period, the national plant is suffering from years of a starvation diet of capital investment because of increasing overseas investment and of increasing use of surplus value in the unproductive war industry. So now the capitalist can keep up his natural rate of profit only by allowing less surplus value to be drained off from the capitalist class. It is recycled back through the capitalist class in spending on bombs, and thus such unproductive work is not attacked. But a school corporation is a different matter. There is then a general tendency to increase exploitation for both the proletariat and the functionaries, thereby overcoming the tendency of the rate of profit to fall due to the circumstances mentioned.

By unionizing, functionaries are not proclaiming themselves productive workers, but merely exploited workers. However, by unionizing they establish a bridge for solidarity with the unionized proletariat that will cancel the most negative features of their competition with the proletariat for the surplus value the proletariat has created. The piers on which this bridge is built are exploitation in each class. However, the solidarity the bridge makes possible will always be tenuous so long as the unproductive workers are employed in ways that are against the interest of the proletariat, as they must be so long as they are employed to preserve the power of the ruling class. The long term hope for solidarity rests on the development of a tendency on the part of functionaries to become restive in their role as functionaries of the ruling class and to begin to develop ways in which their services can be put to use by the proletariat. The development of this tendency is something that unionism can begin to contribute to. But this will only be a bare beginning since the institution of unionism as it now exists accepts as one of the ground rules of the struggle for surplus value the continued existence of the capitalist system, and hence, of necessity, the continued existence of functionaries of the capitalist class.

### #3. THE SOCIALIST FUNCTIONARY

According to the classical theory of permanent rev, the two major classes polarize society as it moves toward basic change in such a way that intermediate classes cannot go it alone. The intermediate classes--or at least each of their strata--side either with the bourgeoisie or with the proletariat. They can enter the rev movement but not take control either of the rev party or a successful rev government. The objective basis for the hegemony of the proletariat in the movement is its role in creating profit on which the rest of the society depends. The soc functionary must keep constantly in view the task of collaborating with the proletariat in a rev movement in which the advanced elements of the proletariat are the vanguard. This view is indispensable for giving clarity to his or her ongoing efforts.

The tactical problem of broadest scope is that of devising the most effective means to build toward collaboration with the proletariat in a rev movement. Taking this problem seriously has two pre-suppositions: (1) that there will be a rev movement to join, and (2) that functionaries, and in particular university faculty, can in significant numbers be split from the ruling class. Functionaries

alone will certainly not make a rev movement. Moreover, if they cannot be split from their present identification with the ruling class, there will be no collaboration with a rev movement led by the advanced elements of the proletariat. The problem of splitting them from the ruling class is analogous to that of overcoming the racism and social chauvanism of the proletariat. Yet there is a fundamental difference. The very nature of unproductive work means that the functionary lives on the back of the proletariat, whereas it is not of the nature of productive work--but of the special conditions of its existence--that blacks pose a threat to the jobs of whites and that the welfare of the working class in other countries should be a threat to the privileged position of the US proletariat. Clearly functionaries in universities will be more difficult to split from the ruling class than those in community colleges and secondary schools. It may well be unlikely that a majority of professors can be split even in an advanced rev situation. But it is possible to bring enough over both to intensify the problems of realizing the capitalist aims of universities and to provide a nucleus for continuity with the rev universities of the future. Let us then assume that our two presuppositions are correct. The question is then how to build for the collaboration of functionaries with the proletariat in a rev situation.

It is inconceivable that one could do without unions in building for such collaboration. No other form of organization will initiate the process of bringing the proletariat and functionaries together around the thing they have in common--exploitation and working conditions controlled by profits. Yet there are certain glaring pitfalls for a union movement among functionaries in a university such as IU.

First, faculty have a tradition of setting their own standards of excellence, within of course the general guideline of insuring the perpetual power of the ruling class. Their own class consciousness as functionaries involves essentially a consciousness of themselves as realizing high standards of professional performance. This is compatible with the role of perpetuating capitalist society, since capitalists in general recognize that they need to be saved from their own tendency to excesses that would endanger the society. So a certain amount of freedom must be accorded the intellectuals and the bureaucrats in the functionary class. Associated with this is the pitfall of control of a faculty union movement by those who wish to increase this freedom for the purpose of realizing even higher standards. Faculty unionism can easily become a powerful instrument for an intellectual elite. This danger will become most acute when the early critics of faculty unionism, who maintain that it will lead to intellectual mediocrity, see the best defense of their position in joining the union and in turning it to their elitist ends. Needless to say, such a danger implies the danger that organized faculty will reduce their own ranks drastically in order to develop internal excellence. This would make it easy for those who want to keep profits up by allocating less surplus value to higher education to find common ground with the professors. Faculty consciousness would move to a greater, rather than lesser, identification with the aims of the ruling class. The same danger awaits unions in all areas of the unproductive sector where there are traditions of internal autonomy regarding professional standards.

The second pitfall to be watched for is the intensification of the contradiction between unproductive and productive workers that arises from the fact that unproductive workers live off the surplus produced by productive workers. This contradiction will be intensified as the organization into unions becomes more complete in the unproductive sector. For when the latent strength in this area is made into a common force, the ability to get higher wages and benefits and to increase employment will be significantly enlarged. The capitalist press and the state will begin to drive a wedge deeper between the two classes by blaming the plight of the proletariat on the selfishness of the functionaries, which has become apparent in their more comfortable position. Already we are seeing the beginnings of a populist attack on the growth of the public sector, in which the greater part of the functionary class is employed. Such a conflict may not be reflected at the level of the labor bureaucracy. The bureaucrats are concerned with their own power. Their power is augmented by numbers, independently of whether growth is due to the organization of public or of private employees.

To counteract the tendencies leading to these pitfalls, it is necessary to have agitprop around the question of standards and the question of taxes. Propaganda that is critical of the standards on which an elitist takeover would be based may at first be populist in flavor--"serve the people," rather than "serve the proletariat." Materials are already available that will support the propagandistic claim that the elitists are themselves either hopelessly isolated from anything but pedantry or else hopelessly compromised because of gearing their research to the aims of the ruling class. One form of agitation on this score must be protests over individual firings on the basis of ingrown conceptions of what is good scholarship. Full-force pursuit of grievances in a unionist fashion is here serving a goal it could not have served in unions of productive workers. Another form of agitation on this score must be for preferential hiring and salary equalization for women. AFT must join the struggles of women's groups around discrimination grievances. Pursuit of security and equality grievances will give the anti-elitist propaganda concrete application. The difficulty here is that grievance persons in a faculty union will too easily be convinced by elitist conceptions that an aggrieved person was not doing "good or sufficient research." MR, the AFT grievance chairperson, has been side tracked by such conceptions on at least one occasion. MF, who handled grievances the first year, was completely confused on the purpose of handling grievances.

The question of taxes has a potential for uniting the productive and unproductive workers despite the objective conflict between them. A pursuit of more progressive tax policies will serve to unearth the nature of taxation in a capitalist society. It will become evident that the real source of difficulty for both productive and unproductive workers is that the capitalist wants control over the size of his share of surplus value. For the productive worker, higher taxes mean simply that the capitalist is not paying the worker as much. More of the surplus value created by the worker becomes tax revenue. To compensate, the capitalist in effect pays the worker less. Appurances do not change, though, since the worker's pay check is the same. In this situation, two possibilities are open to the proletariat: (1) attack the tax and come indirectly into conflict

with the functionaries that would be employed by the resulting revenue, or (2) attack the capitalist's right to continue the accustomed high rate of profit. The second possibility is given reality once it is generally recognized that the capitalist allows the tax only because he saw a need for employing those functionaries to perpetuate the capitalist order.

If one is to attack the capitalist's right to continued high profits, then one will work for a steeply progressive form of taxation with heavy taxes on profits in all forms. On this the two classes of workers can unite and overcome the worst consequences of the conflict between them. Union leaders will caution against putting too great a strain on the system. They, no more than the capitalist, want the capitalist to pay for the ideological and other defenses the capitalist gets from the functionary. Progressive taxation would doubtless have an effect on investment and might then have a stagnating effect. But what better proof would one need than this that the capitalist economy cannot afford justice even of the sort its ideologues profess? A soc functionary in a faculty union can hope to avoid intensifying the contradiction with productive workers by propaganda attacking the capitalist's right to maintain a high rate of profit while taxes used to preserve the capitalist system grow. Campus administration needs to appear to support capitalism in the eyes of legislators and the middle capitalists on the Boards and Commissions. Thus it never raises the issues of taxation, but merely protests cutbacks. This makes the taxation issue one more on which faculty can unite against the administration. The associated agitation will be united-front action with other unionists against new formulas to perpetuate regressive taxes and for a program of profit and high-income taxation.

#### #4. PROSPECTS

Personnel is the main problem for Local 2254 in implementing program. Three comrades are members; two are leaving. The other socs are either not activist, or in the case of the remaining one more active in women's groups than the union. The grievance chairperson, who is essential for the first tactic, is, as indicated, not thinking in terms of non-elite standards. The legislative chairperson, who is essential for the second tactic, is not only irregular in commitment but also sees the legislative job as providing time to hobnob with establishment politicians in the State House.

MF has appointive powers over these two positions, and is faced with a choice now as to whether to reappoint, but there are no clear alternatives. Were it not for the importance of keeping the local going, the president might have taken one of these positions. The possibility of doing so for 1974-75 is, though, a real one, since by then things will be developed enough for there to be a change of leadership. The important thing is create movement around the issues that will have a tie with the class struggle in general, and without a rank and file group outside the leadership the obligation falls on those in the leadership.

The non-soc members of the leadership make the obtaining of a contract into the ultimate victory. They see the path to that victory as being through opposition to the local administration. If this conception of the union is not opposed then the pitfalls mentioned are unavoidable. It will be difficult to get non-socs to support the general aims of avoiding elitism and building a better tax structure as the priorities of the union. An effort must be made to make the connections between these aims and the recognized aims of security and salaries without productivity increases. Insisting on these connections will be the first step, and one that a soc leadership must take.

What can be done within the national AFT? There is the possibility that at the August, 1973, Convention in Washington something will emerge from the embers of the old United Action Caucus that will give soc unionists a sense of direction. The UAC was formed from several tendencies in August, 1971, but its bid for a role in the AFT leadership in August, 1972, failed totally. Involvement with Comrade SZ in the Action Forum, a sub-group of UAC, around the issue of taxation--the anti-elitist grievance program is specific to higher education--offers the only concrete hope at the national level. The Action Forum can hope to work to draw members of the UAC into support of a program on taxation.

May Day, 1973