Ready to speak were significant senators and congresspersons and the presidents of many of the nation’s largest, most active industrial unions. All shared the objective of getting more and faster action out of Congress and the Administration to pull America out of its economic depression.

It all must have seemed almost too good to last. And so it was.

THE FIRST HINT of trouble developed at the main gate shortly before the scheduled starting time. A delegation without the required Jobs Now Rally stickers gathered, and demanded entry. Some had arrived on two rented Hertz stake body trucks. They received permission to transport riders and materials to the stadium. They distributed leaflets identifying the group as the “April 26 Rank and File Coalition.” Listed as parts of it were 15 caucus groups within five international unions. Also listed were 41 individuals, most of them from local unions in the midwest.

The April 26th’s group handbill called for “30 hours work for 40 hours pay,” a ban on overtime while there are layoffs, an “end to military aid to Cambodia and Vietnam (using) the war budget to provide jobs and social services,” fighting “racism and sexism,” “independent political action to build a labor party” and “a one-day strike to back these demands.”

With the exception of the final two points, it is a program shared by many on the center-left, spanning communists and militant anti-communists.

Some of the group gained admission by showing local union cards, a procedure which marshals offered to use for all, except those who were trying to carry bull horns into the stadium. However, apparently believing they were to be denied admission, they rushed the gate and forced their way in.

BY CHANCE, Actor E. G. Marshall, one of the scheduled speakers, had arrived at that moment, and was swept inside. He was untrammeled and untouched however.

On the field, troubles developed with the public address system, which earlier had tested out fine. It was not reaching everybody in the stadium.

Walter Burke, secretary-treasurer of the United Steelworkers of America, read the keynote remarks for USWA and IUD President I. W. Abel, who could not attend because of the death of his brother.

Senator Hubert Humphrey was next and was about five minutes into his text when Katie Fowler, 34, of Danville, Va., rushed onto the playing field carrying a sign which read, “Stop Exporting Our Jobs.” Blonde, peppy Mrs. Fowler said later that she is an executive board member of an Amalgamated Clothing Workers local union. She is working, but her husband, an employee of Dan River Mills, has been laid off as a result, she said, of competition from low-wage imports.

The crowd roared its support for her as marshals good-naturedly shepherded her off the playing field, and she broke free for two more forays toting the sign.

Soon others were trying the same tactic.

IN A MATTER of minutes, hundreds were on the infield, waving signs, parading and shouting. Hundreds clustered in front of the speakers stand, some taking up chants including “Capitalism Must Go,” “A Kick in the Ass to the Ruling Class,” and “Jobs Now.”

Humphrey, an old pro at the mike, tried to pick up the “Jobs Now” chant to get control of the crowd. The group in front of the speakers’ stand would have no part of it. Congresswomen Barbara Jordan and Bella Abzug both tried to restore quiet, but those crowded against the marshals hastily arm-to-arm in front of the speakers’ platform wanted their own messages.

Finally, two from the crowd were given chances to use the microphone with no visible impact.

The New York Theater Guild contingent, at the request of an alert marshal, started a parade around the infield so that demonstrators could let off steam. That pulled some, but when the Guild tried to lead a return to the stadium, the demonstrators returned to the speakers’ platform.

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HUNDREDS milling around the infield stymie tens of thousands in the stands. The picture was taken shortly before the Jobs Now Rally ended.

NCLC Conspicuously Absent

Conspicuously absent from the April 26th Jobs Now Rally were the National Caucus of Labor Committees and its political arm, the U.S. Labor Party.

The Washington POST announced that NCLC would join in the New York parade to RFK Stadium. On April 27th, the POST reported that the NCLC had formally notified the paper that it had not participated.

Handbillers did include representatives of groups which had previously reported they had been physically damaged by NCLC cadres.

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