

# network rk

## Voice of UAW Militants

### WHAT THEY ARE SAYING.....

“We let them know we would not be intimidated. We were prepared to take the whole thing to the membership in a no-holds-barred fight.” Those Who Struggle, p. 10.

“Show our fellow workers... that we know how to win.” UNC Demands Fighting Program, p. 6.

“UAW members have been systematically lulled into a feeling of security.” SUB Fraud, p. 27.

“Several hundred marched... shouting ‘TO HELL WITH BIG 3 PROFITS, WE WANT JOBS.’” UAW Goes to Washington.

“Whether the top UAW leadership realizes it yet or not... economic survival of the mass of auto workers will be at stake.” Editorials, p. 3.

“Class collaborationism as a way of fighting layoffs is on trial, with a very partial jury and an unforgiving judge.” Against the Machine, p. 18.

“I believe workers who went to Washington wanted to be part of a mass movement...” UAW Goes to Washington, center

“We need an economic plan controlled by working people and in their interests.” A Program for Who?, center p. 2.

“Won’t some of these union officials start seeing the light? The answer is NO, unless they are willing to give up the whole philosophy around which they have organized their entire lives.” Let’s Talk About It, p. 35.

.....IN THIS ISSUE OF NETWORK

March 13, 1975--

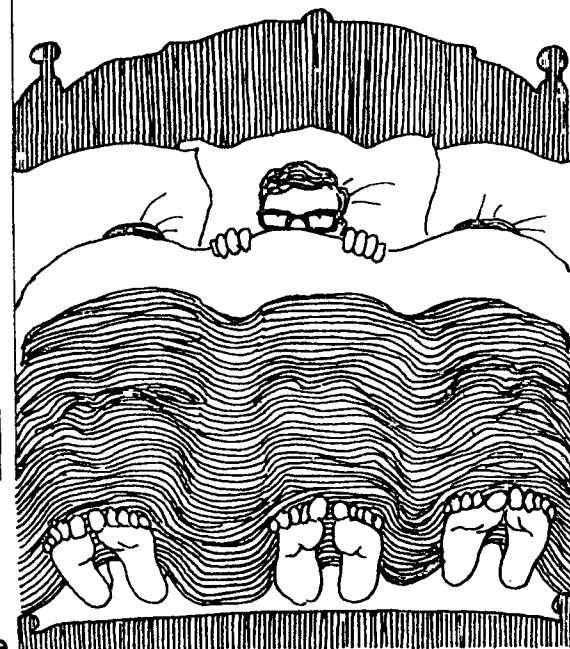
Leonard Woodcock says he is not in bed with the companies.

-reported on NBC TV



1974--

Richard M. Nixon says:  
“I am not a crook.”  
-press conference



Those Who Fight Back: How Chevy ranks built an opposition caucus.

U.N.C. calls job demonstrations.

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# Editorial

## THE NEW SITUATION FACING AUTOWORKERS

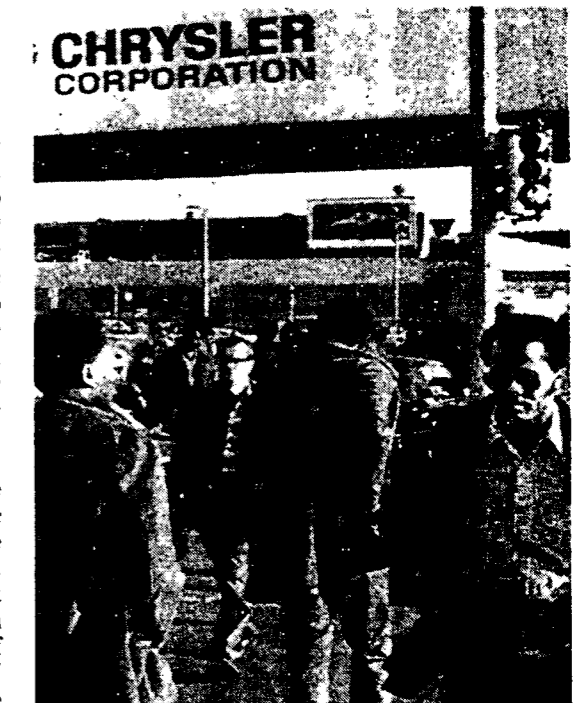
Top level executives signed layoff orders putting one third of the auto workforce on the streets indefinitely. Our response as auto workers was to peacefully file out of the plants and line up at the unemployment and SUB offices. For those of us with enough seniority to collect SUB, the whole thing didn't seem that serious. We were taking home pretty good money for just sitting on our asses, partying, or fixing things up around the house.

Most of us made it through the winter all right. But with the spring thaw, the SUB program is going bankrupt. The Chrysler fund will probably have already gone bust before this issue of Network has reached you. And GM will be following closely. The auto executives are banking on the hope that the mass of auto workers will peacefully accept the bankruptcy of the SUB fund, just like we peacefully accepted the indefinite layoffs. To help them out. UAW officials have stated time and again that the SUB program was not designed to deal with situations like the present—or to put it in other words, that the auto giants are absolutely within their rights in cutting off our funds.

The time has come for auto workers to face the hard facts of life. The years of economic prosperity that characterized the period since World War II have definitely come to an end. The 1974—75 economic crisis is very different than the 1958 recession, which was merely an economic decline within a long term period of economic boom. Whether our top UAW leadership realizes it yet or not, we are

entering a period where the economic survival of the mass of auto workers will be at stake.

The UAW as we know it today grew to maturity during the years of economic boom and stability. It was during these times that the leadership developed the firmly held view that it is the responsibility of the union to preserve



harmonious relations with management. In adopting this philosophy of business unionism, they rejected the old class struggle ideas around which the UAW was originally organized.

In the old days, unionists know that there was a constant battle between the worker and the boss. They knew that in times of economic trouble, the boss would take away everything the workers were not strong enough to hold onto. They knew that the purpose of a union was to organize the workers' unity and solidarity so we could stand together and fight for our rights. They knew that, like it or not, labor and capital are natural enemies. When economic hard times come, one or the other must suffer.

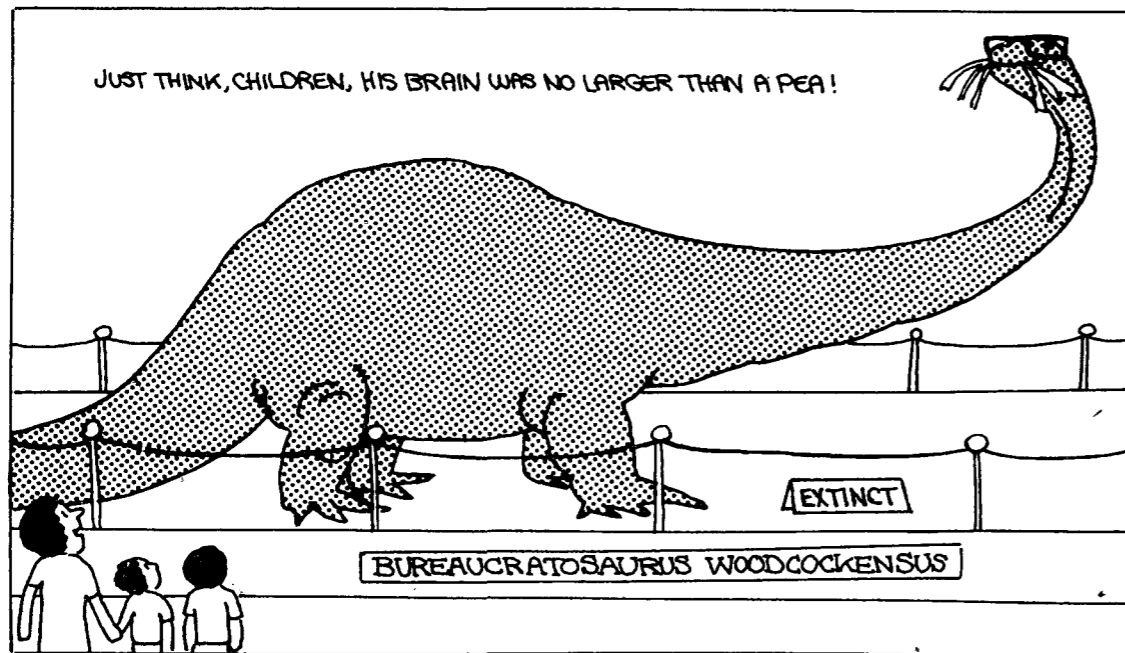
**Big business prefers that it be us, the workers, who suffer. And as long as we are willing to suffer peacefully, cooperative and harmonious labor relations can be maintained. But the price of peace will be a systematic drive by management to solve their economic crisis by taking it out of our hides.**

This spring they say: "Catch 22—no SUB during times of economic crisis." And when they get away with that, we can expect that other benefits we thought were secure will

come under attack. Furthermore, we can expect that speedup 1930's style will be the order of the day as they try to bolster sagging profits. With it will come discipline—a drive to eliminate those who won't stand the pace, as well as deteriorating plant and safety conditions. Income is already under attack through inflation, and this too will get worse as they tell those still on the job: "Be happy with what you get—at least you're still working."

All of us learned in school about the dinosaurs that grew big, fat and powerful during an age of lush vegetation on the planet earth. When it started getting cold, the dinosaurs could not adapt to the hard times and became extinct. Unless the UAW can be changed, it too will go down. It will go down taking us, the auto workers, with it.

When UAW leaders tell us that the SUB program was not designed to deal with situations like the present, we should respond by telling them: "It is the policy and method of the present UAW leadership that is not designed to deal with situations like the present!" Our union, the UAW, is still a powerful organization. The UAW leadership must be forced to effectively use the union machinery to organize and mobilize the membership for action.



# ART FOX

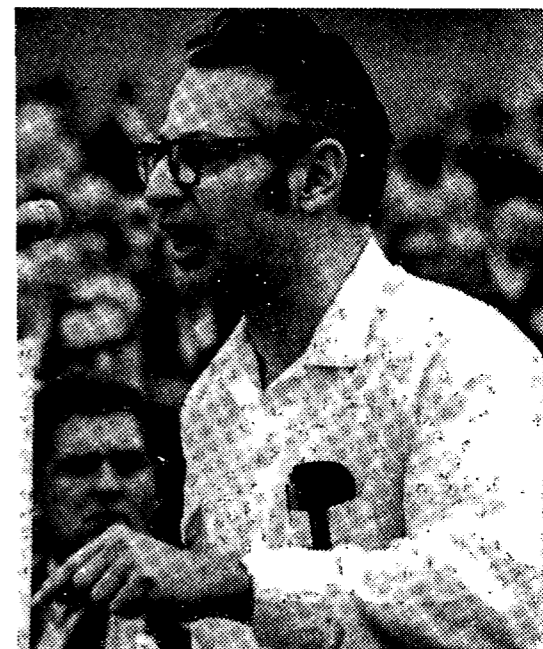
**Network** mourns the passing of Art Fox, founding member and main theoretician of the United National Caucus. Art began work in the auto industry at the giant Ford River Rouge complex as a production worker in 1947. After five years in production, he transferred as an apprentice into the tool and die unit. He remained active in Local 600 and in the tool and die unit until his recent disability retirement. Art was actively involved in the affairs of the United National Caucus until the very week of his death.

During all his years in the UAW, Art was always associated with the opposition to the Reuther-Woodcock machine. During the conservative 1950's and early 1960's this was a superhuman task. Some oppositionists capitulated and went over to the administration. Some were threatened into dropping out of union activities. Some were driven out of the industry. Art is one of the tiny handful who stood fast and survived.

It wasn't easy. Art was well known as a "red" during the McCarthyite years when Reuther was stirring up an anti-communist witch hunt inside the union to drive out all political opponents. He didn't hide the fact that he remained true to the socialist and revolutionary beliefs of his youth, while men like Reuther sold out their professed beliefs at the first opportunity.

And Art had opportunities. He had a brilliant mind and trained himself as an excellent theoretical and practical economist. He was a capable leader, a fine speaker. A man with his skills could have moved up to a position of wealth and prestige inside or outside the labor movement if he would only sacrifice his principles. But Art remained loyal to his class and kept on fighting.

When the United National Caucus was formed in 1967, Art, more than any other single individual, represented the continuity



between the newly emerging movement and the best tradition of this union's past. He was trained inside the UAW by the class fighters who originally built the union. He kept thier traditions alive through constant struggle. And he transmitted these traditions to a new generation of class fighters now just emerging.

All of us who have been part of the United National Caucus have been greatly influenced by Art. More than anyone else, he shaped the program and approach of the caucus. He taught us all lessons that were recorded in no books. And as the new autoworker's movement grows, his influence in it will grow. Already, his goals and inspirations are being carried forward by young workers who never met him, and who may never even have heard his name. His goal in life was to advance and serve the workers' movement. His life was a success.

# United National Caucus Demands

When you read this article, the United National Caucus rank and file demonstration for jobs will have happened. They have been planned for several cities during the first week of April. The official demands of the demonstration, adopted by the UNC executive board and distributed at the demonstration is reprinted to your right. The Network Editorial Board is in basic agreement that these are the proper demands to be raising at the present time.

The Chrysler SUB fund will go broke right around the time of the demonstrations. And GM will follow shortly. Those of us on SUB will suddenly be forced to live on an income cut drastically in half. And despite all rosy predictions, low seniority workers face the real threat of losing their jobs permanently. The



UNC picket line at Solidarity House in Detroit

same goes for high seniority workers in plants where closures threaten. The UNC was right on the mark in making its first demand: **JOBS FOR ALL.**

## THE ARGUMENTS ARE ON OUR SIDE...

But we must face the fact that many of our brothers and sisters will look at these demands through discouraged eyes. They will see that the demonstrations are still quite small and weak. "How do you expect to win a fight for jobs?" they will ask us, "Especially now when we are in a depression and cars aren't selling."

We can go through the program. We can explain that we want the companies to shorten the work week in order to bring everyone back—and pay full wages. We can point out that under the terms of the present contract, if the company schedules a short work week, they are required to pay everyone with one year or more seniority 80% of their pay for the hours less than 40 worked—and that this money does not come out of the SUB fund or cost the workers credit units. Low seniority workers would get time toward one year seniority; money would be paid into the SUB fund, etc.

We could go on to make arguments about how companies have no right to shut a plant and throw into the streets workers who have already given the company the best years of their lives. We can argue that letting the SUB fund go broke is just a rip-off. The companies have no right pulling this shit: "Well, it says in the fine print...and so on and so forth." But really, to the rank and file worker, these probably won't be the main questions that they want answers to.

# Fighting Program For the U.A.W.

Working people produce all the wealth in this country. It's not too hard to make a convincing argument that working people have a right to the products of this wealth, a decent and secure life for ourselves and our families. People want to hear, not just what we have a right to, but **how in hell's name are we going to get it. That's the main question we have to answer.**

How can we force the companies to put everyone back to work with short work week at full pay? How can we make them back up the SUB by the full assets of the corporation to keep it from going bankrupt? How are we going to defend minority workers and women workers from suffering the deprivation and poverty that comes from their position of last hired; first fired?

Our biggest problem is to convince our fellow workers that we, as working people, have the power to win all these things and more. We have to convince our fellow workers, not just that we have the power, but even more important, that we, as ordinary working people, are capable of organizing ourselves to actually exercise that power. We have to show our fellow workers, not only that we know how to fight and protest—but **THAT WE KNOW HOW TO WIN.** We have to show them that we have a strategy that can turn the small weak forces we have today into a winning movement.

## WHAT WE NEED IS ORGANIZATION

The key to doing this lies in point 4 of the UNC demonstration program: "UAW Action." Our union, the UAW, is one of the largest and most powerful organized forces inside this country today. The misleaders who run the union, refuse to effectively mobilize and

## UNC DEMONSTRATION DEMANDS

### JOBS FOR ALL

Share the work with a short work week at full pay. Create work through a massive program of public works. Fund this by cutting the military budget. Jobs not war. Keep Jefferson Assembly open. No overtime while there are any layoffs.

### GUARANTEE THE SUB

SUB should be guaranteed for all laid off workers to be backed-up by the full assets of the corporations. Full unemployment compensation and medical insurance for all workers.

### FIGHT RACISM; FIGHT SEXISM

No retreat on the victories won by minority workers and women workers. Stop racist attacks on national minority workers by corporations, government, and unions. Stop sexist attacks on women workers by corporations, government, and unions.

### UAW ACTION

Set the date for a massive march on Washington backed by a national 24-hour work stoppage to press the above demands on the corporations and the government. Independent political action—no reliance on the Democratic or Republican parties. Labor must build its own party. Build democratic committees of the unemployed in the locals. The International Executive Board should call an Emergency UAW Convention to mobilize the union for action.



organize this tremendous power on behalf of the membership. Instead of writing letters and pleading with congressmen for small changes, our union has the power to forcefully demand results.

Point 4 of the UNC program states: "Set the date for a massive march on Washington of the unemployed, backed up by a national 24 hour work stoppage to press the above demands on the corporations and government." **Picture a demonstration of a quarter million angry workers and unemployed people in Washington D.C. Picture a national 24 hour work**

**stoppage, with not just autoworkers, but truck drivers, steel workers, miners, secretaries, and so on—all stopping work for one day in support of this demonstration.**

It would scare the pants off the corporation executives! It would be a demonstration of our power as working people, sending everyone a message loud and clear. Let's face it, the only time that working people ever won anything significant was when we proved to the bosses that refusing to grant our demands might cost them more than giving in.

Our union, the UAW, has the power to call

and organize such a demonstration. It has the power to touch off a work stoppage that would get support, not just among autoworkers, but in other unions and among non-unionized workers as well: We, as ordinary rank and file workers, have a winning strategy when we organize to force our union to fight.

### SHOWING THE WAY

Today, our numbers are small—but no smaller than the numbers of workers who began the drive to organize the union during the last great depression. And we start from a better position than they did. They had no union at all and had to organize the whole thing from scratch. We have a very strong and powerful union. All we have to do is organize and fight to make the union do its job.

We campaign among the membership to show them what a union can do if only the leaders are willing to organize a fight. Demonstrations are part of this; putting our literature out is part of this; organizing strong local caucuses and leading local struggles is part of this. Economic conditions will stay bad and get worse for years to come. Even if there is an economic upturn next year, it won't last long—and we will be right back down and going deeper. By hanging in there, more and more of our fellow workers will get the message that we know what we are talking about.

### WITH OUR OWN LEADERSHIP

Our goal is to build a fighting rank and file movement today that can force our union to act, and tomorrow to take over the union and turn it into the kind of consistent fighting force it should be. The more the ranks listen to what we have to say, the more the present leadership feels that their jobs are threatened, and the more they feel under pressure to act. When they take even a half-hearted step in the right direction—we support those steps and try to push them even further. But at all times, we keep on fighting to make the UAW the kind of union it should be. Keep on pointing to the kind of programs that should be carried out, and keep on giving whatever day-to-day leadership in struggle we can.

The people who run the UAW today are so tied up with the bosses, that no matter how much pressure we put on them, the leadership in action that they will give will always be too little and too late. Their responses will be based only on an effort to hold onto their own jobs—not on a sincere desire to lead autoworkers in the kind of fight needed to defend us.

Already we hear all kinds of whispering among UAW leadership people: "You better do this and such or the militants will take over." That's right, the militants will take over. The fight is just starting. The movement is still in its infancy. But the future is ours.

## SUPPORT — JOIN — BUILD THE UNITED NATIONAL CAUCUS

- I would like to join the United National Caucus. Enclosed is \$6 yearly membership dues.
- I would like more information about the United National Caucus.
- I would like a copy of "What is the United National Caucus?" One copy free. Multiple copies 10 for \$1.

Name.....

Address.....City.....State.....Zip.....

Local.....Phone.....Union office (if any).....

Send to: The United National Caucus, PO Box 3821, Centerline, MI 48015.

# Those Who Fight Back

## How Chevy Ranks Built an Opposition Caucus

by Wendy Weinberg, Local 235



Solidarity: Justice Committee supports Farm Workers' rally.

Workers everywhere have come to recognize General Motors as a monster—the toughest of all the giant corporation. The Chevy Gear and Axle Plant, located in the center of Detroit is key in the General Motors operation. We make 75% of all GM axles and gears for cars and trucks. The company could not operate long without us. After years of quiet, ulcers are once again developing in the belly of the monster as workers at Chevy Gear and Axle are getting ourselves organized to start hitting where it hurts.

Until 1970 most of the workers at Chevy were quite old. Among the large numbers of young workers hired since then, many were black and many were women. Our workforce today is at least 60% black. But the militant black caucuses that formed at the other Detroit central city plants in the late 60's like at Dodge Main and Eldon Gear and Axle (Chrysler) never had much effect on Chevy. Severe discipline and company-promoted racial divisions between black and white workers have always been serious problems at Chevy. Furthermore, our workforce is divided up into nine different small plants, and a worker from one plant cannot enter another plant without special permission.

In 1972, we experienced tremendous speedup and overtime. The GMAD (General Motors Assembly Division) plants were then all facing heavy speedup, and the squeeze was put on us as a supplier plant to keep up the pace. By summer 1973, tension developed to the point where Chevy experienced its first walkouts of any consequence in years. They were walkouts of heat and overtime but the underlying cause was pressure caused by speedup and overtime.

### GETTING OUT THE TRUTH

It was at that time that the first rank and file newsletter began to appear at Chevy. It was called "Shifting Gears" and talked about how to fight the company and what needed to be done to get the union to stand up for our rights.

The union officials and the company branded Shifting Gears as "propaganda by outside agitators." But it got widespread support from rank and file members who came to recognize it as a newsletter that told the truth about what was going on at Chevy and what was going on in Local 235. Especially company-promoted racism, and worker resistance to speedup and bad working conditions. Chevy tried to harass

and fire those associated with Shifting Gears, but we succeeded in defending ourselves. I, for one, spent seven months fired out of the plant from September 1973 to April 1974—but was reinstated with 6 months back pay after receiving widespread support among the membership.

### CAUCUS ORGANIZED

It was in the same month I got back, April, that militants associated with Shifting Gears teamed up with other militants in the Local to form a larger rank and file group called the Gear and Axle Justice Committee.

The majority of the members were black, but the group included blacks and whites, men and women, from the very beginning. Most of the members were young workers with quite a bit of seniority who had been fighting General Motors as individuals for many years. The Justice Committee became quickly recognized in the Local as the militants' group. All of our members, the whites as well as the blacks, took a firm stand in fighting the GM-promoted racism that we found all around us.

The active core of the Justice Committee was only about 15 people. But the power of its ideas and actions are totally changing the stranglehold the union leadership and the company used to have over the membership. We have continually stressed the need to keep the membership informed and involved. We have talked about the kind of struggles needed to defend our wages, working conditions, and job security from total deterioration. The union officials and the company have viciously attacked the Justice Committee and our members. But the active membership has held strong and the respect we got from the local membership has grown tremendously.

### ELECTION ACTION

Our first activity as an organized group back in April/May 1974 was to organize a Justice Committee slate to run for delegate to the UAW Constitutional Convention. All of our delegates pledged that the Justice Committee would not just be around at election time; but that our organization would remain active and involved year round dealing with the problems that face the membership at Chevy. We flooded the plants with more literature than anyone at Chevy had ever seen before. We had

Justice Committee jackets made up and a couple of hundred people bought and wore them.

The delegate election was a good activity to begin a caucus with. It gave us an opportunity to put forward our ideas about what was wrong with the UAW and what needed to be changed. **We stated that we were not just in opposition to the Local 235 union leadership, but that we wanted to change the whole way the UAW is being run from top to bottom.** The union leadership has given up seriously challenging the company in any way. And so long as the union goes along with the General Motors program, it can't possibly solve the problems we were having in the plants with speedup and overtime. We stated that the goal of the Justice Committee was to begin rebuilding the union in the plants. The membership would have to take control of the union into our own hands... by any means necessary.

We didn't get anyone elected, but our local union leadership was shocked at how well we did. In our local, the administration is divided into two cliques, both of which ran full slates for delegate. Altogether there were 50 people running with the top 12 going to Los Angeles. All the Justice Committee candidates came in between number 14 and number 20—meaning that we beat out the bottom half of both the administration slates. This election put us on the map. We could no longer be called "outsidè agitators."

After the convention, we got a report on everything that happened there from members of the United National Caucus, and reported this fully through literature to the entire Local 235 membership. **People liked the idea of getting information that had never been available to them before. Workers began waiting eagerly for the next issue of our newsletter called "Justice," feeling that they were finally being told the truth about things.**

### FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

One of the things we reported to the membership that had happened at the convention was the change in the term of officers to three years. We found out that we had the right, by majority vote of the local membership, to petition the International Executive Board to keep a shorter term of office for committeemen. We circulated petitions in the plant, forcing the Local

Executive Board to put the question on the agenda of the membership meeting. For the first time at a local meeting, the rank and file people outnumbered the old familiar faces. Except for three district committeemen who were members of the Justice Committee, every other office holder in the local favored the three year term: But we had the votes at the meeting, and so our local president, Robertson, declared the vote illegal and scheduled another vote on the three year term. We protested, pointing out to the membership that our local officials were only interested in their own jobs and had no concern for the democratic rights of the membership.

The first time around, we won by a vote of 56 to 46. In the revote, the leadership did a much better job of mobilizing—but so did we! **This time we won by a vote of 305 to 232. We showed the ranks it was possible to win, even with the entire local machine against us.** Even though this was only a small victory, it was very important to us. It helped to undermine the common idea that nothing could be done to change things in our favor. Many people began to think of other changes that we could get with a little organization.

### WE DEFEND OURSELVES

After this victory, attempts by both management and local union leaders to harass, threaten, and intimidate Justice Committee members stepped up. **We always publicized these incidents in our newsletter, and demanded of the union leadership that they put the lid down on their flunkies, and that they better defend Justice Committee members from management's attacks.**

We stopped the physical threats against our members. But they continued trying to scare people away from the Justice Committee. They jumped on the fact that I, a prominent member of the Justice Committee, am well known in the local as a socialist. They tried to use this to red-bait the entire committee. But the hysteria they hoped to create never did materialize. Then they used a flabby pretext—a mistaken statement of fact that was printed in our newsletter—to try to bring the district committeemen who were members of the Justice Committee up on charges, threatening to take away their elected positions. This they hoped would frighten and divide our ranks.

We made it clear that we were willing to

# Heard Over The Network



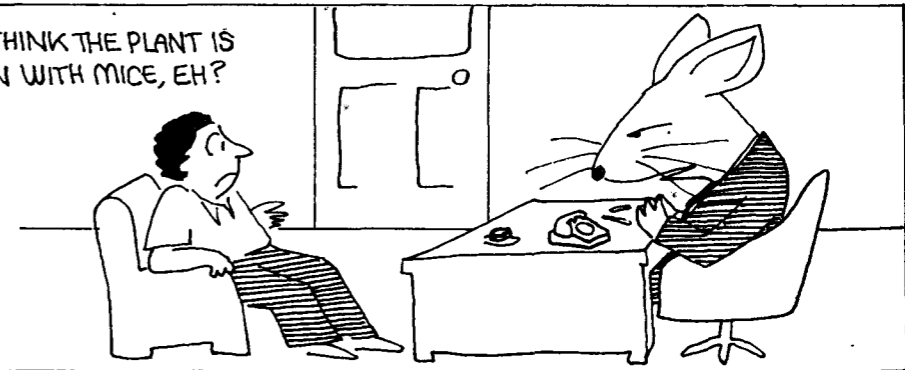
An assembly plant committeeman was writing a large number of health and safety grievances. In a magnanimous gesture, labor relations told him not to bother writing grievances. Instead, he was told, "When you have a problem, come right up to the labor relations office and tell us about it."

A few days later, workers were complaining about mice getting into their lunches. The committeeman complained to labor relations, but was told that mice weren't really a problem. "Any plant as big as this has mice," he was told. "Anyway, they come in with the stock from Detroit, and you can't do anything about it."

Later in the day, while labor relations staff were eating lunch, the committeeman returned with a bundle under his arm. "So you don't think that mice are a problem," he said. **At that point he opened his bundle and dropped a gift on the desk—a dead mouse that had been squashed on the shop floor.** The labor relations man nearly lost his lunch.

Next week two things changed in the plant. Fumigation crew eliminated the mice. And a new order came out from labor relations: **Henceforth, no committeeman or other unauthorized personnel shall be permitted into the labor relations office without being called.**

SO YOU THINK THE PLANT IS  
OVERRUN WITH MICE, EH?



With thanks to  
Thurber

retract the statement, but they wanted blood. Leading members of the Justice Committee were requested to attend a local executive board meeting. At the meeting, our regional director, George Merrelli, got up and warned the board that the Justice Committee was dangerous, and that it had to be destroyed and driven out of the local. **We let them know we would not be intimidated. We were prepared to take the whole thing to the membership in a**

**no-holds-barred fight. We backed them off when they found they couldn't scare us into running. Our Committee was more solid and together than they thought.**

The other game they pulled on us is having the company and the union leadership gang up on the Justice Committee committeemen. The company starts busting people in the district right and left, and then they refuse to settle anything in the first step of the procedure—the-

only step where the district committeeman is involved. The shop committeemen then sit on the grievance and refuse to act. Then the local officials put their stooges out on the floor running their mouths about what a lousy job the district committeeman is doing. "That guy is such an idiot," they say. "He can't settle nothing."

#### OUR STRENGTH—ON THE JOB SUPPORT

We in the Justice Committee know that when a committeeman is willing to play ball with the company, the company makes sure to do things to make him look good to his people. We know that whenever you press the company where it hurts—really defend the membership from attack—you can't expect justice from the grievance procedure. We are trying to make the local membership aware of the fact that if they think they can just sit back and let the union solve their problems for them, we won't get anywhere. The only power we have is through acting together and protecting each other. GM needs us to get out production. Knowing how to make use of this basic fact of life, is the real secret of our strength as workers. Until the membership learns how to effectively use this strength, a militant committeeman has a really hard job. Educating the membership to this, is one of the things the Justice Committee is all about. But it's a long battle. Most people are still captured by fear.

Since we were formed, the Justice Committee has continued to make steady progress. But it's been hard going, with lots of set-backs along the way. In January 1975, our situation changed dramatically. Chevy Gear and Axle as hit by layoffs like it has never seen before as far back as anyone remembers. Our plant has long been known for its job security. People used to say: "At least you're sure of a job at Chevy. It's not like Chrysler." Workers are now laid-off back to September 1969. All 300 women in the plant were hired after 1970, and all are now out. High seniority workers are being put on the hard jobs they haven't done in years, and many are rushing to retire. Harassment by management has always been bad at Chevy, but now it's far worse. Workers, both in the plant and on the streets, are angry and shocked. Overtime is still being worked. When the company found it difficult to get volunteers, they started forcing people with

provisions in the '73 "voluntary overtime" contract.

#### NOW THE FIGHT FOR JOBS

The Justice Committee is now leading the fight in the local for jobs, and against speedup and overtime. Back in November, before the layoffs really hit us hard, we put forward a motion at a regular local membership meeting for the establishment of a local union Unemployment Committee. The local President responded in a surprising way. With elections coming near, he must have decided that to fight us on the question of setting up this committee was unwise. Instead, he went along and appointed one of our members chairman.

The Justice Committee has taken the leadership of an active rank and file Unemployment Committee. We have gotten people involved who have never been active in the union before. The president let us set up meetings, because he did not think we would actually be able to get people involved. So far, at least 50 people have participated in our activities. We are at the local hall every Friday to answer phone calls and help laid off members with their problems.

We organized to get laid off members from our local to go on the bus to the UAW demonstration in Washington February 5. Most of the members who went on the bus and who participate in our Unemployment Committee are women. Until now, women members have not been encouraged by the union to get involved in union activities. The Unemployment Committee has given women members that chance. For women, getting a job at Chevy was a big thing because it is very hard for women to get jobs which pay so well. For a lot of women with children, losing a job in auto means either trying to raise a family and pay childcare on three dollars an hour, or going on welfare. Most of the women know what it's like to be poor, and are ready to fight not to go there again.

Our Unemployment Committee is leading a fight to get rid of overtime. We were able to get a motion passed at our February local membership meeting that stated:

"Local 235 demands that GM management stop scheduling all overtime what-so-ever while members are on layoff. This shall be conveyed to both local and central manage-

ment by letter. A letter shall also be sent to the UAW International Union calling on them publically to demand that GM stop scheduling all overtime."

This has made the local union administration up tight. They are spreading rumors that the Unemployment Committee will no longer be allowed to function. Members of the Unemployment Committee have been threatened that if they continue to follow the leadership of Justice Committee members, they will be "blacklisted." The local president also threatened to remove the Justice Committee member who is chairman.

At present, the Justice Committee and the Unemployment Committee are pushing in the local for some kind of demonstration at a plant working overtime if the company won't stop. We want to call public attention to this outrage that GM is perpetrating. This question is coming up at our next local membership meeting. It will be a fight we don't expect to

win easily. But the Justice Committee is also discussing and exploring the kind of action we can take by ourselves, if necessary.

#### BATTLE ON ALL FRONTS

Local elections are coming up soon. We plan to put ourselves forward with a fighting program for all positions we can cover. Every day, the economic crisis is convincing more Chevy workers that we have no choice but to fight back. We are preparing to give leadership to the struggles that we expect will explode. We will be participating in the April 3 demonstration for jobs that the United National Caucus has called in the Detroit area, and will be trying to turn out Chevy workers for it. We see a long hard struggle ahead of us, and expect no easy victories. But we believe that what the Justice Committee stands for represents the future of the autoworkers' movement.

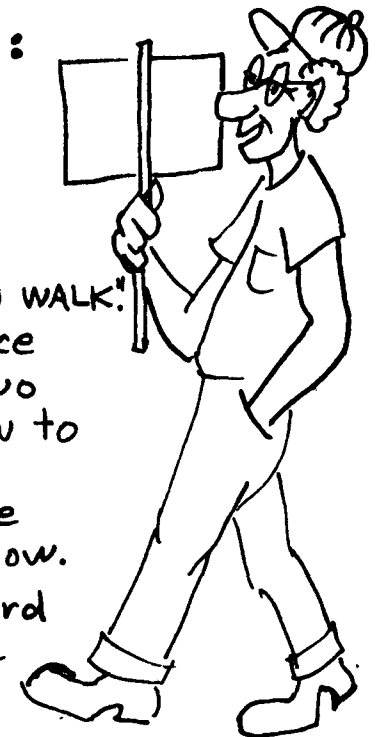
THE OLE PHILOSOPHER SEZ:

Used to be a real bright guy in our local, crackerjack organizer. Always said: "Phil, YOU GOTTA CRAWL BEFORE YOU CAN WALK!"

Can't say he didn't practice what he preached. Taught two generations of youngsters how to crawl.

Paid off, too. Works in the UAW Education Department now.

A deep fellow he wuz. Hard to remember his name, cause everybody called him Snake.





# MALCOLM



# 10 yrs. later

Ten years ago Malcolm X was murdered. He was one of the greatest American political leaders of our time.

Malcolm was the most dynamic spokesman of the black liberation movement at a time when it was changing many of its ideas and directions. The civil rights' movement was beginning to change into the black power movement, and he had a powerful impact on it. The goals of both Malcolm and the older civil rights movement participants were the same—the liberation of black people from racist oppression and degradation. But there were differences on almost everything else.

The strategy of the civil rights' movement was to organize pressure on the Democratic Party. Malcolm was opposed to the Democrats because they always sold out black people's struggles against racism—and he made his opposition clear.

The tactics of the civil rights movement were based on non-violence which Malcolm X knew was folly. He continually pointed out that if all blacks were going to do was ask for change, all those in power had to do was refuse. Then what?

Finally Malcolm X knew and explained that centuries of racist oppression were not accidents, but part and parcel of the whole decaying political and economic system.

But Malcolm X was not an important leader for only black people. One of his contributions was to observe the mass movement that was being built by black people, and understand its tremendous potential for everyone.

"By any means necessary" was the slogan Malcolm made famous. He understood that when people rise up against years of oppression and harassment they won't be willing to settle for temporary or partial solutions. Malcolm saw that when tens of thousands of people were organized for struggle, they could accomplish much more than mere adjustments of the system. An organized mass movement could change society.

"We don't have to ask the man downtown can we demonstrate. We don't have to ask his consent; we don't have to ask his endorsement; we don't have to ask his permission.

"Anytime we know that an unjust condition exists, we will strike at it by any means necessary."

Malcolm X understood that this society exploited white people as well as black, but

that racism prevented many whites from struggling with blacks for change. And he understood that as long as white people wouldn't struggle against racism, then unity was impossible—even though both blacks and whites were fighting against the same enemy, a system centered on profits rather than people.

"You tell me what kind of country this is. Why should we do the dirtiest jobs for the lowest pay? Why should we do the hardest work for the lowest pay?"

"I'm telling you we do it because we live in one of the rottenest countries that has ever existed on this earth. It's the system that is rotten; we have a rotten system.

"It's a system of exploitation, a political and economic system of exploitation, of outright humiliation, degradation, discrimination—all of the negative things that you can run into, you have run into under this system that disguises itself as a democracy."

When Malcolm was killed he was working towards combining the struggle against racism with a struggle against economic exploitation. He was dedicated to total human freedom, not simply black liberation.

"People in power have misused it, and now there has to be a change and a better world has to be built..."

"I, for one, will join in with anyone, I don't care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth."

The conditions that Malcolm X fought against still exist. Many of them have, in fact, gotten worse. Today the difference is that the economic crisis and political chaos is affecting all of us—black and white, men and women, working people and unemployed people. All of these oppressed and exploited sections of society are beginning to fight back.

In a speech just before his death Malcolm X laid down a simple challenge. He said, "If this is a house of freedom and justice and equality for all, if that's what it is, then let's have it. And if we can't all have it none of us will have it."

The life of Malcolm X should be an inspiration to all UAW rank and file militants who know that in fighting to put the UAW house in order, we are beginning a fight to change all of American society.

by Rick Eusani, Local 51

# THE **ZENITH**

## STORY: Rank and Filers Against the Machine

by Dennis Shattuck

I believe that the Woodcock machine is fully aware that their leadership is for the first time being critically examined by most of the ranks. It is my opinion that they have already begun to realize that their policies will fail. This realization has produced a crisis of confidence in the UAW bureaucracy. Recognizing their own weaknesses, they have begun to fear even the most underdeveloped threat to their position of control.

As this crisis of confidence spreads throughout the bureaucracy, there will be different responses in individual situations. Recent events at my plant show one particular response.

### WAMPOLE STRIKES OUT

I belong to Local 1851 which is composed to the workers at the Zenith Electronics Plant in

Lansdale, Pa. We are a young local, formed in July, 1973. In October 73 we elected our first president, John Wampole.

Wampole's year in office was a disaster. Time and time again he refused to fight for the workers, instead defending the company's "rights" under the contract. In addition, Wampole never tried to hide his essentially pro-company outlook with militant rhetoric.

By December of 1974, Wampole's openly collaborationist attitude had isolated him from the membership.

It was in early December that the recession struck at Zenith. It was announced that half the workers were to be laid off indefinitely. The December general membership meeting on the 8th was a stormy one. About 50 people showed up and Wampole was asked what he was going to do about the layoffs. His response was so inadequate that by the end of the meeting he

was being openly jeered from the floor. It was agreed to hold a special general membership meeting the following Sunday to propose ideas on how to fight the layoffs.

On Thursday of that week, the local Executive Board met. Here too, Wampole was subjected to severe criticism from the entire executive board. By the end of the meeting, it was obvious that Wampole was virtually alone. On Friday, faced with the prospect of another membership meeting on Sunday, Wampole resigned.

What forced Wampole to resign was not simply the layoffs, nor was it simply the collaborationist attitude he had. **What forced Wampole to resign was the fact that the ranks had recognized that collaborationist leadership was totally unsuited to meet the economic crisis.** They had more or less consciously rejected Wampole's type of leadership.

### COMPANY PITCHES GREASEBALL

The events of the week had several immediate effects. First, the company, sensing that Wampole was losing control, decided not to tell the workers who was being laid off, and who wasn't. Although they had posted announcements that all workers would be notified of their status on the week of the 9th, only some skilled trades workers knew they were being laid off.

### UAW DESIGNATED HITTER STEPS IN

Secondly, it brought our service representative, Joe Robinson, on the scene. Robinson, although he too believed in collaborating instead of fighting with the company, was much less obvious about it than Wampole. Robinson would make speeches about how the company was the enemy and would make a show about how he fights for the membership. But Robinson had no intention of leading a fight against the layoffs any more than Wampole. On Dec. 15, Robinson came to the special general membership meeting realizing that it was necessary to calm down the ranks before they got out of hand.

Third, Wampole's resignation created a leadership vacuum in the local. The vice president, Charles DeNolfi, was inexperienced and had no clear idea of what to do. With Wampole gone, Robinson realized the danger was present that the more militant individual

members who had consistently kept the pressure on both him and Wampole could fill that leadership vacuum.

### WE VOTE FOR A NEWSLETTER

With the company postponing the layoff announcements and Wampole's resignation, there was a temporary dampening effect on the militancy of the previous week. The turnout on the 15th was much less than most people expected, and the meeting was dominated by Robinson. The only major agreement was that a newsletter should be produced and sent to all laid off members.

Over the Christmas holidays, Zenith announced that the plant was being closed down indefinitely.

### TREASURY SNATCHED

At the January 11 general membership meeting, the need for a newsletter was reaffirmed and it was also agreed to set up an unemployed council. In addition, the Feb. 5th March for Jobs had been transformed from a small lobbying effort into a major demonstra-



Color TV assembly line.

tion, and it was agreed that we would attempt to mobilize people for it. Surprisingly, Robinson, who again chaired the meeting, did not argue very strongly against these motions as I had expected. It was not until after the meeting that I found out why. Before the membership meeting, Robinson informed the new president and financial secretary that the International was taking control of the union funds and that from now on all expenditures had to be authorized by his signature. Throughout the entire membership meeting, he never once alluded to this fact.

What reason did Robinson give for taking the funds? He said to me that it was only a safeguard to protect against any attempt by the membership to blow all the money on a party and to insure the money was not stolen by union officials. Although he claimed there were constitutional grounds for this to happen automatically, I have not found any.

#### ROBINSON TAGGED

But when somebody else asked him at a different event, Robinson replied that it was necessary to do in order that the local not go "beserk" and start creating a "lot of bad publicity for the UAW." **What Robinson truly feared was independent action by the local membership. Any confusion on his intentions was quickly cleared up by his reaction when asked to okay money for the newsletter.**

In late January, a two page letter was sent out telling people about the Feb 5 demonstration and containing information on Blue Cross-Blue Shield, severance money, and announcing the creation of the unemployed council. At the January executive board meeting, Robinson was asked whether he would sign the money over to send out the newsletter. He said he would okay the money for the two page letter already sent and that he would okay money for one more letter about Blue Cross and Blue Shield. But he called a monthly newsletter "nonsense" and he flatly stated he would sign over no more money for it.

At the February general membership meeting a report was given on what Robinson had said about the newsletter and a motion was once again put to the floor about whether the membership wanted to mail one out. After a long and thorough debate, it was decided that even in the light of Robinson's opposition, the newsletter should be mailed.

As of this writing the entire affair has not yet come to a conclusion but by the time this article is read, it will have. My guess is that Robinson will refuse to give the money to have the newsletter printed and mailed. If this is the case, the International could find itself with a pretty angry local on its hands.

#### WE ADD UP THE SCORE

What lessons can be gained from this experience? I have drawn four conclusions.

1) I believe that there will be an **increasing number of conflicts between the bureaucracy and the ranks as the need for a fighting response to the layoffs becomes more pressing.**

2) **The confidence of the Woodcock machine is so shaky that there is a tendency to over-react to potential threats.** The first reaction of the bureaucracy in a situation of conflict is to protect itself from losing control. This is done without much regard to the affect these protective measures will have on the membership; the result of such a policy is to further disenchant the ranks with the present leadership.

3) **The local leadership plays a major role in the development of conscious understanding of how the UAW bureaucracy works.** This experience that our membership had with Wampole has instilled a more critical attitude among the workers about their leadership. At present there is a growing dissatisfaction with Robinson, similar to the dissatisfaction the ranks had with Wampole. Having been through such an experience once, it will not take as long to develop the next time.

4) **The role of a militant non-collaborationist opposition is vital. Even if it is not well enough developed to fill the leadership positions, it is necessary to consistently fight against the present leadership.** Without an opposition which poses an alternative to the the policies guiding the UAW at present, most workers will simply feel there is no way to challenge the bureaucracy and fall back into apathy.

The effectiveness of class collaborationism as a way of fighting layoffs is on trial, with a very partial jury and an unforgiving judge. We must work to bring in a quick verdict.

[Dennis Shattuck is Recording Secretary of UAW Local 1851.]

# The UAW Goes To Washington



## NETWORK REPORTS BY AN ECONOMIST AND BY TWO AUTO WORKERS...

# 1. AN ECONOMIST'S ANALYSIS: "Off Target"

by Mike Buckley

When UAW rank and filers arrived in Washington for the union's Unemployment Rally, they were given booklets with the union leadership's program for dealing with the economic crisis. It was about time.

Until the Washington Rally, Woodcock, Fraser and Co.'s big idea had been to offer union money to pay for auto advertising to demand that auto pollution regulations be weakened. **With 9,000 laid off autoworkers coming to the rally, the "leaders" knew they had to come up with something better.**

Well, Solidarity House labored, and brought forth "A Program for the Nation's People," the title of the booklet. The foreword to the program says: "Action is needed immediately to get the nation and its unemployed workers and their families back on their economic feet... We cannot afford delay..." Sounds good, but what is it they are actually proposing?

## UAW SHORT TERM PROPOSALS

The program has a section on **Immediate Needs**, which contains the union's major suggestions to revive the economy and reverse unemployment. Let's look at these proposals.

### 1). TAX CUTS

Leading the list is a call for "a fast, substantial cut in personal taxes." No one would argue with this. In fact, even Jerry Ford has said about the same. **But the program**

**leaves out any mention of how big a cut the UAW leadership believes is necessary.** The Democrats have proposed cuts of \$21 billion and George Meany has called for \$30 billion. **The largest of these figures amounts to little more than the amount of money that inflation has increased taxes over the last year or so.** This kind of tax cut will have little effect on unemployment in the near future. And if you read the fine print in the proposals you find that the makers don't really expect them to.

### 2). UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Next comes reform in unemployment compensation, calling for minimum federal standards to set benefits at  $\frac{2}{3}$  of wages and extend benefits to 52 weeks. We need benefits we can live on **for the full duration of layoffs.** The longer someone is laid off, the more they need the benefits. A lot of people will be spending more than 52 weeks in the streets. **If the UAW leaders really want to fight for this, we are with them even if it doesn't go far enough. What is more important, however, is that we fight to get rid of unemployment altogether, not just try to make it tolerable.**

### 3). PUBLIC JOBS

That brings us to the only section of the immediate needs which deals directly with jobs: public service employment.

Woodcock proposes a permanent program which would fund public works at  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the

federal budget until unemployment reaches 4%. It would then increase by  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the budget for each 1% increase in the unemployment rate above 4%. At current levels of the federal budget (approximately \$355 billion) and unemployment (8.2%), this works out to  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the budget or a little less than \$9 billion.

The Democrats have proposed \$5.9 billion for public jobs, claiming that this will create 900,000 jobs. On the same basis, the UAW version would create  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million jobs. By the government's very conservative figures, there are  $7\frac{1}{2}$  million people completely out of work and another 4 million working part-time because they can't find full-time jobs. **We need to put all these people back to work, plus the millions the government doesn't count.**

### 4). CREDIT

The final parts of the immediate program deal with the need to pump up consumer purchases of housing and consumer durables (like cars) by having "reasonable" interest rates and allocation of credit. Neither the UAW program, nor the Democrats who echo these statements, have said exactly how this is going to be done. And they won't. This approach involves even more future inflation or the kind

of controls on the banking system which none of the people who make the proposals are willing to consider.

**"HE DON'T HIT HARD, BUT HE MISSES"**

**The big thing that stands out in this union program, is that the list of immediate needs does not include a single demand on the auto companies or any of the other mammoth corporations which dominate the economy. Do the UAW leaders believe that the auto giants are innocent of all blame? They made huge profits during the recent boom, as they always do. But now that the depression is here, the union leaders seem to have forgotten all about the companies.**

The problem is jobs. And the jobs are in the plants, producing what we need to live with. We should be demanding that there be no layoffs. Let everyone work shorter hours at full pay. Such short work week provisions already exist in UAW auto contracts. In any place where layoffs have occurred, overtime should be prohibited until everyone is back to work.

The corporations will yell that they can't afford it, as they do whenever demands are made on them. If they can't or won't run the plants and keep people on the job, then the workers can. **If the bosses can't do their job**



Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young, UAW President Woodcock and Vice President Fraser hold a press conference about the Depression-level layoffs in auto, but find they have very little to say

right, it is they who should be laid off. Nationalize their corporations under the control of the workers. We do have immediate needs, and we can't afford delay.

The other thing that stands out in the union program is how moderate it is. It is clear that each of the proposals is just a drop in the bucket. A few billion dollars in an economy whose level of output (GNP), even in this depression year, is running at almost \$1500 billion. When you add up all the individual proposals what you have is a small puddle in an almost empty bucket.

This depression was triggered by government policy. But its roots are deep in the nature of the system. It is more severe than any downturn since the Great Depression. Unemployment is at the highest rate since 1941, and climbing. Public works and other New Deal programs failed to end unemployment in the 30's. It took a world war. Smaller programs of the same type won't succeed today.

#### IN THE LONG RUN

The UAW program ends with a section on long-term needs: some modest proposals and a lot of nice sentiments. The specific proposals include ending the oil depletion allowance, support for the Kennedy-Corman health insurance bill, and a 5-year pause on auto emission standards. The nice sentiments include permanent public works, energy conservation, closing tax loopholes, not allowing corporations to make "excess" profits, protection of workers against the hardships following plant closures, and "unwarranted" high food prices, and income security for the family farmer.

This economic system is not just getting older, it's getting worse. Nice sentiments and a few token reforms won't get rid of unemployment. And they won't prevent the next round of layoffs either.

We predict a slow recovery beginning late this year in the national economy. Unemployment will fall only slowly, however. And the cost of even a slow and partial recovery in employment will be a new round of inflation even worse than the recent 14% rates. According to staff studies by both the administration and the Democrats, unemployment will remain high for the rest of the decade, even with policies designed to stimulate the economy. In 1976 and beyond,

inflation will once again be speeding up.

We are in the early stages of a long-term crisis which affects all the capitalist countries. Even Woodcock and Co. are beginning to understand this. Their program says: "An uncoordinated economic system no longer is acceptable to society and to the community... Every segment of our economy today is run by plan. But the economy as a whole drifts like a ship without a rudder."

We agree that a planned economy is vitally necessary to ensure a reasonable standard of living for all. But a plant by itself does not ensure these results. We must ask: planning by who, and in whose interests?

We need an economic plant controlled by working people and in their interests. When the corporations plan our future, our interests are ignored and we see the results today. If the same groups control a national economic plan, we will end up with well-planned soup kitchens. The UAW proposal for a National Economic Planning Board leaves control over the economy in the hands of the same groups that got us into this mess.

The only role for the UAW ranks in this official program is writing letters and visiting politicians to plead with them to make things a little better. It was the union that taught us that it is our numbers and our power in the workplace that makes us strong. The corporations and the politicians who serve them will "listen" forever. They will only act on our problems if we force them to.



## 2. A GM WORKER: "An Opening for Militants"

by Ron Banks, Local 22  
(Cadillac)

The UAW Emergency Unemployment Rally was called, as expected, for the purpose of quieting the ranks. In reality, it was merely a showcase for Democratic liberal politicians.

Increasingly, Woodcock has been under attack for his refusal to take on the auto companies over the disappearing SUB funds and the mounting layoffs. The Washington Rally was staged to answer those critics.

Auto workers have been hit first and hardest by the current recession and the International leadership had to appear as if they were fighting in our interests. At the same time, the bureaucrats clearly tried to shift the responsibility for regaining jobs from themselves to the Democratic Party.

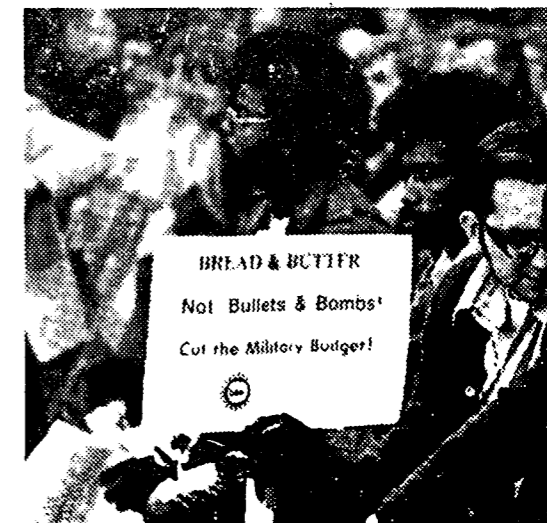
#### THE LOCAL'S RESPONSE

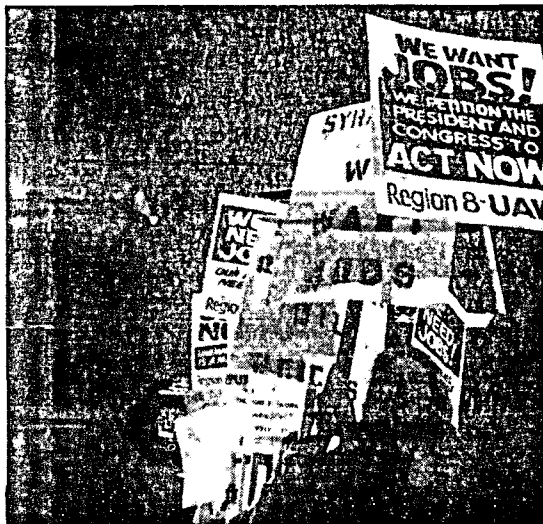
Since the Washington Rally was called primarily to discourage criticism of the international union leaders over their refusal to fight the layoffs, and not as a kickoff to a mass movement of workers to demand their jobs back, each local built the rally differently. Some locals, especially those which have strong rank and file unemployment committees (Local 235, for example) built the rally aggressively among their laid off members and succeeded in bringing workers to Washington who had little or no previous involvement in union activities.

Ford, Ypsilanti Local 898, on the contrary, which had over 1500 workers on indefinite layoff only brought 18-20 people to the rally.

The local leaders neither leafletted the plant nor sent letters to their unemployed members. The sole publicity that 898's leadership gave to the rally was to post a sign in the union hall.

Cadillac Local 22, which had nobody on layoff, built the rally very unevenly. The local union distributed leaflets throughout the plant describing the rally and promising a bus seat to anyone who wanted to attend, perhaps with the thought in mind that employed workers would hesitate losing two days pay to go to an unemployed rally. At any rate, after ninety people signed on to go, we were told that there was only room for 48 on the bus. True to form,





those seats were filled by workers friendly to the local leaders first and then with other workers.

### RANKS SKEPTICAL

Once at the rally, we heard speakers who ranged from Woodcock to Kennedy to first-year congressmen. One particularly disgusting speaker demanded that "no company should be allowed to close its doors—without first telling its workers."

The response to the speeches was lukewarm approval. The speakers were interrupted very few times for applause and nobody, with the possible exception of Kennedy, received lengthy ovations. Woodcock, in fact, evoked a considerable amount of booing when introduced.

Faced with 10,000 laid off workers in Washington, we hoped the union would release a strong program capable of winning back jobs. Rather, Woodcock urged us to support the liberal Democrats and to write our congressman asking him to back the UAW legislative program.

The UAW program, similar to Gerald Ford's, is designed to ease the burden of being laid off instead of putting people back on their jobs.

The International Union officers proved that they are unwilling to fight the companies over any demand. Only once at the rally did anybody from the podium speak badly of the

auto companies. That was when Doug Fraser again accused Chrysler of "mismanagement."

The one promise made by Woodcock that gives any cause for hope, and significantly the one proposal workers seemed most excited about, was his re-commitment to mobilize 250,000 workers in the streets of Washington by spring if the layoffs continue.

By that time, of course, workers will have been unemployed a lot longer. They will have seen the inadequacies of the bureaucrats' solutions, and they will have experienced the complete breakdown of the Chrysler and GM SUB funds. It's very unlikely that a quarter of a million workers will sit idly at the foot of the Washington Monument listening to Senator Mondale and Congresswoman Abzug calling for tax reform. While workers went to listen in February, by May they'll go to demand.

In talking to workers at the rally, it was obvious that most did not believe that the union is willing to fight for their jobs. I believe workers who went to Washington wanted to be part of a mass movement—however ineffectual it might be. They no longer believe that the union fights for them, but they still hope they can force the union to act.

Workers today are troubled and they want solutions to their problems. Why are prices skyrocketing, wages plunging, and jobs disappearing? They came to Washington to find answers and left the city hoping that maybe the union leaders at last recognize that there are thousands of workers who will fight the government and the companies if only their union will point the way.

Most workers at the rally seemed unclear about what they were expected to do there. About two hours before the scheduled start of the program, however, the United National Caucus (UNC) members began chanting and marching through the aisles. Within minutes, a group of twenty-five or thirty UNC'ers grew into a crowd of hundreds of chanting and singing pickets. Unfortunately, after the speeches began, the workers realized that they were there to listen, not participate, and only one other—smaller—picket developed throughout the afternoon.

### A REAL PROGRAM

The UNC also distributed a leaflet to those at the rally which had a real program for ending the layoffs. It read in part:

"EVERY LAID OFF WORKER MUST BE REHIRED. Bring workers back to the jobs working shorter hours with no cut in pay. ABOLISH ALL OVERTIME AS LONG AS ANY WORKER IS LAID OFF AND ELIMINATE PLANT CLOSURES. If the companies insist that they cannot afford to pay, DEMAND THAT THEY OPEN THEIR BOOKS and, if necessary, NATIONALIZE THE AUTO INDUSTRY WITH WORKERS CONTROLLING PRODUCTION. To push these demands, we insist that the International Executive Board call a SPECIAL UAW CONVENTION ON UNEMPLOYMENT. At this convention the UAW SHOULD CALL A CONGRESS OF LABOR FOR THE PURPOSE OF FORMING A LABOR PARTY."

This program can eliminate the economic crisis that workers face today, but our labor

leaders ignore the real solutions since the solutions demand fighting the companies.

We in the UNC support Woodcock's proposal to bring 250,000 workers to Washington to demand an end to the layoffs. But to give the demonstration added teeth, we further propose that it be backed by a general strike as well. A sympathy strike would not only give all workers a chance to participate in the demonstration, but would also create a feeling of solidarity among employed and unemployed workers. More important, it would really put a scare into the politicians and auto companies.

To prevent Woodcock from renegeing on his promise, we should instruct our local unions to send a letter to Woodcock ordering him to set the date for the demonstration. The Plymouth Local 51 unemployment committee has already



Even Lordstown's robots are out of work, as unassembled Vegas sit gathering dust on the line

passed such a motion. It calls on Woodcock to set the date for the demonstration and to back it with a one day general strike.

### SOLIDARITY FOR A NEW GENERATION

In order to continue to put rank and file pressure on the UAW leadership, we must convince others that acting together we have the power to force the union to wage a fight around a strong program. Constant pressure must be put on union officials, both in the shops and in the union halls.

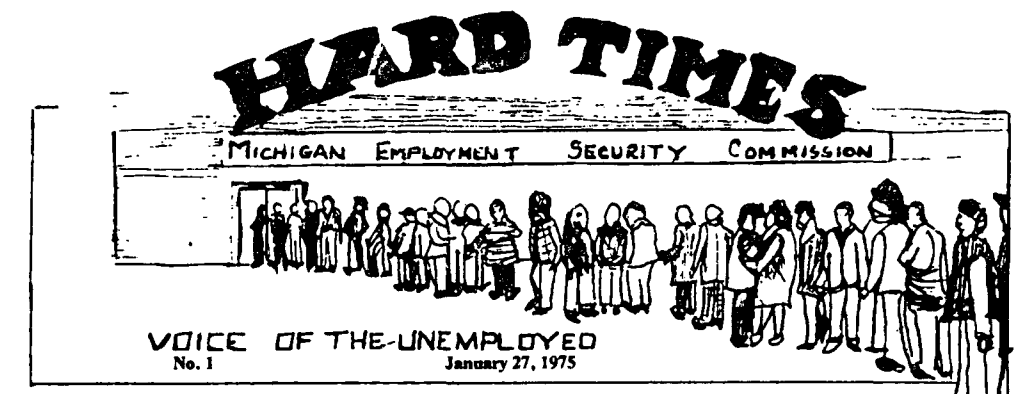
Along the same lines, employed workers must begin supporting their unemployed brothers and sisters. Already, workers everywhere realize that nobody's job or income is secure. The laying off of workers with fifteen and twenty years seniority has accomplished that task. Certainly, a motion banning overtime

should be introduced in every local where that possibility exists.

The demands for the abolition of overtime and for a sympathy strike can be a way to involve workers who, until recently, had been discouraged by or uninterested in the union.

Those of us still working should try to build caucuses which will fight for the UNC program outlined above. Through rank and file caucuses we can show other workers that there are alternatives to Woodcock and his sell-out policies and that workers today are part of new generation of workers who are beginning to fight back.

The upcoming march in Washington and the renewed political interest of workers make the next few months extremely important and we, as rank and file militants, have to seize the opportunity to increase the participation of newly angered workers in political activities.



# Attention UAW members

## COME TO WASHINGTON

On February 5, the UAW will be holding a demonstration in Washington, D.C. Every UAW member should attend. Each local union is providing free busses and any UAW member can sign up at his or her local union hall.

So far not very many people have even heard about it, let alone signed up. It is important that everyone who can should attend. Let's make it into a militant demonstration, not an indoor rally. This Washington action should be a beginning to fight for our jobs. We want jobs and we want them now.

## fighting back

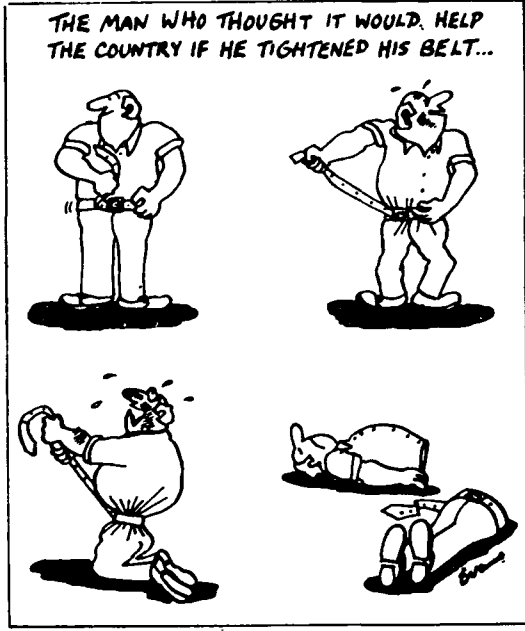
The United National Caucus Unemployed Committee is a group of unemployed auto workers. We know that the solution to unemployment is jobs, not some jive the government tells us. We believe that a decent job is necessary for survival and is a basic human right. The need for work exists. Look around Detroit. There are plenty of old, unused factories, housing that is falling apart and old schools that are badly needing repair. The money is there. It's in an overstuffed military budget, the bank accounts of the corporations and in the Federal treasury. We need jobs, not tax rebates from the government. What we need is a fight to force these people to create the jobs we need.

### WE DEMAND JOBS

From the corporations we demand: Recall all the workers on layoff and share the available work on short work week basis, with a full forty hour pay check for all. 30 for 40.

From the government: We demand a massive program of public works to create jobs for all at union wages and under union working conditions, so that we can rebuild our cities. We need a decent unemployment compensation system at full pay for the duration of all layoffs.

From our unions we demand action. The unions, particularly the UAW, should be leading this fight. In the shops they should be fighting against speed-up and overtime. For those laid off they should be leading a movement to fight to get our jobs back.



# 3. CHRYSLER WORKER: "Rebate On Politicians"

by Enid Eckstein, Local  
51 (Plymouth)



The first busload of Chrysler workers leaves Local 212 for Washington

"The UAW Wednesday put on, the largest demonstration of the unemployed since the Great Depression. But unlike the 30's when labor was weak and unorganized the 9,000 UAW members who came flexed their political muscle to support their demands to put America back to work.

"A white haired man with a guitar sang the old radical songs, Joe Hill, Solidarity Forever, as tired workers tried to follow the unfamiliar words from a union song sheet. The rally was trying to recapture the old militant spirit of the UAW that had faded in recent years.

"The rally was more reminiscent of a Democratic party convention than a labor rally."

The above quotes were taken from the local Detroit newspapers the day after the Feb. 5 UAW Emergency Unemployed Mobilization. Which was it? Militant spirited like the old days, or merely a Democratic party pre-election rally?

## HALF-HEARTED MOBILIZATION

For the UAW leadership who ran it, it was like a pre-election rally. But many of the rank and filers there tried to give it a militant spirit.

When the layoffs first began, the UAW leadership did nothing about them. But finally, when over 200,000 UAW members were out on the streets, they realized they had better act or else they would lose control of the situation.

In December at the Houston Skilled Trades Council meeting, Doug Fraser first announced plans for a rally in Washington. It sounded like a mass March on Washington reminiscent of the civil rights or anti-war marches of the 60's.

It turned out that what the union had in mind was a conference on unemployment to be held in an armory several miles away from the capitol. At maximum, only 10,000 would be permitted to attend. What about the other 190,000?

In some areas the local leadership did attempt to mobilize the ranks. But in the

Detroit area, very few locals even told their members about the rally or the fact that transportation would be provided free at union expense. Most members learned of the rally through word of mouth.

## RANK AND FILERS TAKE THE LEAD

The United National Caucus Unemployment Committee spread the word through its newsletter, **Hard Times**. On several afternoons, as part of publicizing the demonstration, the UNC provided free coffee at unemployment offices. We also held a news conference to publicize the Washington trip.

On a snowy Tuesday night the busses from the Michigan area left. The mood on the busses was quiet. On a good number of buses UAW staffers rode with us. Many rank and filers began asking, "What is the program? Why are we going all the way to D.C.?" In most cases, we were told to wait until tomorrow and you'll find out then.

The crowd in the armory was different from most UAW events in two ways. It was overwhelmingly rank and filers and had an unusually high percentage of women, reflecting the high percentage of women laid off.

The UNC distributed a special edition of its newsletter, **Hard Times**, and brought picket signs. UNC signs read:

WOODCOCK, DEFEND OUR JOBS,  
NOT BIG THREE PROFITS

FULL EMPLOYMENT—  
NOT EMPTY PROMISES  
LABOR NEEDS ITS OWN PARTY

BREAD AND BUTTER,  
NOT BULLETS AND BOMBS  
CUT THE MILITARY BUDGET



**NO LAYOFFS, NO SPEEDUP,  
NO OVERTIME, NO WAGE CUTS  
30 FOR 40, JOBS FOR ALL**

People from all over enthusiastically took the one thousand signs the UNC had brought and proudly marched with them.

An hour before the official rally rank and filers took to the floor of the armory and began a march through the hall. Led by the UNC, several hundred marched for an hour shouting, "To hell with Big Three profits, we want jobs" and "Share the work, full pay, we want jobs right away."

**FIREY TALK, WATERY PLANS**

The official rally itself was very low key and mainly a Democratic Party function. The January issue of Ammunition (a UAW publication) handed out at the rally summed it all up on its cover—"Congress—Our Brightest Ray of Hope."

This message was spelled out in Douglas Fraser's opening remarks. Acting as the chair, he explained the problem and then said that there is nothing we can do at the bargaining table—that we have come here to put pressure on politicians elected last November.

UAW leaders Bannon, Bluestone, Odessa Komer and Marc Stepp spoke. The main speaker was Woodcock.

As Woodcock rose, he was greeted with a chorus of boos. It was clear that a large number of people were quite dissatisfied with his performance over the past few months. Knowing that his audience was overwhelmingly rank and file, and pissed off about being in the streets, he was not going to get up and start wailing about the paper thin profits of the corporations as he had done in January on "Meet the Press." He did not have the nerve to get up and tell those of us still working to give up the COLA as a futile gesture toward backing up the SUB. And he didn't dare mention his idea of using dues money to advertise American cars.

Woodcock put on his militant hat and tried his best to sound like a fighting union

president. But it is hard for him, since he never really played that role. He was so uncomfortable that at times his voice cracked. Even the Detroit Free Press described him as "uncharacteristically militant."

Woodcock's speech finally let us in on the well-kept secret—the UAW's program for this crisis. The program could be summed up in two phrases—more than the Republicans want, but no more than the liberal Democrats in Congress will give.

Never once did any of the UAW leaders speak to the problems of the sinking SUB fund and what to do when it finally hits bottom. Not once did they speak of the fight to be made against any and all overtime while there are layoffs. Nor did they even mention the possibility of shortening the work week at full pay so that all of us could be working. Behind the militant rhetoric, their program is surrender in the fight for jobs.



# The membership in action

One way for rank and file workers to get across our ideas about what the union should be doing is to fight to get resolutions passed at our local membership meetings, or other officially constituted bodies of the union. Getting a resolution passed is just one tactic in an overall strategy toward changing the union, but it can be very useful in mobilizing support and influencing opinion within the union. **The real fight, of course is not just to get our ideas passed as resolutions, but to get them implemented.**

At Detroit Chevy Gear and Axle, Local 235, a motion was passed instructing the local officials to write a letter to GM local management stating that the local was demanding no more overtime while there were any layoffs. The resolution also instructed local officials to send a letter to the International calling on them to protest overtime while there were layoffs.

A similar motion was passed by the Unemployment Committee of Local 599, Buick Flint. The same committee also passed a resolution calling on Leonard Woodcock to set the date for the massive mobilization of the unemployed in Washington that he has talked about. The resolution stated that enough time should be allowed for the local union to secure involvement of other local groups such as community organizations, and asked that the UAW make provisions for the unemployed to **stay in Washington as long as was required to get results.**

The Unemployment Committee of Local 51, Chrysler Detroit Lynch Road Assembly and Mound Rd. Engine also passed a resolution calling on Woodcock to set the date for the mass mobilization in Washington. They called

for this to be done in conjunction with other unions, and called on the UAW to take the lead in organizing a national one day work stoppage in conjunction with the demonstration in Washington to show strength and to link up the employed with the unemployed.

## Join Today

**Dues for the Independent Skilled Trades Council [UAW] will be one dollar per month. This is a voluntary organization with the UAW open to all members in the skilled trades. There is no legal financial obligation associated with joining the Council. Give applications and dues to your local representative or mail to: P.O. Box 135 East Detroit, Michigan, 48021.**

**I want to join the Independent Skilled Trades Council [UAW].**

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

Local union.....Phone.....

Shop.....Union office?.....

Trade?.....Shift?.....

# THE S.U.B. COVER-UP

by Dave McCullough

My wife's job takes her into a lot of homes in Detroit. In mid-March she had the following conversation with a woman, head of the household, aged 35.

Are you laid off?

Yes, from Dodge Truck.

So what are you going to do now?

I'm going to take it easy, honey. I got 52 weeks of SUB coming.

What are you going to do when the SUB runs out?

That's a long ways away. I'll probably get called back before then.

No—I mean when the SUB fund goes broke and they stop paying benefits.

Who said it was going broke?

The UAW. It's been in the papers.

Shee-it. I didn't see anything about it. They told us we were entitled to 52 weeks if we had 2 years in. If you're right, I better start worrying about getting called back.

What do you say to that woman? "Tough nails. You should read *Network* and then you'd know"? NO WAY.

We say, "Sister, you are 100% right. You are entitled to a full year of SUB. They promised it to you and now they are trying to funk it. Chrysler is guilty of false advertising

just like any little two-bit mail order company that takes your money and never delivers the goods. You can get it, but you'll have to raise hell."

Two big myths have been used to blindfold hundreds of thousands of autoworkers as we are led to economic disaster. One is that SUB will carry us through the layoffs. That myth is dying the hard way—people waiting for checks that never come.

The bigger, more vicious myth is that the companies have a right to throw us to the dogs. And that there is nothing we can do about it. This article will show that GM, Chrysler, and Ford have **no such right**. But there is only one way to prove that something can be done. That is for us to do it.

## EMERGENCY ACTION NEEDED

Our UAW leadership tells us that the demand to GUARANTEE THE SUB WITH CORPORATE ASSETS just isn't reasonable. UAW Vice President Irving Bluestone now says: "The SUB was never intended to take care of situations like this."

Doug Fraser tells us, "There isn't any viable alternative really. Workers will not get SUB & they'll have to survive on unemployment compensation, which is totally inadequate."

These so-called "labor leaders" join the Big 3 in pretending that layoffs should be treated like a natural disaster, like a tornado or some

other "act of god." But in the face of natural disasters, leaders jump into action. Where were the warning cries about SUB? Where was the mobilization of all the union's resources to prepare its members? Where are the emergency measures to meet an emergence situation?

Brother Fraser tells us he sees "no viable alternative." Not "viable" means there's no other way to go. But **this is false**. In times of natural disaster, an emergency is declared which can suspend normal constitutional and property rights. No piece of paper is allowed to stand in the way of people's efforts to survive. By what right, then, does the fine print in an obscure supplement to our union contract deny us the right to survive?

## BIG THREE RENEGE ON DEAL

SUB is the result of a 20-year old deal between the Big 3 and the UAW leadership. Both sides have reaped the benefits of this deal many times over. Now, when it is **our turn to cash in on the promise, the deal is off**.

In 1955, many autoworkers rallied behind the demand for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to guarantee job security. Walter Reuther came up with the so-called "Guaranteed Annual Wage" as his alternative. And he jammed it through the union. Now it is called SUB, and for good reason. It is not annual, not guaranteed, and soon not even a wage.

For years the Big 3 have attracted workers from around the country by promising economic security through high wages, health benefits, and SUB. Here's how one Ford worker put it to me:

"I was living in Kentucky at the time of the Ford negotiations in 1967. I'd worked on and off at lots of jobs, nothing steady. We were watching the Ford settlement on TV, how they won SUB payments to carry them through layoffs. So my wife and I talked about it and we decided to pull up and move to Detroit, and work in auto where you could have security for your family."

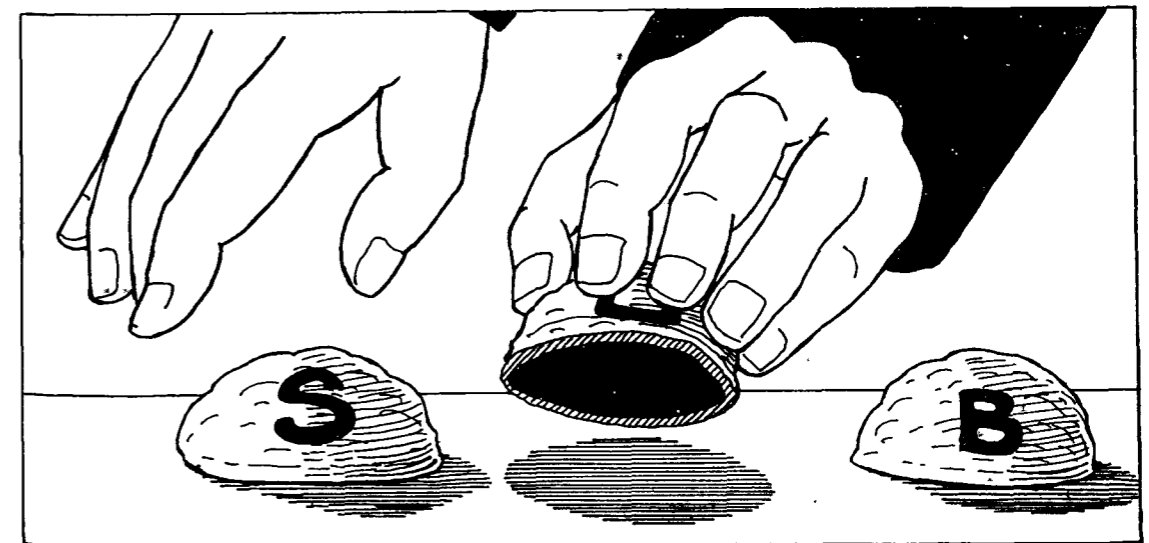
The Big 3 have gotten **their** security. Listen to Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., former President of General Motors:

"The plan is merely another extension of unemployment insurance.

"The real benefit of the new plan is not simply the degree of protection it will give workers in slack periods; after all, many workers will always be ineligible for coverage and many others will receive only small payments. Rather, it is that the plan gives our workers a greater **feeling** of economic security; and perhaps in the long run that is enough."

[From Sloan, *My Years With General Motors*: McFadden, p. 405. My emphasis.]

**There you are, brothers and sisters. It is enough for GM that you feel secure, whether**



THE OLD SHELL GAME

you are or not. Sloan tells why:

"In my opinion, it is more of an incentive or a bonus... I think the fact that our workers benefit on a definite and prescribed basis, resulting in an increase in their standard of living, gives us more **sympathetic co-operation in the introduction of labor-saving devices** and other improvements that flow from technological progress, which on the whole are a **healthy [profitable—DM] influence on the efficiency of the company's operations.**

"It is undeniable... that the **formula has served to bring relative peace and stability to our labor relations.** [Ibid., pp 402-3. My emphasis.]

Sloan is writing here about the Annual Improvement Factor. But the same reasoning applied to SUB. We got the promise of a rising living standard and economic security—both now wiped out by inflation and depression. GM got what they wanted, the go-ahead to speed-up, automate, and run the plant any way they chose. The Reuthers and Woodcocks got the exalted position of "labor statesmen," above such petty concerns as working conditions.

And now it turns out that we got shit. Today, while 127,000 GM workers have lost their security, GM still has its "sympathy," "co-operation," "efficiency," "peace," and "stability."

### THEY HELD OUT A PROMISE

UAW members have been systematically lulled into this famous "feeling of security." Open the Chrysler booklet on SUB. The first words you see are: "You 1973 SUB plan provides regular benefits for full weeks of layoff." Sounds good. In this entire 25 page pamphlet there are only **17 words**, tacked on at the end of 2 paragraphs, hinting that you might not **get** the benefits. Of course, you could read the contract supplement itself—if you can get it, and if you had the training in reading legal jargon to get through it.

Look at how the UAW tops praised SUB in the Jan/Feb 1974 issue of **Solidarity**:

"SUB is keeping to going for thousands of UAW members.

"SUB is keeping it alive for scores of communities. SUB is not a substitute for jobs... But it's a long way from the breadlines and soup kitchens of a generation ago."

How long away. Only **4 months away** for

Chrysler workers—December to April. Would Woodcock mislead us? Of course not. Therefore the words above are followed by a small box giving the bad news: "Not everybody gets SUB." At that time, about half the laid off had seniority too low to be eligible.

**But not one word** to say that even the "lucky" half will be shafted by the SUB going broke.

Instead of preparing us to survive disaster, this same issue of **Solidarity** plays sweet music for the worried worker. It quotes a Ford worker, James Grachek, 25, on why he quit a state job to work at Ford:

"Very simple... I liked the working conditions and benefits under the union contract—the pay and the security.

"With times what they are, I think I made a good decision. SUB and unemployment compensation will carry my wife, Mary Anne, and me over the slump.

"We'll be all right," Grachek said, "In fact, with SUB and Mary Anne working, we may still be able to save a little for a house and a family."

Here's how John A. Williams, Chrysler worker with 1969 seniority puts it in that same issue of **Solidarity**:

"I know that today, with the union, it isn't going to happen again (the 30's). At my age it isn't easy to find another job. But I've got some protection under the UAW. I'm just going to wait it out."

Finally, Robert Smith from Flint is quoted: "I can make it," he said, "for a year anyway."

There it is again, the promise of 52 weeks of SUB, of SUB "the extension of unemployment benefits," SUB the security. What will become of these three workers in 1975? Add to this evidence the glowing praise which the newspapers have heaped on the SUB program. The entire community was taught to regard autoworkers as the guys who had it made.

### CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

No way did the company or union **believe** any of this propaganda they broadcast. It has always been these people's policy to report the good news and hide the bad in fine print, unpublished memoranda, and legal gobbledegook.

The company and the union have been fully

aware of what was in store for us. Leonard Woodcock told the 73 Bargaining Convention, "We must get adequate reform in SUB financing or we will find ourselves with bankrupt funds when UAW families will most need that help.

"The financing of our present SUB plans is woefully weak. They are grossly underfinanced. As they stand, they would not hold up under the onslaught of even a relatively short recession. They would go bankrupt.

"The situation has to be corrected. If we don't correct it, then the companies and this union would be guilty of perpetrating a fraud upon our members."

And they did. They not only perpetrated the fraud, but lied to the membership to **cover up** the fraud.

The only way to avoid a fraud would have been to press in negotiations for a contract in which the SUB would have been guaranteed by the total corporate assets. And when we say this, we are not just being Monday morning quarterbacks. **In August of 1973, while negotiations were still going on, the United National Caucus newspaper said: "Full SUB benefits must be paid for the duration of layoffs. SUB and pension funds must be protected against bankruptcy by having the contractual guarantee that they are backed by the entire assets of the corporation."**

At contract ratification meetings, the membership was told that the SUB had been improved. In the "Newsgram" distributed to Chrysler workers explaining the new contract prior to ratification, the section on SUB begins:

"UAW gained substantial increases in efforts to firm up the financial security of laid off workers." Unless they are a lot dumber than we think, the UAW leadership know at the time of negotiations that it was highly likely the SUB program would go bankrupt during the life of the contract. Yet they chose to lull the membership into a false sense of security.

### SHORT WORK WEEKS

One important improvement in the SUB program, however, was made in the 1973 negotiations. Previously, all short work week benefits were payed out of the SUB fund, just like regular SUB benefits. **In several GM plants, management had worked out a shady deal to use the SUB fund for purposes for which it had not been designed.** Workers in

some departments were told that if they made production in 4 days, they would get laid off on Fridays, receiving a three day weekend with short work week benefits. GM got 40 hours production, but they only had to pay out 32 hours worth of pay from the regular payroll account. **The pay differences came out of the SUB fund.** It was because of this rip-off, that the GM SUB fund was in such weak economic shape even at the height of the 1973 boom.

This loophole was closed in the 1973 contracts. No effort, however, was made to force GM to repay the millions of dollars they were able to rip-off the fund before the loophole was closed.

If all autoworkers were put on short work weeks, the cost of short work week benefits would not deplete the SUB fund further, but would be absorbed by the corporation. Here's how it would work. I'm a Chrysler employee and make \$5.60 an hour. If Chrysler went on a 28 hour week, it could hire back every single laid off worker at its present rate of car production. I would earn 80% of the 12 hours not worked. I would get paid for 37.6 hours, or \$210.46 gross. This is \$46.65 a week **more** than my unemployment plus SUB. And soon I won't be getting SUB anyway. Instead of the SUB fund going bankrupt, it would grow. Low seniority workers, ineligible for short work week benefits, would continue gaining seniority towards one year service at which time they would become eligible.

### THE ONLY WAY OUT

**A shorter work week at full pay. Guarantee the SUB. Increased unemployment benefits for the duration of layoffs and at the former wage level.** These are the only reasonable solutions

## CATCH 22

Ernie, a worker at Chrysler Warren Stamping, fell ill at work and was sent to see the company doctor. The doctor told him to see a doctor. He did, and the doctor put him in the hospital. Two days out of the hospital, he reported to work... where he was discharged, for taking medication.

yet put forward. If they are unusual, it is only because the situation is extraordinary. A worker can only make a living with a job, and jobs are controlled by the corporations. If the corporations are allowed to cut us off, **we have nowhere else to go.** This is not America of the 30's. There are no farms to go back to, no big families to fall back on. The welfare and unemployment insurance systems cannot handle our numbers for long.

We claim that the right to live is more important than the fine print of any contract. In a system where living means money, those who have it, have to give it: the corporations and the government. Business contractors are constantly violating their contracts with cost overruns, muscling the government and other

corporations to pay out extra millions. The working majority must do the same.

The companies and the UAW leaders are guilty of perpetrating a fraud on us. If there were justice, they would both be pilloried for false advertising. Their SUB contract would be declared void by its own Article VII, Section 6, (Chrysler) on Liability which concludes, "nothing in this section shall be deemed to relieve any person from liability for wilful misconduct or fraud"!

We don't expect to find a judge in America with guts enough to jail the Big 3 directors for fraud. We do claim the **right** to stop this fraud, with or without the help of the UAW tops, politicians, judges, and others who never miss a paycheck.



Photo by Junebug Clark

Local 599's Robert Smith, laid off because of the energy crisis, now has plenty of time to play with his children, Michael and baby Mary, who is held by his wife Nancy.

"LOVE THOSE LAYOFFS!" or "AIN'T UNEMPLOYMENT GRAND?"—Solidarity, Jan. 1974

### HOW THE SUB FUND RUNS OUT

A couple of definitions first:

• **Credit Unit**—You get ½ Credit Unit for each week you work, to a maximum of 52 units collected in 2 years. You would get 52 full SUB checks for 52 Credit Units, as long as the SUB fund held up.

• **Credit Unit Cancellation Base**—This is the

total amount in the SUB fund divided by the total number of people (working or laid off) who are **eligible** to receive SUB (whether or not they are laid off). In other words, it is the amount left in the fund per person, **if everyone were laid off.**

As the fund goes down, the CUCB goes down. As long as the CUCB is \$342.50 or more, then each check costs only 1 Credit Unit. But as the CUCB drops, then the number of Credit Units per check increases, depending on your seniority. This chart explains it:

If the Credit Unit Cancellation Base applicable to the Week for which a Benefit is paid is:	And as of the last day of the Week for which such Benefit is paid to the Employee his Continuous Service is					
	1 to 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	10 to 15 Years	15 to 20 Years	20 to 25 Years	25 years and over
	The Credit Units to be canceled shall be:					
\$382.50 or more	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
342.00-\$382.49	1.11	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
301.50- 341.99	1.25	1.11	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
261.00- 301.49	1.43	1.25	1.11	1.00	1.00	1.00
220.50- 260.99	1.67	1.43	1.25	1.11	1.00	1.00
180.00- 220.49	2.00	1.67	1.43	1.25	1.11	1.00
139.50- 179.99	2.50	2.00	1.67	1.43	1.25	1.11
99.00- 139.49	3.33	2.50	2.00	1.67	1.43	1.25
58.50- 98.99	5.00	3.33	2.50	2.00	1.67	1.43
18.00- 58.49	10.00	5.00	3.33	2.50	2.00	1.67
Under \$18.00	No Benefit Payable					

So, if a person had 5—10 years seniority and the CUCB was between \$139.50 and \$179.99, then each check costs 2 Credit Units and a person with 52 Units would only receive SUB for 6 months instead of 12.

The CUCB—with one exception—is figured every month. So for any given month, the number of Credit Units per check will remain the same. The exception is if it drops below the \$58.50 figure, then it is figured each week.

The \$58.50 figure is important for another reason. When the CUCB drops below \$58.50 then benefits are cut 20%. Of course workers with less than 5 years seniority are charged 10 Units per check so the short checks don't last long.

If the CUCB drops below \$18 then no

payments are made until the CUCB figured for the beginning of a month is over \$18.

What all of this means is that checks first "cost" many Units but pay full benefits. Then they cost still more Units and pay 20% less. And then they stop altogether for a period of time. Finally they will pay again—until it runs out again. (When you get to the end and have less Units than a check "costs" you get the check.)

All of this applies equally to those already laid off and those whose layoffs are in the future. When the CUCB is below \$18, there are no payments to anyone.

[The chart above is taken from the Chrysler contract.]

# UAW Leaders Squelch Layoff Discussion In Kenosha



KENOSHA, Wis.—Many auto workers were furious.

There was supposed to be a special session at the Feb. 8 meeting of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 72 to talk about the threat of massive long-term layoffs at American Motors.

But of the some 500 workers packed into the Kenosha union hall, no one spoke about layoffs.

No one had a chance.

Instead, the local leadership delayed the agenda with longwinded reports, rambling speeches and bylaw changes. After two hours of this carefully orchestrated diversion, Local 72 President Ralph Daum called for an adjournment vote without telling the meeting about the scheduled discussion on unemployment.

Exhausted auto workers passed the motion, and the meeting broke up before rank and

filers concerned about unemployment had a chance to speak.

Why did the union leadership resort to this parliamentary manipulation? What were they scared of?

In a word—rank and file initiative. The idea for the emergency meeting on layoffs had been pushed, not by the local leadership, but by an independent group of rank and filers.

The ad hoc group of workers launched a petition drive last month calling for a special meeting. Over 500 American Motors workers in Kenosha signed the petitions.

When the rank and file group presented the petitions to the union executive board, asking for a special meeting, the board was cordial, but insisted that the discussion be listed as a "special order of business" at the regular union meeting.

Apparently, President Daum had second thoughts when he realized the discussion would be out of his hands. What really worried him, it seems, was the possibility of the freewheeling discussion taking a militant turn. A crowd of 500 auto workers might have demanded a more radical strategy than the official UAW International line of appealing to the Democratic Party for basically mild, piecemeal legislative reforms.

Like many lower echelon union officials, Daum takes his political cues from the UAW International. But UAW President Leonard Woodcock hasn't impressed anyone recently as a decisive leader who has answers to the layoffs ravaging the UAW membership.

Woodcock certainly hasn't endeared himself to auto workers with his passionate defense of the pricing policies of the industry. Even the Washington Post, hardly a radical paper, was compelled to note that Woodcock "is going along with the industry philosophy and not fighting it in the hope of preserving the jobs of his members."

In contrast to Woodcock's fumbling, the auto workers who organized the petition drive in Kenosha have put together a tentative program to deal with the unemployment crisis. Unlike proposals by the Ford Administration and big business, this is a workers' program designed to guarantee jobs for all while making the corporations pay for their recession.

For openers, the program demands that the government subsidize the supplemental unemployment benefit fund [SUB], which long-term layoffs will bankrupt, in the same way it

has subsidized failing corporations like the Penn-Central Railroad, Lockheed and the Franklin National Bank. The SUB fund gives American Motors workers (with at least one year seniority) income in addition to state unemployment compensation.

Second, there should be a mass program of public works at union scale and increased unemployment benefits to 95 percent of net pay for all jobless.

"We are more than a 'cost factor' even if the companies don't think so," said a leaflet prepared by the petition group. "If they decide to cut production to protect their profits, we should not suffer by being forced to work at low paying jobs or going without work."

Third, the program calls on auto workers to defend the union's past contract gains, which American Motors will most likely try to undermine in the recession, and to fight intensified production speed-up. "Why should we work hard and faster for the same pay just to be kicked out the factory gate all the sooner," one worker said.

Fourth, layoffs should be offered to the workers with highest seniority first. These workers are assured of SUB pay and can better afford and enjoy temporary layoffs than newer workers, many of whom are women and blacks. When workers with higher seniority then want to return to work, they should be allowed to "bump" workers with lower seniority to get their old jobs back.

Finally, the program demands "30 for 40," that is thirty hours work for forty hours pay. "Let the companies cut production if they want to, but don't force us to pay for it," one worker said. "The UAW International has been talking about 30 for 40 for years, it's about time they act on it. If we don't start to struggle for it, we'll probably just continue to hear talk."

Although the union leadership is delaying in order to prevent an open discussion of what to do about unemployment, they won't be able to bottle up debate forever. Everyone at American Motors knows lengthy layoffs are coming. The only question is when. Twice in February, 8,500 workers were laid off for one week.

With these layoffs as ammunition, the petitioners are making an even stronger effort to make the UAW confront the unemployment issue at the next union meeting.

[Reprinted from the Wisconsin Patriot.]

# CLUW Fights The Layoffs International Womens' Day



Unemployment hits hard. While all of us are struggling to get by, women have been particularly hard hit. Women were not hired much by the Big 3 before the 1970's and so as the saying goes, "Last hired, first fired." Many women are the sole supporters of their families. More and more women are forced to go on welfare because they cannot get by.

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) was formed last year to organize trade union women to fight for their special needs. Only one year old, CLUW has begun to fight the layoffs and their devastating impact on women. On March 8, which is International Women's Day, CLUW held and participated in rallies across the country which emphasized the plight of working women.

Women in CLUW rallied in support of these

key demands:

- 1) Shorter work week at no loss of pay. No speed up, or overtime while anyone is laid off.
- 2) Full SUB backed by the assets of the corporations and full unemployment insurance for the duration of the layoffs.
- 3) Unions to place the burden of past discrimination of minorities and women on employers rather than the workers.
- 4) No wage controls.
- 5) Create more public service jobs at union wages and working conditions. Cut the military budget to fund such programs.

CLUW actions took place in a number of cities. Here is a round up of the activities.

• **New York City**—A small rally was held by CLUW and then CLUW members marched over to a large march sponsored by over 50 women's organizations, of which CLUW was one. In all, over 1500 women marched down Fifth Avenue in celebration of International Women's Day.

• **Washington, D.C.**—200 women from CLUW and the Central Labor Council rallied at the Capitol Building



CLUW demonstration against layoffs in Louisville, Kentucky.

• **Chicago**—200 women marched to the Federal Building in support of the demand to end the layoffs.

• **Atlanta**—CLUW participated in a coalition of a number of groups. 200 people rallied in celebration of International Women's Day.

• **California**—CLUW women from all over California marched along with 3000 union members to the state capitol in Sacramento to protest the high rate of unemployment in the state. The march was sponsored by several unions and the state AFL-CIO.

• **Detroit**—80 CLUW members picketed the main welfare office demanding, "Jobs, not welfare."

• **Cleveland**—100 persons attended a forum sponsored by CLUW which included a talk on the history of working women's struggles.

• **Boston**—80 women attended a forum sponsored by CLUW.

• **Louisville**—CLUW sponsored a demonstration against layoffs, unemployment, and the depression. 75 union women and their supporters gathered to march from the state unemployment office to the Riverfront plaza for

speeches.

• **Seattle**—CLUW women participated in a rally to fight the layoffs and extend protective legislation. The rally was sponsored by the International Women's Day Coalition.

CLUW is an organization that was formed by women union officials so that all trade union women could get a better deal. Yet the struggle between rank and file workers and the bureaucracy has not escaped CLUW. It was rank and file pressure and activity that made most of the March 8 actions a reality. Olga Madar, former UAW International Vic President, is the national had of CLUW. She and other women UAW officials don't want CLUW to be an activist organization in which rank and file women can freely participate.

The struggle in CLUW is of importance to all militants struggling against the UAW bureaucracy. CLUW, and the struggle within it, will be the subject of an article for the next issue of *Network*.

# RANK & FILER'S DO-IT-YOURSELF HANDBOOK

There's always more than one way to get a point across.

Below is a typical potshot at the working class by the government today.

WASHINGTON—According to the Director of the government's Council on Wage and Price Stability, the time has come for unions to lower their wage targets—and for management to get tough at the bargaining table if they don't.

"High unemployment," he said, "declining productivity and rising labor costs—all products of the recession—should have a moderating influence on wage demands this year." He pointed out that "there are two parties to collective bargaining," and added, "and just as responsible unions will not make excessive demands, responsible management will not agree to them."

Detroit Free Press, March 3, 1975

Many people would miss this in thumbing through the paper, or just let it sink into their minds with all the rest of the daily propaganda quota. Here are three ways to handle a retort. You can....

put it in a nutshell...



or spell it out...



or just comment on it...

## THEY'RE GETTING READY FOR US

All working people know that runaway inflation is wiping out the spending power of our wages, even when we are working steady. Now they are telling us that trying to win back what we lost to inflation is "excessive demands." It sounds like the government is urging the companies to kick us when we're down—and urging the unions to cooperate.

The most basic way to make a point: JUST TELL THE TRUTH.

And a good way to reach people: PASS IT ON.

Why not just clip out these pages and use the part you like best in your own literature?

Send "how-to-do-its" that YOU have learned to the Network Rank and File Handbook.

# 1975 Union Elections: More Of The Same-- No Way!

This year something new will happen in many UAW locals—we will be electing local officers for the next three years instead of two. And these three years are not going to be “more of the same”—but they are going to be three years that may determine what happens to our jobs and the industry. Three vitally important years.

And something else new is going to happen. In many locals there will be caucuses, slates and individuals which are not just “more of the same” with a few different names and faces. Besides the one or two pro-International administration tickets, there will be those that stand out. There are really only two choices for us. We can cry and beg and pledge support to the auto company executives like President Woodcock does. Or we can begin the kind of battle needed to maintain and improve our living and working standards.

Chances are since you are reading *Network* you already know which side you are on. But now that is not enough. No UAW member can afford to sit back and wait for someone else to do it for them. We need action leadership now. **The issues facing the union today are clear: unemployment, inflation, discrimination, speedup, and politics.** The administration by and large ignores these. Most of these problems are national in scope and can't be resolved by one isolated local. Even so, it is important that local candidates address themselves to the issues and make clear the sort of fight they intend to help lead to truly make the union serve the workers.

- Unemployment must be fought. Ban all overtime, establish rank and file unemployed action committees. For a union policy of short work weeks to provide jobs for all and full pay. Full union fights for those laid off.

- No backsliding on wages or fringes but rather a union fight to keep ahead of inflation.

- No retreat on the gains of minority workers and women workers.

- No speedup.

What all this points to is the idea that we—the members of the UAW—must not be the ones to pay for the companies' problems. We can sit back and let the UAW leadership on all levels be “more of the same,” and we will be sold out. Or we can fight to change it. The choice is ours.

We urge all concerned members in locals having elections to immediately make plans to run. Furthermore, we urge you to contact the United National Caucus, PO Box 146, Centerline, MI. 48015

## Grievances?

After the heavy layoffs at Local 212, stewards and committeemen were in a dither about which of them would be cut. One guy who was chopped out in favor of another with less ‘steward seniority’ appealed to the executive board. The local president retorted—**“Why should you complain about losing your district—you haven't written a grievance in ten years.”**

# Let's Talk About It

I talked to a friend who liked the first issue of *Network*, but thought it was too down on the top UAW leadership. He had two basic questions: 1) Given the apathy in the ranks, could the leadership really do much better? and 2) As conditions get worse, and as the ranks get more and more angry, isn't it possible that some of those people will become fighters again?

My answer to the first question is very simple: I blame the union leadership for the apathy. For years they told the members: “Don't worry, we'll take care of everything.” **Rank and file people do try to get involved in the union.** But they are put down. They get discouraged at every step, by withheld information and by undemocratic procedures. And they get threatened. Younger members have never had the experience of being part of a union that actively tries to involve and use the creativity and energy of its members. Most union activities are mainly an arena for hustlers, competing with each other over the best jobs.

But the second question is really the most important. Won't all this change as the situation gets worse? I answer that it won't change automatically. I don't believe that the main problem with the UAW leadership is that they are bad people. Many of them, I think, sincerely believe that they are dedicating their lives to further the best interests, not just of working people, but of “humanity.” But what these people **think** they are doing and what they **are actually doing** are two different matters.

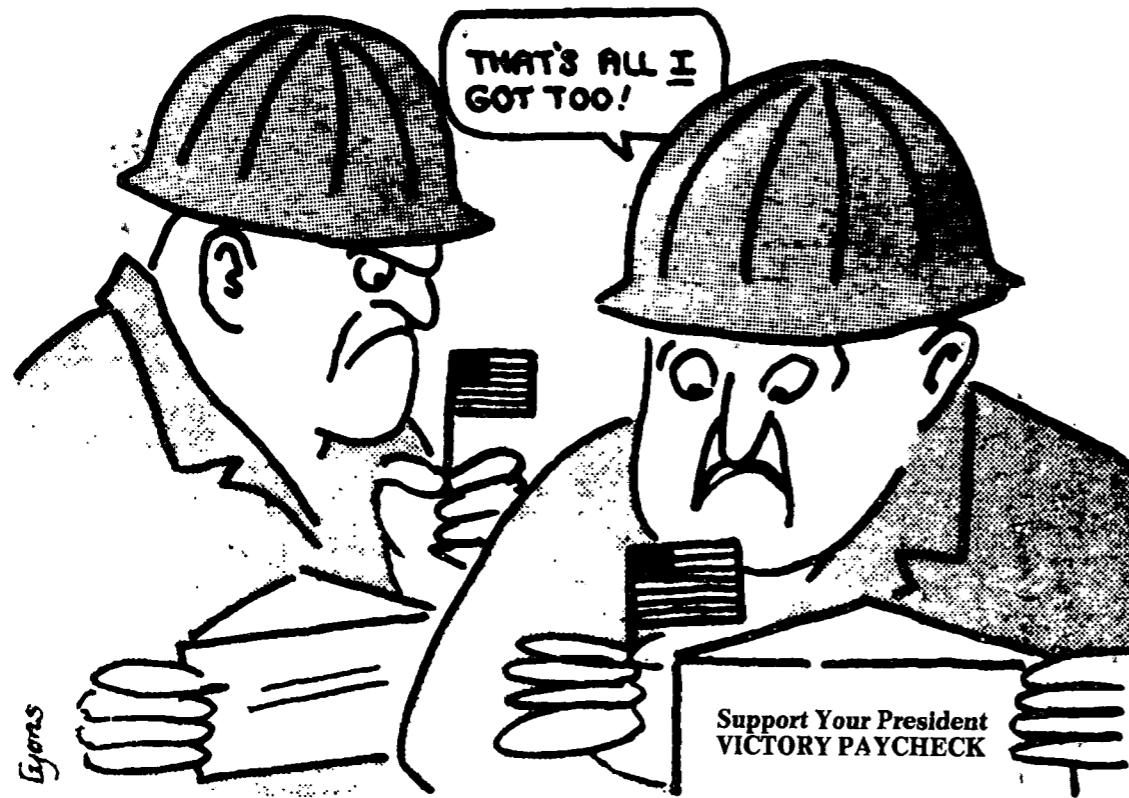
The problem with the top UAW leadership is

that they are committed 100% to a certain philosophy and principles of unionism. They may not like the name, but it is called “class collaboration.” **Put simply, this philosophy on unionism is based on the belief that basic conflict between workers and bosses can be avoided, so long as both sides act reasonably and responsibly.** Furthermore, they believe that working people should be willing to



The President's National Commission on Class Collaboration





sacrifice on behalf of the so-called "public interest."

When it comes right down to it, however, they always let the big business interests decide what "reasonable" means and what constitutes "public interest." The UAW leadership accepts the business-oriented point of view that anything which challenges the profits of the giant corporations is UNREASONABLE and A THREAT TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

Working people and big business people have different interests. The majority—us—want the best possible lives for ourselves and our families. The minority—they—want the biggest possible profits for their companies. They own the newspapers, radio and TV stations, and bombard us with their propaganda from the time we're old enough to crawl. But at times of crisis like the present, it should become clear to everyone: **either our lives suffer or their profits suffer.**

Our union leaders see this as a hard choice. But they are committed to being "reasonable" and to protecting the so called "public

interest." They chose to defend profits. As working people, this shouldn't be a hard choice at all. The purpose of the union should be to protect working people: **to hell with the companies' profits.**

But the question can still be asked: "As the ranks get angry and as conditions get worse, won't some of these union officials start seeing the light?" The answer is NO, unless they are willing to give up the whole philosophy and orientation around which they have organized their entire lives.

For example, most union officials are totally committed to a strategy that ties the union movement to the Democratic Party. They see this as the most reasonable way of furthering the political interests of their members. So, when Democrats in Congress pushed through wage control legislation, Leonard Woodcock agreed to be a part of Nixon's Wage Control Board. The effect was to hold down working people's income and allow massive cuts in real wages through inflation. After it was over, the government officials even admitted that wage controls were designed to "zap" labor.

The Democratic Party includes both representatives of labor and representatives of liberal business interests. To really follow a policy of "put the working people, the poor, the oppressed, first—to hell with profits" is unacceptable to the business interests. Business interest operate in the Democratic Party, and spend millions of dollars to control it and its candidates, as a means of keeping the majority of Americans tied to the profiteers.

We need union leaders prepared to break all ties with big business and with the defense of their profits. We need union leaders who view the public interest as the interest of the majority: The working people, the poor and the oppressed—not the big money interests. We need union leaders who believe it is "reasonable" to fight to defend working people and "unreasonable" to believe the majority should suffer in order to protect the profits of a minority.

One necessary step before our UAW leadership could become true class fighters would be to break all ties with the Democratic Party, and begin to launch a new party—a

party for working people, poor people, and oppressed racial and national minorities. Our union has the strength to get such a party going—a party committed to the real interests of the majority.

Only a party that breaks all ties with big business interests and with the defense of profits can serve the majority at times like these. We need legislation to really put everyone back to work—not just talk about it. This can be done by forcing a shorter work week with no loss in pay. The government can take over any company unwilling or unable to go along. And turn it over to the workers to run. It's that simple—so long as we have a party that is independent of big business interests with the militancy and courage to push it through.

But so long as our UAW leaders remain committed to the Democratic Party, when someone has to suffer, when someone has to go out onto the streets, it's us—not the business interests. That's only reasonable, they'll tell us. Reasonable for who?

Jack Weinberg, Local 212

## PARLIAMENTARY BUREAUCRACY

A young worker got up at his local union meeting and challenged an interpretation of the UAW International Constitution. An argument developed about what the Constitution actually said. "Local Committees can't be elected by the membership," shouted the President. "The Constitution says that the president must appoint all committees."

"Look at Article 44," retorted the young worker. "Alright, we'll look at the Constitution," replied the President, at which point he opened his Constitution and began reading: "The Local Union shall have the following standing committees:" etc., etc., ending with "all committees should be appointed or elected, subject to the discretion of the Local Union" etc.

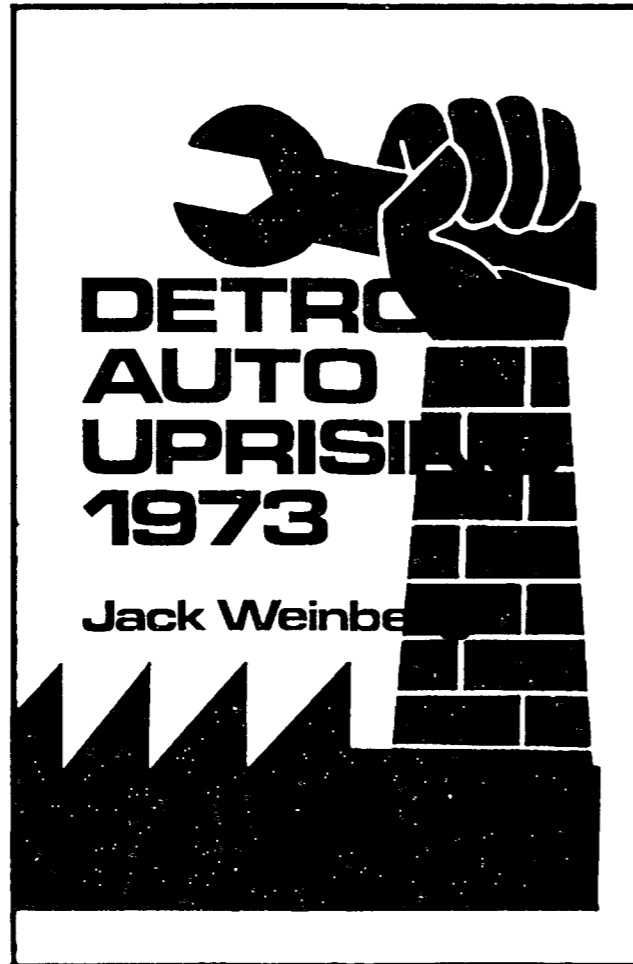
The President closed the book with a smug smile on his face which slowly turned into a sick sinking look as he realized what he had just read. "Just a minute," shouted the President, "let me read that again." Again he started at the beginning reading Article 44. This time however, he finished the section with "all committees should be appointed." Period, end of article. He closed the book smiling happily until he noticed that at least ten local members had been following his dissertation word for word in their own copies of the Constitution.

"That's not what it says!" "You're a liar!" members started shouting. "OK," the President said, "LET'S GET ON WITH THE MEETING."

In the summer of 1973 important strikes hit three of Chrysler's Detroit plants. One involved a sit-in that closed Jefferson Assembly. One was a wild-cat at the Detroit Forge plant. And one was a strike at Mack Avenue Stamping that was broken by a 1000-person goon squad of UAW officials. This goon squad was the most vicious but by no means the only anti-union action by the UAW International leadership. No UAW member can afford to misunderstand the events of 1973.

This highly readable pamphlet by an active participant of the struggles describes what happened, points out the reasons and begins a discussion of what is necessary to change this. Order your copy now!

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