

# DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

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DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY  
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE  
CHRYSLER ELDON

# THE \$500 SELL-OUT

Notices were posted by the time clocks recently announcing the 8¢ an hour cost-of-living increase which goes into effect soon, and in a few weeks we will undoubtedly see another notice, about the annual "productivity" increase averaging 11¢ an hour.

Of course it's great to get these increases. But as we enter the third and final year of the 1967 contract, it becomes clearer that THIS CONTRACT WAS A GIGANTIC SELL-OUT, and will have cost each auto worker MORE THAN \$500 before it expires next fall.

Remember, the cost-of-living allowance is not a wage increase; it is just supposed to KEEP OUR PURCHASING POWER THE SAME AS IT WAS WHEN THE CONTRACT WAS SIGNED. The '67 sell-out does not do that.

Two major changes were made. First of all, the cost-of-living allowance is now re-computed only ONCE EACH YEAR, instead of EVERY THREE MONTHS as under previous contracts. This means, for example, that during the second contract year, on the OLD basis we would have received 17¢, 20¢, 24¢ and 28¢ during successive quarters, while under the NEW basis we were limited to 17¢ for the entire year.

BUT WE DIDN'T EVEN GET THE 17¢! We only got 14¢ an hour, because the second change was to put a CEILING on the allowance; a ceiling so low that we hit it three months after the contract started and have been limited by it ever since. The result, in lost purchasing power, even if prices remain constant during the coming year, amounts to over \$500 per worker. The savings to the auto industry amounts to nearly HALF A BILLION!

## Long History of Sell-outs

Of course, the history of the UAW bureaucrats is a series of such sell-outs. Each new contract would have a few gains, but would give up on working conditions and the means to defend them. For instance: in 1939, the UAW agreed with management to outlaw sitdowns in the plants. In 1940, the union signed a no-strike pledge, forcing workers to resort to "wildcat" walkouts to protect themselves. In these wildcats, the workers sometimes won personal rights, such as the right to smoke in the plants, and also some control over the speed and other aspects of production; most of these gains have since been lost. In 1948 the UAW conceded to management the right to run production as it wanted to, and made issues such as assembly line speed, body "mix," overtime, etc. "management rights," which were not subject to negotiation. And finally, in 1958, after 700 wildcats in the Chrysler plants alone in three years, Reuther agreed that any worker who participated in a wildcat should be warned once and then discharged.

So now, of course, working conditions in the plants have been getting worse; they are only defended locally, instead of nationally, which means each plant or local must take on the giant corporations ALONE, instead of with the full strength of the entire UAW membership. The grievance procedure is PHONY, as its purpose is to act as a safety valve to PREVENT us from taking our protection into our own hands. At the 1967 negotiations the union had over 19,000 UNSETTLED local disputes against General Motors alone! And now OFFICIAL SCABBING has become the customary, established practice; a strike will be authorized at one assembly plant while other plants making the same models continue operating. And now the economic boom of the '60's is tapering off and the corporations are even less willing to give us anything. (Look at the way General Electric has announced that its plants will be open and operating during the current strike!)

## What Can We Do?

But what do we do about it? Some groups, such as the one called the United Caucus, think that rank-and-file auto workers can put enough pressure on the International Union

to prevent future sell-outs, or can eventually kick out Reuther for a more militant leadership. To this end, the United Caucus is calling a demonstration in front of the special convention of the UAW next weekend to demand that the contract be reopened to improve the cost-of-living allowance. But we cannot really fight the corporations through "our" union because the present union is virtually a part of management. It maintains "law and order" in the plants so the companies can enjoy uninterrupted production, and it fails to fight for its members in a time of automation and rapid changes in production methods. And by failing to fight--and in many cases, supporting--the racist practices of the companies, the union perpetuates the division of the workers along racial and ethnic lines.

But although we need to put militants into the leadership of the locals and the International whenever this is possible, changes at the top will not make much difference, as long as there is no organization on the shop floor. If we want to avoid the continuing deterioration of wages and working conditions, we will have to fight effectively, and to do so, we will have to get organized. With the union as it has become, we need to have an independent, militant organization of rank-and-file workers in every plant across the country, organized on a shop floor level, so that we can work within the union where feasible, and outside it where necessary. We must reach the point where a beef in one department is supported throughout the plant; where a shutdown in one plant is supported by every other plant; where a fight against one company is supported by everyone in the industry.

### Towards Workers' Control

But we must also realize there are limitations to what we can win within this system of economic exploitation. In a society divided between those who own and run the factories and those who must work in them, workers can only win concessions from the companies. Even the best of unions are forced to remain within the general framework, and can only try to protect us from increasing exploitation. The most militant union or rank-and-file organization will not enable us to stop having to work for a boss or be able to control the industries we operate or determine our living and working conditions. Fighting within the capitalist system will not end the oppression, racism, and wars which are built into that system. The only answer for ALL workers is a REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION: the establishment of production for use under workers' control, instead of production for profit.

To begin to accomplish this, we need a revolutionary movement of workers, which would organize in the plants, publish plant bulletins, hold classes and discussion groups and in various ways try to develop our understanding of what this system is like and how we can change it. To coordinate the efforts of such groups in the plants and focus them in a revolutionary direction, we need a revolutionary workers' newspaper--toward which we hope the paper WILDCAT will be a step. Eventually a revolutionary political party must be built, which will be based on the workers in the shops and which can fight for our interests in all society as well as in the plants.

November, 1969  
(labor donated)

Detroit Revolutionary Organizing Committee  
(Distributors of WILDCAT)

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- ( ) I enclose \$1.00 for a subscription to WILDCAT (12 issues).
  - ( ) I would like to know more about the ideas and plans of your group.

Plant \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_ Shift \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(Please send to Jack Jones, Rm. 505, 7338 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Mich. 48202)



Introducing WILDCAT

We are a group of workers at Dodge Main and other Detroit plants who believe that the products and profits which we turn out should be used for the benefit of those who produce them. We think that this system, with its rats, cops, wars and all, should be destroyed, and replaced by a new one, without any exploitation, which would be controlled by those who do the work, and would provide the houses, schools, and other things that we need.

Because we want to be a part of a movement which would be able to change things in this way, we are distributing this paper--WILDCAT--dedicated to this goal. We would like to get in touch with people who are interested in the articles, or who might like to write reports or be interviewed for this paper about conditions and happenings at Dodge Main or other plants they have worked in.

Our ideas are basically those of the editorial statement, "Where we stand," printed in this issue. In addition, we want to add this:

The main reason working people in this country are being pushed around is that they are split right down the middle by racism. The ruling class benefits enormously from this division, and encourages discrimination, prejudice and bigotry in many ways, through its control of schools, TV, newspapers, police, governments, etc.

The racist attitudes of many white workers are not likely to be changed by words. Probably only by having to work together in struggles will black and especially white workers be convinced that it is in our interests to fight the bosses and politicians together. And much of the racism which presently exists may disappear as we fight together for a common goal.

In many parts of this country, black workers have taken the lead in fighting both the company and the union brass by walkouts over racism and job conditions, as at the Ford plant in Mahwah, New Jersey, led by the United Black Brothers, and here in Detroit Chrysler plants, led by ELRUM and DRUM. Such fights should be supported by all workers, black and white. While local battles seldom result in lasting gains, the lessons learned in these struggles can help to bring nearer our final victory, the establishment of workers power. To coordinate these struggles and make sure the things we learn from them are known to all workers, not just those at a single plant, we need a unified revolutionary workers movement.

If you feel that you might want to help in this, we would like to get together with you to exchange ideas. If interested, contact our distributor (same location every two weeks), or use the blank below.

October 1969

Detroit Revolutionary Organizing Committee

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( ) I enclose \$1.00 for a subscription to WILDCAT (12 issues).

( ) I want to know more about your group. Shift \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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