

# DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 2 OF 16

FOLDER 5

CHRYSLER ELDON UAW LOCAL  
961 1970 SETTLEMENT  
AGREEMENT DISSENTING  
VIEWS

Since April 16 Chrysler's Eldon Ave. Axle Plant has been the scene of three wildcat strikes and five deaths, 2 workers dead from unsafe working conditions, 2 foremen and a jobsetter shot down by a righteously enraged worker striking out at Chrysler's intimidation and harassment and a sell-out Local union. (Local 961) 18 union officials, stewards and workers have been fired since May 3, 7 of whom are still in the street, sold out by both the officers of the Local and Solidarity House. Three of the seven ~~th~~ are the Chief Committeeman and 2 stewards. These men are probably the strongest, most militant union men in the Local. The other 4 are members of ELRUM and ~~a~~ a white radical group called Wildcat. These workers were fired for leading an attempted safety walkout on May 26.

Last week the Local's officers announced a new Memorandum of Understanding of local grievances and working conditions, the product of an extended Special Conference with plant management. The cases of the 7 men still fired were to be discussed in the Conference, but the Local's officers decided to not officially put their grievances on the table. These workers have been labelled "troublemakers" and "reds" by both the Local and the International. Furthermore, they have shown the ability to organize people in the plant to fight both the company and the Local's sell-out practices.

The Memorandum of Understanding itself is an almost complete sell-out. Out of about 400 grievances, about 86 were "won". The rest were given away for safety and housekeeping items which should never be given away and for other items both unneeded and which cut back on seniority and overtime provisions already in the master contract. A few workers got partial pay after being by-passed for overtime; most of the overtime grievances were set aside. 90% of the unfair and unjust penalty grievances were given away with a few reinstatements. A few write-ups were pulled from a few records with little or no back pay granted.

The Local's officers claimed they were "forced" to accept a "Temporary Part Time Employee" program negotiated by Art Hughes of the U.A.W. Chrysler department and top Chrysler management from Highland Park. The reason given was alleged "excessive absenteeism" at Eldon. The officers, however, failed to press the company on the real reasons for high absenteeism and turnover at Eldon--unsafe working conditions and brutal, overbearing management.

The Memorandum also contained a statement by Chrysler admitting the plant has many serious safety hazards that must be corrected, along with 167 separate safety and housekeeping items already completed or promised to be completed by Oct. 1, 1970. It took 2 deaths in the plant, an attempted safety wildcat walkout led by workers acting outside the Local, and constant pressure from both the Wildcat and ELRUM publications to gain recognition and promised correction of these problems. Yet the Local, the International and the company have deliberately kept the workers directly responsible for these improvements out of the plant. In fact, it has been more the fault of the Local than the company that these men are still in the street.

The Memorandum contained other language unfavorable to workers. A provision assigning janitors to production departments and making them responsible to both production foremen and their own supervisors subjects these workers to the hazards of "Multiple Supervision". If the supervisors' orders conflict, the worker loses. In the past men have lost their jobs at Eldon because of "Multiple Supervision." Constant effort in the past five years had almost done away with the problem. Now Eldon's janitors are back in the same old bag.

A number of skilled trades grievances were referred back to the 11-I section of the Skilled Trades supplement to the master contract, a run around for skill tradesmen since this section is limited in scope.

The Memorandum deprives high seniority inspectors in several departments of their right to available overtime based on seniority and ability. Instead, management now has the right to choose anyone it wishes for overtime in these departments, an ~~er~~ erosion of seniority rights already guaranteed by the contract and long established practices.

The U.A.W. constitution required all agreements, including memoranda of understanding, to be ratified by the membership in a special membership meeting called for that specific purpose. Ignoring this requirement, Elroy Richardson, president of the Local, called a special membership meeting for Sunday, August 9, supposedly to discuss the agreement with the membership. At the same time he announced a secret ballot vote for Wednesday, August 12 on ~~the~~ the question of ratification of the Memorandum. Neither the membership meeting or the secret vote was authorized by the U.A.W. constitution.

By Sunday it was obvious there was serious opposition to the agreement in the Local and in the plant. Most of the stewards were reported to be against it; so were a majority of the Executive Board including all the plant committeemen. At the Sunday meeting/2-3 Local officials questioned Richardson's actions in the matter. A steward demanded a roll call vote of the Exec. Board, the chief committeemen and a Trustee questioned the constitutionality of the meeting itself. Seeing the strong opposition to the Memorandum and his administration, Richardson suddenly adjourned the meeting after about 20 minutes--even though the Local's By-Laws require all meetings to run at least 2 hours. An ~~angry~~ angry worker questioned Richardson ~~about~~ about his improper adjournment of the meeting; his answer was to ~~slam~~ slam his office door in the man's face after stating "it was my meeting, I was running it and I can adjourn it anytime I please." A Solidarity House representative in the hall stated Richardson was justified in adjourning the meeting.

The next day Richardson issued a bulletin in the plant ~~claiming~~ claiming members of Wildcat and ELRUM had so disrupted the meeting he had to adjourn it. This was an outright lie; No member of ELRUM attended the meeting and only one member of Wildcat who arrived late and had no chance to speak before adjournment.

The night before the vote a bulletin criticizing the Memorandum ~~and~~ was distributed at the gates to the afternoon and midnight shifts. This bulletin was signed ~~by~~ by all the committeemen and all the Local's lesser officers. An edition of the Wildcat publication taking the same position had been distributed the day before. Both bulletins recommended the membership refuse to ratify the Memorandum and send ~~it~~ it back to the table.

As workers approached the hall to cast their votes they were met by President Richardson telling people such lies as "vote Yes or you will lose your job", and "vote yes if you want to keep your job at Eldon." Members opposing the agreement also campaigned at the hall.

When the vote was counted the Agreement was ratified by a close margin, about 70 votes out of approximately 670 cast.

What did the vote mean? It meant unified opposition to the sell-out, incompetent leadership of Local 961 is growing. It meant workers at Elden, like workers across the country, are getting more and more pissed off and willing to organize and fight on their own against both weak corrupt unions that give them no support on the shop floor, and brutal oppressive companies that are pushing them closer and closer to active open rebellion, at the point of production.

FACT SHEET ON PROPOSED MEMORANDUM AND UNDERSTANDING  
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The truth and facts of alleged gains in this recently negotiated agreement is that there weren't any.

**Fact #1:** The grievance package. A few workers got partial pay after being by-passed on overtimes. The majority of the overtime grievances were set aside. 90 percent of the unfair and unjust penalty grievances were also by-passed with a few reinstatements. A few write-ups were pulled from a few records with little or no back pay granted. Vote No!

**Fact #2** Student and temporary part-time employee agreement. Only the company will gain from this program. For example, a regular employee permanently laid off may request to displace a temporary part-time employee, BUT will be required to comply with the work schedule for temporary part-timers. We already have the only temporary employees we need- probationary employees under Section 58 of the master contract. Why give Chrysler a blank check to deny anyone the right to gain seniority and all the other benefits given us by the contract. Vote No!

**Fact #3:** The January, 1970 memo of Understanding. This memo has been completely ignored by management. All we got in the current agreement was the company's promise to do better. We need more. Vote No!

**Fact #4:** Pay practices. The top five officers have agreed to give management the responsibility for solving our pay problems--The very people who caused them in the first place. Vote No!

**Fact #5:** Inspectors overtime in Dept 81 and the Roll rooms in 75 and 79. Traditionally, overtime has been rotated in Depts. 19 and 25, equalized in skilled trades and based on seniority and ability in all other areas. The Agreement will only support management's efforts to destroy these past practices by giving it the final say so on who will work overtime. Vote No!

**Fact #6:** Housekeeping, Working Conditions and Special Non-Production Departmental Assignments ( Dept. 19 and 25)  
Dangerous dirty working conditions and "Multiple Supervision" are the cruz of our current problems - with the worker in the middle. We all know what the problems have cost Eldon workers in the past year- jobs, money, health and even life itself. Some have been fired for their efforts in this area (McKee, Chandler, Edwards, Taylor) while the top five officers try to take the credit. Many of the items said to be completed are only promises - and we know how good the company's promises are. Vote No!

**Fact #7:** Skilled Trade Problems. These problems have been referred to the 11(i) section of the national agreement. This section is limited, and many skilled trade problems should be negotiated by the total local union to guarantee the best all around results. We only have one local union, not two. Let's keep it that way. Vote No!

**Fact #8:** Work stoppages Penalties. President Richardson specifically promised these matters would be discussed in the Special Conference and Management agreed to discuss them. But they never get to the table. Vote No! to this agreement. Get back your local Union.

Respectfully Submitted,

By the concerned leadership of your Union  
Bottom Five Officers: Oddo - Thomas - Buford - McNeely - Big Davis  
Shop Committee: Sims - Thornton - Bates - Farmer  
Chief Stewards: H. Willis (Comm. Chrm.)