

# **DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS**

**BOX                      13 OF 16**

**FOLDER                23**

**DETROIT UNEMPLOYED  
COUNCIL HISTORY AND  
OBJECTIVES**

This article is written to explain some of the history and political perspectives of the Detroit Unemployment Council, which is now functioning in the City of Detroit. The unemployment movement has a long and rich history. In order to explain some of the analysis that we used in the struggle to create D.U.C., we will touch lightly on some of that rich history. If the reader has read Detroit I Do Mind Dying by Dan Georgakas and Marvin <sup>Surkin</sup>, then this article will be much easier to follow. Those chapters which describe the development of ~~the~~ RUM (Revolutionary Union Movement) are most helpful. But we must emphasize the difference between the past movement and the present movement. In the past, DRUM, ELRUM, JARUM, etc. were all black organizations. Now they are multinational organizations, the political leadership for which comes from the Communist Labor Party.

Unlike the trade union movement, the struggles of the unemployed offer no rich treasury of dues paying members. The trade union bureaucrats are always slow in involving themselves in the unemployment movement. But in the case of the communist movement, the plight of the unemployed has always been a matter of particular concern. In Detroit, this is no exception.

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In the fall of 1973, the effects of the current overproduction crisis began to be manifest. In Detroit, this process began in the auto factories. The unending stream of automobiles, the incessant overtime, the pounding of the hammers, began slowly to grind down. On December 1, 1973, Chrysler's Jefferson Assembly Plant employed over 7,000 workers. By Christmas of the same year 1,500 of those workers had been laid off. For the next six months, production was scheduled on a week to week basis. These were the first signs of the depth of the current crisis.

The response came quickly. The first new JARUM (Jefferson Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement) came out in April of 1974. Intense agitation began in an effort to fight the silent resignation that was setting in amongst the workers. By July 1974--the end of build out of the 1974 model--over 2000 workers had lost their jobs. JARUM was valiently trying to build a militant fight back against the oncoming depression. Many of the members of JARUM had built the old JARUM and ELRUM (Elden Revolutionary Union Movement); but now these organizations had changed their politics. ~~They now specifically rejected the syndicalism of the past which stated that whites organize whites and blacks organize blacks.~~ JARUM, called for unity of the workforce to fight the layoffs. (The International UAW on the other hand was politically bankrupt, remaining completely silent on the issue of unemployment.)

Could be inserted below when JARUM is first mentioned

Can you expand on this? Could be very important

in the context of changing conditions (?)

expand!

I suggest picking this up at a later point in comparison with CLP analysis of Duc.

Chrysler's Jefferson Avenue Assembly was built in the early 1900's. It and Hamtramck Assembly (Dodge Main) are among the oldest auto factories in the world. Assembled at Jefferson is the soul of the Corporation--all the Chrysler models and all the Imperials. The depth of the crisis becomes clear when we realize that in May, 1975 the last Imperial rolled off the assembly line. The end of an endless stream. The last sentence of the old chapter. But the first sentence of the new chapter had been written months before.

As unemployment was steadily rising all over the country, Michigan in general and Detroit in particular was ~~was~~ ahead of the pace. The workers at the Jefferson Plant were even worse off. In October, 1974, Chairman of the Board Lynn Townsend announced that Jefferson Assembly would be shut down. JARUM immediately responded demanding that the plant be kept open. On November 15, 1975, the second shift was discontinued throwing 2500 workers on the street. Two days later, Coleman Young, UAW Vice President Doug Fraser and Townsend held a joint press conference at the Chrysler World Headquarters in Highland Park, Michigan. With the audacity of card sharks at a bridge tournament, they announced that there would be no more massive layoffs. JARUM had a long history with these double dealers. For years, members of JARUM had fought to expose these lackies. Members of JARUM had just participated in the struggle successful struggle to form the Communist Labor Party. Outside this ~~for~~ press conference, they had assembled 300 workers to ~~protes~~ demand that the plant remain open.

This confrontation ~~XXXXX~~ was the perfect setting. Coleman Young, Doug Fraser and Lynn Townsend on one side; the workers on the other. Young--the recently elected Black Mayor. Fraser--the tired old union bureaucrat. Townsend--the incompetent lackey for the bourgeoisie who had just flown back from his vacation in Hawaii to make this announcement. They were a multinational group. On the other side, a multinational picket <sup>line</sup> of angry workers. The weakness of our past movement had been the division between Black and White--now we were united under the banner of the Communist Labor Party. On the sideline, stood Kenneth Cockrel and other members of the Black petty bourgeoisie trying to figure out how it had all happened. The drumbeats were beating a new tune--one that was designed to be heard for a long time.

In the book. Detroit... we argue that Eldon is the heart (or lungs) of Chrysler.

Give figures on unemployment

Unclear (let me suggest that underlying the D. book is the CRBW strategy of struggling against imperialism, relevant to this audience)

The point I would like to see developed is the significance of multinational struggle as a class struggle, and at this time and involving unemployed workers.

One day later Townsend announced that all the assembly plants in the United States of North America would be reduced to one shift and beginning December 1, 1974, the Jefferson Avenue Assembly plant would be shut down for six weeks. Having completely contradicted the statement of the previous day, Townsend thereby made Young and Fraser look like the fools that they really are. Immediately, Jefferson workers set up a picket line outside Solidarity House demanding that the International UAW publish the minutes of the meeting between Young, Fraser, and Townsend. The UAW leadership denied that there were any tapes taken of the meeting.

Their economic program a shambles, their political program of conciliation ~~beginning~~ to collapse, the UAW leadership was totally incapable of providing the militant leadership that the situation demanded. The program of the Communist Labor Party was the only clear alternative. The form through which workers were able to express that program was the Detroit Unemployed Council. ~~Committee~~. The basis for a united working class struggle was:

- 1) A job for every worker at the expense of the military budget.
- 2) Support busing--smash the KKK, the Nazi party and all other fascist gangs; all education financed by the federal budget on a per student basis.
- 3) End all deportations of undocumented workers.
- 4) No USNA military intervention in Southeast Asia or the Middle East.
- 5) Nationalize the energy industries. (People's Tribune 5/1/75)

*too heavy for these readers*  
*Might go: Duc is a program supported by C.P. It emphasizes 1, 2, 3.*

The Detroit Unemployed ~~Committee~~ <sup>Council</sup> could easily <sup>fight</sup> for jobs not war in the context of the above political program. While not every person would agree with all aspects of the program, such a program set the basis for a higher level of unified struggle than all the opportunistic programs combined.

*not clear & too heavy*

*What workers identified with Duc? How did they relate to it? what relation between unemployed & unemployed workers formed?*

The militant struggles of JARUM combined with the political leadership of the Communist Labor Party set the organizational basis for the formation of the Detroit Unemployed Council which grew out of these struggles. After D.U.C. was formed, it immediately began to distribute leaflets and petitions demanding that the Detroit Common Council have a public hearing on the unemployment crisis.

As thousands of workers were being thrown on the streets of Detroit, an organizational form had to be created that met the needs of these workers both politically and organizationally. Attempting to prevent the creation of any organizational form expressing this political militance, the bourgeoisie made every attempt to prevent any formation of any independent organization. Even after D.U.C. was formed, New Detroit, the direct representative of the bourgeoisie in Detroit) attempted to buy off the Unemployed Council by offering it large sums of money which were turned down. The most important aspect of D.U.C was the link between

*This could be expanded. Not only who each side represents but what they did and how?*

the unemployed and employed worker. Arising out of JARUM and its struggles, D.U.C. initially had that link which made its struggles more successful. Over the months however it has been much more difficult to maintain this political link with the employed workers. The momentum was there however.

By December 1974, D.U.C. submitted 20,000 signatures to the Detroit Common Council demanding that a public hearing be called on the unemployment crisis in the city of Detroit. The Common Council agreed to that demand and set the meeting for January 17, 1975.

How had this relatively small group been able to seize political leadership so quickly? Why was the response so quick? Of course, the history of struggle of the people involved in the effort was important. But more importantly these people had a long and rich history on which to rely. Having studied and, in many ways, mastered this history, they were much more prepared for the struggle this time around.

One of the earliest Unemployed Councils was in St. Petersburg, Russia at the turn of the century. It was formed under the leadership of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party. This early Unemployed Council held to three pragmatic points of organization:

- 1) The general aims and tasks of the Unemployed Council are to lead the unemployed out of their unbearable situation.
- 2) The most immediate task of the Council was to force the city to organize public works for all the unemployed.
- 3) The Council was to rally the unemployed around these aims on the basis of their common demands and arrange to send delegates to the City Duma and subsequently seek other means of influencing the City Duma.

*This historical section up to page 7.  
will have to be cut out. The  
Social Policy crowd won't deal with it.  
I suggest brief notes on the history of  
unemployed councils & their effectiveness,  
their importance to revolutionary politics,  
but not the notes.*

Summing up the experience of the St. Petersburg Unemployed Council, Lenin stated:

"Through this organization alone you cannot influence the bourgeoisie; you will not be strong enough, and the unemployed workers themselves will not be able to develop this work on a broad proletarian class basis. Therefore, you must immediately extend the Unemployed Council to include representatives of those employed in all the factories and mills of St. Petersburg. You must now begin to agitate in the factories and mills for this purpose, and immediately arrange for the election of these representatives. The Unemployed Council must not only consist of 30 representatives of the unemployed but of 100 or 150 representatives from all districts, from all the factories and mills. This will provide the unemployed with a genuine proletarian leading body which will really be able to exert pressure on the City Duma and on the bourgeoisie generally."  
(Unemployed Councils in St. Petersburg in 1906)

The Czar eventually suppressed the St. Petersburg Unemployed Council but the experience set the basis for the formation of many unemployment councils throughout the world.

But Marxism means a concrete analysis of a concrete situation so it was also necessary to study the history of the development of unemployed councils in this country in order to set the basis for the development of the Detroit Unemployed Council. The following is a quote from the December 15, 1974 People's Tribune which analyzes the way in which the struggle was carried on<sup>^</sup> the 1930's:

"This article on the struggle of the unemployed workers during the 1930's was written by a comrade who has been active in the workers' movement since 1914. He joined the Communist Party (CPUSA) in 1928 and left in 1945, in opposition to the revisionists that had seized the leadership of the party. Although the CPUSA today is a revisionist party and is actively sabotaging the struggles of the proletariat, it was built by many honest revolutionaries who were staunch fighters for the working class and have a great deal of valuable experience. As we build Unemployed Councils we should learn from the past successes and use them for a guide. (PT's Editor's Note)

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"In Seattle, in 1933, the bourgeoisie created the Unemployed Citizens' League of some 10,000 members. To be a member a worker had to be Anglo-American and a citizen. Negro

"national minority workers and foreign-born workers were excluded. The leadership had a "self-help" plan--the unemployed were supposed to help the unemployed--like selling apples on the streets. They never demanded jobs from the capitalists or the government. They separated the unemployed workers from the employed workers, and sent unemployed workers out to scab. . . . .

"The Communist Party decided that the best way to work from within was to seize the leadership of the UCL from the bourgeoisie. It constituted 10 of us as a fraction and sent us in there. A new election was slated; 4000 or 5000 people were there. Five of us stayed outside and passed out a big leaflet and five went inside with the throw-aways. Then we took them up in the gallery and threw them out over the audience. We had a new slate and proposed them on these leaflets. A few of them were communists and the rest were honest working people we could depend on. The whole thing was turned around with one meeting by the communist fraction. . . . We elected every member we put up.

"Then we called for new by-laws and a new program. One after another of us in the fraction got on the floor and hit the chauvinist provision hard. We raised the issue of Independence for the Negro Nation and demanded that the old clause be dropped. We saw clearly that as long as they used white chauvinism to divide the unemployed and ~~un~~employed workers, and even unemployed from unemployed workers, there was no way that even 10,000 people could win the fight for jobs. This is just as true now as it was then. . . . . Any unemployed or part-time worker could be a member, regardless of nationality or creed or political beliefs. The name was changed to Unemployed Council and that put us in accord with the other big UC's up and down the coast.

"Then the newspapers ran a headline, "Communists take over the UCL". The old leadership stayed in hoping to reverse it. They tried red-baiting and the usual anti-communist package, but they couldn't put forward proposals that were beneficial to the organization, that spoke to the workers' demands. We had way more strength because the Negroes and ~~EX~~ foreign-born workers came in. This was one of the decisive factors. Then we adopted the proper tactics that were in the workers' interests--demonstrations against war and fascism, picketing anti-Negro bars, mass resistance of evictions and demanding jobs from the county and federal government.

"'Self-help' was completely rejected. . . .  
The whole tactic of the bourgeoisie was to separate unemployed from the employed and our job as communists was to unite them. We had perfect relations with both the AFL and the CIO. If men were needed at any CIO plant they came down to us to get them. If they went on strike over any issue, our men were pledged to come in and get on the picket line and help, and to keep our own unemployed from scabbing and going to work. . . ."

The above analysis of course was extremely helpful but it still had to be applied to our concrete situation. Having learned from past experience, the bourgeoisie was making every effort to prevent the assemblage of any large number of workers. Very early, we decided that we would have to build an independent form that <sup>would</sup> bring together a number of workers. We called a number of demonstrations in order to focus on the unemployment problem. Then D.U.C. demanded a Common Council meeting. In addition, we began to demand that unemployed ~~councils~~ <sup>committees</sup> be set up in all the local unions.

From this base of historical experience and an analysis of local conditions, the D.U.C. participated in a coalition of working class groups to force the City Council to hold an open hearing on unemployment. On January 17, 1975, over 600 workers from around the city attended this open hearing. In five hours of testimony, over 40 representatives of the working class spoke out against unemployment and war. As a result of this open hearing, the City Council passed a resolution calling for Congress to increase the funding of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 so that all the unemployed, both men and women, are provided unemployment at a decent income. This resolution also called for this funding to come from the massive military budget so that public service jobs can be provided for the unemployed. In addition, ~~several~~ two councilwomen began to demand that Detroit be declared a national disaster area because of the economic crisis.

The most important impact however was that it made clear that the unemployment issue was not going to be ~~allowed to~~ ~~be~~ covered up. Politically, all forces in the city understood that they must make some show of struggle on the unemployment issue or be left in the dust. Very soon, the UAW began to demand that unemployed ~~councils~~ <sup>committees</sup> be set up and offered the Communist Labor Party seats on the ~~councils~~ <sup>committees</sup> if they would stop agitation.

At some point you might get into the national or international picture of unemployment



Thinking that they were outsmarting someone, the UAW called a demonstration in Washington D.C. to protest the unemployment situation. When workers began to show up by the thousands to ride the buses to Washington, they were told that the demonstration had to be held to 9,000 workers. The UAW successfully limited the number of workers at the demonstration, but it was clear that the old Democratic Party platitudes were insufficient. As Kennedy for President banners flouted around the ~~By the~~ auditorium, workers began to shake their heads in disgust. By the time of the AFL-CIO rally on April 26, 1975, this disgust expressed itself by walking out of the stadium during Humphrey's speech. Over 80,000 workers marched through the streets of Washington to the stadium. When they got there, they were in no mood for another Democratic Party rally. While thousands of workers marched onto the field and stopped Humphrey's speech, workers who had just entered the stadium turned around and left. In any case, it was clear that the opportunists and sell-out artists of the bribed union bureaucracy could not afford any more mass mobilizations of workers.

*What were their slogans?  
What were they demanding?  
What was the follow up?*

In Detroit, the Unemployed Council threw itself into the struggle for Busing. Open hearings were being held by the federal judge in each school region. The Unemployed Council organized workers to be present at each of these hearings and support the necessity for Busing for the purpose of integration. At all the demonstrations in favor of busing, D.U.C. had representatives present. In addition, it supported a pro-busing forum which drew over 400 workers.

Having now described the general motion of that D.U.C., <sup>during</sup> ~~participated in~~ the first six months of its existence, some description of the objective condition of the Detroit working class is necessary. The unemployment figures rose from 9.5%

in October 1974 to 14.7% in July 1975. These were the official published figures. For the inner city those figures would be doubled and for Negro youth those figures would be tripled. In addition, during this time the City of Detroit experienced a steady inflationary spiral approximated at 1% per month. Clearly then the cost of living <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ going up and the chance of living <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ going down. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ With this constant erosion of the living standard for working people, there arose the absolute need to fight back against these conditions.

*Some of this can go earlier, some is useful to reinforce the facts of the situation.*

But does this mean that there is necessarily an immediate response by the working class in Detroit? Of course not. S.U.B. benefits did not begin to run out until April 1975. ~~These~~ Being paid 95% of their average weekly wage (without overtime), workers were not immediately being forced to starvation and the level of their struggle reflected that material fact. In addition, the UAW negotiated an agreement with Governor Milliken of Michigan. Since the S.U.B. benefits were running out, it was necessary to get immediate payments in the hands of those workers most likely to support the Union bureaucracy <sup>And how does its use relate to DUC strategy & effectiveness?</sup>

*Explain S.U.B. (a capitalist state gimmick) but what effect on workers?*

This agreement between the UAW and Milliken went as follows: those workers who had been laid off in the most recent cut back would receive an immediate increase in their unemployment payments by \$30.00 per week. For this small bribe, the UAW gave up the following: any worker fired or who voluntarily quits would be disqualified for any benefits up to 13 weeks (plus <sup>many other</sup> ~~there other~~ even more onerous punishments); workers who had been laid off for a longer period of time would get no increase. This is not a detailed analysis of the Milliken-UAW bill but the social motion of the bill was clear. The workers who needed the benefits the most did not get them; national minorities would be punished most severely because they are the workers who most often are fired for unfair reasons, who are pushed off jobs ("voluntarily quit"), etc. But the bill protected the social base of the UAW hierarchy: the high seniority Anglo-American worker and the skilled worker.

*Might see face  
this by mentioning  
the content of  
the last contract*

*This needs  
to be explained  
or dropped.*

Having seen the use of the bribe to buy time, D.U.C. knew that it was necessary to dig even deeper into the most exploited and oppressed sections of the working class. It therefore embarked on the long tedious campaign of uniting with those fighting members of the working class with the least ties to the imperialist bribe. Soon enough, the workers still sucking at the UAW sugar tit would learn that only by the most militant defense of the rights of national minority workers can they protect their rights. Soon enough, these workers would find through their own experience that the UAW opportunism only makes them weaker in their ultimate fight with international imperialism.

On June 19, 1975, D.U.C. participated in the ~~XXXXXX~~ Negro Nation Day parade celebrating the emancipation of the slaves in 1863. Over 400 workers participated in the celebration which concentrated on the need to smash the rising tide of the KKK and support for General Baker who was recently fired from Ford Motor Company for getting a job under an alias.

~~In June of 1975, D.U.C. joined the Coordinating Council on Human Relations which represents over 90 community organizations. Representatives from D.U.C. began immediately to politicize the work of this organization including calling for a struggle against the KKK and for support of busing in the Detroit Metropolitan area. The initial response was positive. After realizing however that action on these issues would create a place for workers to gather, the bourgeoisie and its lackies ~~XXXXXX~~ immediately began to sabotage its efforts. Coleman Young called all his direct representatives and bluntly stated that there would be no demonstration. New Detroit began to pull on the purse strings, and every group began to find reasons~~

*Is this necessary?*

*is a separate  
subject for p. 10*

Also, in June of 1975, D.U.C. joined the Coordinating Council on Human relations (CCHR). CCHR is an organization which acts as an umbrella organization for over 90 community groups. Since almost all these organizations were controlled economically or politically by the governmental structure, CCHR had never been particularly active. Once D.U.C. got there, a polarization began to develop. In early June 1975, the Detroit Free Press had printed an article featuring the KKK as another social organization that was now allowing "Klansladies" to participate with equal rights within the organization. Representatives of D.U.C. insisted that CCHR demand equal time to explain the truly vile nature of the KKK, to tell of its murder and rape, to tell of its consistent attack on the working class in this country.

Soon after this struggle, CCHR was persuaded to call a demonstration for peaceful integration which eventually was scheduled for August 16, 1975. Through a process of continuous political maneuvering and struggle too complicated to describe, the local political power brokers did everything possible to sabotage this demonstration. Coleman Young told all those under his control that there would be no such demonstration, New Detroit said that money would be withdrawn, all <sup>of</sup> which resulted in repeated announcements that the demonstration had been cancelled. But the City of Detroit now had an independent force not under the control of these opportunists. Therefore the demonstration occurred on August 16, 1975--the same day the District Judge DeMascio announced that there would be no busing in Detroit dashing the hopes of workers for quality education in this year; the same day that the local fascist group had a demonstration in front of the federal building against busing. CCHR under the leadership of the D.U.C. was the only progressive force on the scene that day. In spite of the efforts of the opportunists, the CCHR demonstration outnumbered the fascists 10 to 1. This particular demonstration was projected all over the country: Columbus Ohio front page, Chicago Tribune front page, and the Charleston West Virginia front page, etc. But nothing was mentioned of the demonstration by the Detroit News which did mention the smaller demonstration of the fascists and the Detroit Free Press only made a slight mention of this demonstration.

Although every effort is being made to hide the existence of D.U.C from the Detroit working class, it is clear that it is fast becoming know as the one organization that will consistently and militantly fight for the interests of the working class. The economic crisis will worsen. Lay-offs are already scheduled for late fall. S.U.B. benefits are already low, past savings are now exhausted. The intensity of the struggle for jobs must increase; that is, the strength, vitality, and focus of our movement must increase. We now have a multi-national movement supporting the everyday struggles of the working class at a level of unity that we have never seen in the past. We can expect that the victories of the past year will soon appear as small indeed in the light of the victories that we can now see in our grasp.

*I think this needs to return to council in form of Summary & laying out the next steps or something like that.*

Chrysler's Jefferson Assembly Plant was built in the early 1900's. It and Hamtramck Assembly (Dodge Main) are among the oldest auto factories in the world. Assembled at Jefferson was the top of the line - the Chrysler and Imperial. In May 1975, the last Imperial rolled off the assembly line. The last sentence of the old chapter. But the first sentence of the new chapter had been written long before.

In the fall of 1973, the effects of the current overproduction crisis began to be manifest. In Detroit this process began in the auto factories. The unending stream of automobiles, the incessant overtime, the pounding of hammers, began to grind to a halt. On December 1, 1973, Jefferson employed over 7000 workers. By Christmas of that year, 1500 of these workers had been laid off. For the next six months production was scheduled on a week to week basis.

The ~~UAW~~ leadership <sup>OF THE UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE, AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS (UAW)</sup> did not respond to this first attack. Complacently sitting back on their fat wallets, they pointed to the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Fund (SUB) as the answer to such a situation. What they ~~failed~~ refused to point out was that most of the workers caught in this early layoff did not qualify for SUB. They had worked for Chrysler for less than a year, many for less than 90 days.

Out of this situation grew the Jefferson Assembly Revolutionary Union Movement (JARUM). This new JARUM Caucus was unlike the old RUM Caucuses in the UAW. The old RUM movement saw the struggle between black and white, consequently it was organized on a syndaculist line. Only Negro workers could join a RUM Caucus. The JARUM Caucus was pro-communist, anti-fascist, and saw the struggle of the Negro people for equality and the Independence of the Negro Nation as a question of the class struggle. This change in line was concretely reflected in the fact that the JARUM Caucus was a multi-national grouping.

In April, 1974, the JARUM Caucus launched an intensive agitation campaign against the layoffs and for full employment. They combined this campaign with concrete political exposures of both the UAW leadership and Chrysler. By July 1974 - the end of the build out of the 1974 model - over 2000 workers had lost their jobs at Jefferson. By October, 1974, unemployment nationally had risen to 6%. In Detroit unemployment had reached 9.5%. The workers at Jefferson were facing even heavier unemployment. That same month Chairman of the Board Lynn Townsend announced that Jefferson would be shut down. The JARUM Caucus immediately responded, demanding that the plant be kept open. On November 15, 1974, 11 months after the initial layoffs, the second shift was discontinued. 2500 more workers were thrown into the streets. Two days later, Lynn Townsend, Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, and UAW Vice-President Doug Fraser held a joint press conference at Chrysler World Headquarters in Highland Park, Michigan. Outside this press conference the JARUM Caucus and the Communist Labor Party had assembled 300 workers to demand that the plant remain open.

This confrontation was a reflection of the class forces lining up against each other. Lynn Townsend - direct representative of capital. Young - representative of the capitalist state. Fraser - representative of capital in the union movement. This multi-national group stood on one side. On the other side stood a multi-national picket line of angry workers. On the sidelines stood Kenneth Cockrel and other representatives of the petit-bourgeoisie, ~~caught~~ caught between the hammer and the anvil. Townsend, Young, and Fraser backed down, announcing that there would be no more massive layoffs.

One day later, when there was no direct confrontation, Townsend announced that all the ~~assembly~~ Chrysler assembly plants in the USNA would be reduced to one shift and that Jefferson would be closed down for six weeks beginning December 1, 1974. Immediately, the JARUM Caucus set up a picket line outside of Solidarity House, the International Headquarters of the UAW, demanding that the UAW leadership publish the minutes of the meeting between Townsend, Young, and Fraser. The UAW leadership denied that any minutes existed.

This apparent turn around on the part of Townsend, signalled the impending collapse of both the economic and political program of the UAW leadership. In less than six months, the SUB fund would ~~collapse~~ be bankrupt. The insurance program for unemployed workers would no longer exist. The short work week benefit for employed workers would be gone. Irving Bluestone, UAW Vice-president, explained that the SUB fund was not designed for a crisis.

Out of this struggle at Jefferson grew the Detroit Unemployed Council. Unlike the union movement, the struggles of the unemployed offer no rich treasury of dues paying members. As pointed out by Bluestone their concern with the unemployed was minimal. Their economic program was not designed for a crisis. But in the case of the communist movement, the plight of the unemployed has always been a matter of particular concern since unemployment is a fact of life in capitalism.

One of the earliest Unemployed Councils was in St. Petersburg, Russia at the turn of the century. It was formed under the leadership of the Russian Social-Democratic Party. This early Unemployed Council held to three pragmatic points of organization:

1. The general aims and tasks of the Unemployed Council are to lead the unemployed out of their unbearable situation.
2. The most immediate task of the Council was to force the city to organize public works for all the unemployed.
3. The Council was to rally the unemployed around these aims on the basis of their common demands and arrange to send delegates to the City Duma and subsequently seek other means of influencing the City Duma.

The Czarist government eventually suppressed the St. Petersburg Unemployed Council but the experience set the basis for the formation of many unemployed councils throughout the world.

Under the leadership of the Communist Labor Party, the Detroit Unemployed Council adopted a broad political program. The basis for a united working class struggle was:

1. A job for every worker at the expense of the military budget.
2. Support bussing - Smash the Ku Klux Klan, Nazi Party, and all other fascist gangs; all education financed by the federal budget on a per student basis.
3. End all deportations of undocumented workers.

4. No USNA military intervention in Southeast Asia or the Middle East.
5. Nationalize the energy industries.

The Detroit Unemployed Council could easily fight for JOBS WITH PEACE in the context of this program. The Council immediately began to distribute leaflets and petitions demanding that the Detroit City Council have a public hearing on the unemployment crisis. In December 1974, the Council submitted 20,000 signatures to the City Council. Submitting to this pressure, the councilmembers set January 17, 1975 as the date for the hearing.

At this point, New Detroit Inc. stepped directly into the picture. New Detroit was formed after the 1967 Rebellion. The content of its Board of Directors, like the press conference, consists of representatives of capital, representatives of the capitalist state, and representatives of capital in the labor movement. Its main purpose is to control any and all forms of resistance and militancy in the city. Its main tool is money. Almost every community group in Detroit is under the control of New Detroit. Their technique is as tantalizing as it is simple. Provide the funds necessary for an organization to carry out its program and then threaten to cut off the funding if the program does not conform to the wishes of capital. Many an honest organization has been smashed or subverted by this tactic.

The Council was given an "emergency grant", no strings attached. New Detroit then encouraged the Council to submit a full funding proposal. When this proposal came before the Board, the Council was expected to tone down its program and stop confronting capital in the streets. To the surprise and amazement of New Detroit, the Council turned the new grant down in favor of seeking financial support from its membership.

As January 17, 1975 drew closer, more and more working class organizations became interested in the Open Hearing on Unemployment. On the day itself, over 600 workers from around the city attended the hearing. In five hours of testimony, over 40 representatives of the working class spoke out against unemployment and demanded ~~jobs~~ JOBS WITH PEACE. As a result of this open hearing the City Council passed a resolution calling for Congress to increase the funding of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 so that all the unemployed, both men and women, are provided employment at a decent income. This resolution also called for this funding to come from the massive military budget so that public service jobs could be provided for the unemployed. In addition two councilwomen began to demand that Detroit be declared a national disaster area because of the economic crisis.

The most important impact however was that it made clear that the unemployment issue was not going to be covered up. Politically, all forces in the city understood that they must make some show of ~~xxxxx~~ struggle on the unemployment issue or be left in the dust.

Forced to take up a political struggle, the UAW leadership called for a rally in Washington, D.C. on February 5, 1975 to protest the

unemployment crisis. Their economic program a shambles, this last ditch effort to save their political credibility was to prove a failure. When workers began to show up by the thousands to ride the buses to Washington, they were told that the rally had to be limited to 9000 workers. This was less than 5% of the 200,000 unemployed UAW members. The unemployed at Jefferson alone could have filled over half of the buses. Having successfully limited the number of workers at the rally, it soon became clear that the old Democratic Party platitudes would not smooth over the plight of the unemployed. As Kennedy for President banners were carried around the auditorium by UAW staff members, workers began to shake their heads in disgust. They had not been brought to Washington to FIGHT FOR JOBS, it was a Democratic Party rally that their hard earned dues were paying for. By the time of the AFL-CIO rally in Washington, this disgust expressed itself by walking out of the John F. Kennedy Stadium. Over 80,000 workers marched through the streets of Washington to the stadium only to find another Democratic Party Rally paid for by their dues. They had come to FIGHT FOR JOBS. While thousands of workers rushed onto the field and stopped Hubert Humphries speech, workers who had just entered the the stadium turned around and left. This would be the last mass rally called by the union leadership, they clearly had lost political control of their memberships.

ON APRIL 16, 1975

In Detroit, the Council threw itself into the struggle for busing. Open hearings were being held by federal Judge DeMascio in each of the seven school regions in the city. The Council organized workers to be present at each of these hearings and in support the necessity of busing for the purpose of integration. In May, 1975, the Council participated, along with the Communist Labor Party, in a march for bussing in opposition to an anti-bussing march called by a fascist group similar to ROAR in Boston. A Pro-bussing forum which the Council participated in drew hundreds of workers. On June 21, 1975, the Council participated in the Negro Nation Day parade celebrating the emancipation of slaves in the territories of the USNA on 1862. Again hundreds of workers participated in the celebration which concentrated on the need to smash the rising tide of the KKK and the anti-bussing movement.

UAW

The leadership came out directly in opposition to bussing. Fraser led this opposition when he stated that he never did support bussing in the North. This put the UAW leadership in the position of objectively supporting the fascist anti-bussing movement. This desertion of the rights of the Negro worker in the UAW was an indication of the desertion of all the working class as a whole. This desertion took concrete form in the changes in the Michigan Unemployment Compensation Law enacted by the capitalist state.

~~When this...~~ Their political stranglehold on the working class slipping, the UAW leadership turned to the Michigan State Legislature to bail them out. In a compromise between Michigan Governor William Milliken, the UAW Leadership, and the State Legislature, the workers laid off in the most recent cut back would receive an immediate increase in the unemployment payments of \$30 per week. In exchange any worker fired for fighting or stealing would be automatically disqualified from collecting benefits. In addition the penalty period for any worker fired for "cause" other than fighting or stealing, or who quit was increased from 6 weeks to 13 weeks.

This compromise, which gave a minimal increase in benefits for the unemployed at the cost of subjecting the employed to a strengthened terroristic power of capital, <sup>IN THE FACTORIES</sup> could have been avoided by the Uaw leadership. The UAW leadership could have mobilized for a demonstration in Lansing, Michigan in support of the increase without increasing the penalties. After witnessing, the April 26th demonstration in Washington it was clear that mass mobilizations could not be politically controlled by them. Their collaboration with capital had neutralized their ability <sup>POLITICALLY</sup> deal with the crisis.



In late <sup>July</sup> May, 1975, the Detroit Free Press printed an article featuring the KKK as another social organization that was now allowing "Klansladies" to participate with equal rights within it. The Council contacted the Coordinating Council on Human Relations (CCHR), an umbrella organization for over 90 community groups about the article. Since almost all of these groups are controlled economically or politically by the capitalist state structure, CCHR had never developed as a fighting force. This was their opportunity. The Council ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ insisted that CCHR demand equal time from the Free Press to explain the truly vile nature of the KKK, to tell of its murder and rape, to tell of its consistent attack on Negroes, Catholics, Jews, and the labor movement in this country. A meeting was held <sup>THE</sup> with the Editor of the Free Press who refused to publically condemn "Klansladies" article or the KKK.

As a result of this struggle, the Council was asked to join ~~XXXX~~ CCHR. A proposal was put forward by the Council to the Executive Board of CCHR to hold a pro-busing demonstration. The Board accepted this proposal and August 16, 1975 was set as the date for the demonstration ~~at~~ Kennedy Square in downtown Detroit. Through a process of continuous political maneuvering and struggle the capitalist state did everything short of banning all demonstrations on August 16th, ~~Mayor XXXXXXXX told~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ in order to sabotage the event. Mayor Young told all those under his control that there would be no such demonstration. New Detroit Inc., said that money would be withdrawn from CCHR.. Repeated announcements were circulated that the demonstration had been cancelled. In spite of all <sup>GRAB</sup> this the Council proceeded with plans for the demonstration.. On August 16th, <sup>GRAB</sup> the Council mobilized hundreds of workers at Kennedy Square to show their unswerving support for bussing. At the same time a small group of anti-bussers demonstrated at the Federal Building a few blocks away. In a last ditch effort the capitalist state had Federal Judge DeMascio announce before the demonstration that morning that there would be no bussing in Detroit ~~in~~ September. In spite of all these roadblocks, this particular demonstration was projected all over the country. It appeared on the front pages of ~~XXXX~~ newspapers in Charleston, West Virginia; Chigago, Illinois; and Columbus, Ohio. ~~The magazine carried pictures. But the news blackout in Detroit~~ In Detroit, the two major dailies, the Free Press and the Detroit News failed to cover the demonstration in an attempted blackout.

Although every effort is being made by the capitalist state to hide the existence of the Detroit Unemployed Council from the working class, it is clear that it is fast becoming known as ~~XXXX~~ an organization.



that will consistently fight for the interests of the working class. The economic crisis will worsen. The union leadership older and stronger is afraid to mobilize the thousands ~~for~~ demonstrations that will be necessary to defend the standard of living of the working class. The Detroit Unemployed Council, younger and weaker is not afraid to mobilize the hundreds for demonstrations. The intensity of the struggle for JOBS WITH PEACE must increase; the strength, vitality, and focus of the unemployed movement must increase. There is now a multi-national movement supporting the everyday struggles of the working class at a level of unity that we have never seen in the past. We can expect that the victories of the past year will soon appear as small indeed in the light of the victories that we can now see in our grasp. THERE WILL BE JOBS AND THERE WILL BE PEACE.

(5)

The unemployment movement has a long <sup>and</sup> rich history. This article will touch lightly on that history, hoping to explain some of the history that we drew on to <sup>build</sup> ~~rationalize~~ the Detroit Unemployment Council.

~~Detroit has a rich history~~  
~~The history of the unemployment movement~~

Unlike the trade union movement, the struggles of the unemployed offer no rich treasury of dues. The trade union leaders ~~and~~ have ~~it~~ always been slow in responding to the felt needs of the unemployed. But in the case of the communist movement, ~~at~~ the plight of the unemployed has always been a particular concern of ~~the~~ communist parties of every kind.

Within this general history, the city of Detroit has a particularly <sup>rich & complex</sup> history of revolutionary struggles. Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, Detroit I Do Mind Dying outlines much of that history. The Detroit Unemployment Council is merely an extension of that history particularly the RUM movement.

(Revolutionary Union Movement) \* \* \* \* \*

In the fall of 1973, the effects of the current overproduction crisis began to be manifest. In Detroit, this process began in the auto factories. The unending stream of automobiles, the incessant overtime, the pounding of the hammers, began slowly to grind down. On December 1, 1973, Chrysler's Jefferson Assembly Plant employed over 7,000 workers. By Christmas, 1,500 of these workers had been laid off. For the next six months, production was scheduled on a week to week basis. These were the first signs of the depth of the current crisis.

(Jefferson Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement)

The response came quickly. The first JARUM came out in April of 1974. Once again the workers fought to stop the silent <sup>USA</sup> ~~depression~~ that was setting in. By <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ July 1974 - the end of build out of the 1974 model - in July 1974 over 2000 workers had lost their jobs. The International Union was silent. JARUM was valiently trying to build a ~~an~~ militant fight back against the oncoming depression. Many of the members of JARUM had built the previous JARUM and ELRUM. But <sup>JARUM had changed</sup> now the political program was a united fight against the attacks by the companies; the ~~old~~ old syndicalism of seprating Blacks and Whites was gone. JARUM was politically on much more stable grounds. The International UAW on the other hand was showing its political bankruptcy as it remained silent.

This article will attempt to explain the historical basis for the development of the Detroit Unemployment Council. ~~More of the particular~~ Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin in Detroit I Do Mind Dying outline the basis for the development of the Detroit Unemployment Council especially when they give the history of the RUM movement.

In the fall of 1973, the effects of the current overproduction crisis began to be manifest. While unemployment is "normal" to a capitalist economy, in a crisis the destruction of the "overpopulated" working-class becomes paramount. Unemployment sky-rockets while means of production are withdrawn from production. The most "efficient" method that capitalism develops for this purpose is war. War on a global scale for the redivision of the world. In Detroit, this process begins in the auto factories. The unending stream of automobiles suddenly is no longer endless.

On Dec. 1, 1973, Chrysler's Jefferson Assembly Plant employed over 7000 workers. By Christmas, 1500 of these workers had been laid off. For the next six-months production was scheduled on a work-in-week off basis. These were the first signs of the depth of the current crisis. By the end of 1974, build out of the 1974 model in July <sup>1974</sup> over 2500 workers had lost their jobs. A deep sense of the failure of the economic programs (and political program) of the UAW leadership was in the air.

Chrysler's Jefferson Assembly Plant was built in the early 1960's. It and Hamtramck

(2)

Assembly are among the oldest auto factories in the world. Assembled at Jefferson is the soul of the Corporation - all Chrysler models and the Imperial. In May, 1975 the last Imperial rolled off the assembly line. The end of the endless stream. The last sentence in an old chapter. But the first sentence of the new chapter had been written months before.

As unemployment was steadily rising all over the country, Michigan in general and Detroit, in particular, was way ahead of the pace. The workers at Jefferson Assembly were way ahead of the race. In October 1974, Chairman of the Board Lynn Townsend announced that Jefferson Assembly would be closed. On November 15, 1975, the second shift was discontinued. 2500 more workers were thrown into the streets. Two days later, Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, UAW Vice-President Doug Blassing, and Townsend held a joint press conference <sup>at the Sheraton Hotel in Highland Park, Mich.</sup> announcing that no more massive ~~camp~~ <sup>from the surrounding area</sup> would occur. Outside were over 300 workers and supporters led by the Communist Labor Party of the United States of North America <sup>was</sup> demonstrations. Demanding that the plant remain open.

One day later, Townsend announced that all U.S. N.A. assembly plants would be reduced to one shift and beginning Dec. 1, 1974 Jefferson

were initially enthusiastic, by the end of the rally it became obvious that this was no rally against unemployment. 10,000 autoworkers had been brought to Washington to attend a Democratic Party rally ~~to~~ for Ted Kennedy. As Kennedy For President banners flouted around the auditorium, workers began to shake their heads in disgust. By the time the AFL-CIO rally was held on April 26, 1975, this disgust expressed itself by walking out of Kennedy Stadium during Hubert Humphrey's speech.

Over 80,000 workers marched through the streets of Washington to the stadium. When they got there, they were in no mood for another Democratic Rally. While thousands of workers rushed onto the field and stopped Humphrey's speech, workers who had just entered the stadium turned around and left.

The attempt of the UAW and AFL-CIO leadership ~~had failed~~ to smash Unemployed Councils and re-establish their shattered program had failed. They would not be ~~calling~~ calling for anymore rallies. The workers were not fools.

In Detroit, the Unemployed Council threw itself into the struggle ~~again~~ for Bussing. Open hearings were being held by the federal judge in each school region. The Detroit

Having the ability to draw on the <sup>historical</sup> experiences of the working class in many countries, the Detroit Unemployed Council participated in a coalition of working class groups to force the City Council to hold an open hearing on unemployment.

On Jan. 17, 1975, over 600 workers from around the city attended this open hearing. In five hours of testimony over 40 representatives of the working class spoke out against unemployment and war. As a result of this open hearing, the City Council passed a resolution calling for ~~the~~ Congress to increase the funding of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 so that all the unemployed, both men and women, are provided employment at a decent income. This resolution also called for this funding to come from the massive military budget so that public service jobs can be provided for the unemployed.

~~As a consequence of this hearing, Congress passed a ~~staggered~~ \$5.4 billion~~

In an attempt to squash the development of Unemployed Councils, both the UAW and AFL-CIO decided to hold mass rallies in Washington, D.C. Grasping for some way to regain some semblance of legitimacy among the autoworkers, <sup>their political program of collaboration</sup> the UAW leadership held their rally on Feb. 5, 1975. While the workers

2. The most immediate task of the council is to get the city to organize public work for all the unemployed.

3. The council is to rally all the unemployed around these aims on the basis of their common demands and arrange to send the delegates to the City Duma and subsequently seek other means of influencing the City Duma.

→ This Lenin offered the following advice to the St. Petersburg Unemployed Council:

"Through this organization alone you cannot influence the bourgeoisie; you will not be strong enough, and the unemployed workers themselves will not be able to develop this work on a broad proletarian class basis. Therefore, you must immediately extend the Unemployed Council to include representatives of those employed in all the factories and mills of St. Petersburg. You must now begin to agitate in the factories and mills for this purpose, and immediately arrange for the election of these representatives. The Unemployed Council must not only of 30 representatives of the unemployed, but of 100 or 150 representatives from all districts, from all the factories and mills. This will provide the unemployed with a genuine proletarian leading body which will really be able to exert pressure



Assembly would be shut down for six weeks. Immediately workers picketed the UAW's Solidarity House in Detroit. Again under the leadership of the Communist Labor Party (USNP), they demanded that the UAW leadership publish the minutes of the meeting with Young, Fraser, and Townsend. The UAW leadership denied that any record of the meeting existed. ~~The minutes~~ Their economic program a shambles, their political program of conciliation was collapsing. It was fast becoming obvious that the struggle for jobs, the struggle against war was primary. Jobs with Peace!

The Jefferson Assembly Plant struggle exposed the lack of concern with unemployment for the workers in Detroit. Workers from the plant and supporters formed the Detroit Unemployed Council. This union of the unemployed was not a new organization. It was the rebirth of the Unemployed Councils that the working-class has formed in the past.

One of the earliest Unemployed Councils formed was in St. Petersburg, Russia at the turn of the century. It was formed under the leadership Social-Democratic Party. This early Unemployed Council held three programmatic points:

1. The general aims and tasks of the Unemployed Council are to lead the unemployed out of their unbearable situation.

successfully on the City Duma and on the bourgeoisie generally." (Unemployed Councils in St. Petersburg in 1906)

The St. Petersburg Unemployed Council was finally suppressed by the Czar. But the experience of this early Council could not be suppressed. Workers all over the world have formed Unemployed Councils.

Unemployed Council organized workers to attend  
these open hearings. Both Anglo-American and  
Negro workers testified ~~at~~ in support of bussing.  
~~the workers testified at~~

7/25  
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