

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

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FOLDER 27

CLP REPORT UAW

NEGOTIATIONS RUBBER

STRIKE

INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION REPORT

RUBBER STRIKE

This memo has been prepared by the industrial commission in order to aid the work of the Detroit area (in particular the factory nuclei) as regards the upcoming UAW contract negotiations and the current rubber strike.

First of all, let's look at the rubber situation. In the past, during their contract struggles, there was one "target" company out of the big four (Goodrich, Goodyear, Firestone, and Uniroyal) singled out for strike, and the remaining contracts settled on the basis of what was settled with the "target" company.; similar to the way the UAW and the big 3 in auto operate during contract time. However, for the first time, all of rubber's big 4 are being struck at the same time. Along with an international boycott of rubber products, sympathy strikes are taking place overseas. These things give a very militant character to the strike on the surface. However, let's go deeper.

The rubber workers have an extremely militant history, particularly in Ohio's Akron Valley where 90% of the tires for Michigan's auto complex are produced. The workers many years ago were successful in getting a six hour day through out most of the industry, due in part to the extremely intense and hazardous nature of the work. (For more information, see Keller's pamphlet on the Akron Rubber Strike) This history of militant struggle is still true, and in the Akron Valley the KKK has attempted to turn this militancy into pro-fascist sentiment by propagandizing around the threat that if the rubber workers went on strike, the shops would go to the Negro Nation. The Klan hoped to discourage the workers from striking. However, strike they did, which put quite a crimp in the Klan's aspirations. (incidentally, 55% of the workers in the Akron Valley fought in Vietnam -- these are no cowards!) As far as the strike itself is concerned, there is very much potential for struggle --- a nationwide strike, an international boycott, a historically militant rank and file, a union leadership that is selling many wolf-tickets to management (the more the companies won't give in, the longer we will stay out).

However, the leadership is consciously keeping a cap on the development of the rank and file movement. This is manifested in the Detroit area local in minimal mobilizing of pickets, and lack of union meetings, little publicity on the strike or the negotiations. But what stands out most about the misleadership of the international union is the inability or unwillingness to call for a master agreement for the rubber industry.

As the People's Tribune points out (May 1, 1976), the rubber workers are working under separate agreements with the individual corporations in the rubber industry. These separate agreements set the basis for unequal wages, especially in the Negro Nation and the Southwest. We must unite with the progressive demands for COLA, higher wages, and health and safety, but at the same time we must demand a master agreement that will force equal pay for equal work.

UAW

Along with the rubber strike, the UAW is approaching its negotiations, another part of the struggle on the economic front. As the PT and Party Organizers have stated, these negotiations bear great importance in the current drive toward fascism and increased productivity.

At the UAW bargaining convention, the demands for a shorter work week, full employment and 25 and out were put forward. But will Woodcock and the rest of the labor lieutenant of the capitalists fight for these demands -- only in the halls of Congress, or in the closed meetings with the bourgeoisie. They do not intend to organize a real rank and file movement from below to fight for these demands -- nor can they afford to. Therefore, the political line of our party must be injected into this struggle. The propaganda around the shorter work week, productivity and the over production crisis, the fight for health and safety, freedom for the Negro Nation, etc. must be injected. It is not our task to cast aside the demands of the convention as not "revolutionary enough". Our task is not to dream up more revolutionary demands. There is no such thing as a revolutionary reform. A reform is just what it says -- a reform -- and cannot be transformed into being revolutionary.

In conclusion, the UAW negotiations and the rubber strike presents tremendous possibilities for our influence to be broadened in the class. The rubber strike is key, especially with its possibility of raising struggle based around the Negro National Colonial Question. Our party must put forth the demand for a master agreement; raise the question of the colonial position of the Negro nation. Our factory nuclei must, through their shop papers, agitate around giving support to the rubber strike, and explain to the class the crucial importance of the strike. If possible, the rank and file in the UAW should be mobilised to demands that their local unions give concrete support to the rubber workers -- canned goods, donations, a coffee truck for the picketers, etc. We should support the fact that Woodcock has pledged a large sum of money to booster the Rubber unions strike fund, but these gestures of support must be taken to the rank and file as well. This fight to support the rubber workers also touches the Negro national colonial question, for the militancy of the rubber strike is from its primarily bribed Anglo-American workers, while the militancy of the UAW is from the Negro National Minority. Our work in the rubber strike is in many ways the proving ground for the upcoming UAW negotiations. However, in both struggle we cannot limit ourselves to just trying to get material support for the rubber strike, or become the physical leaders of a possible auto strike. Our task is to strengthen our political line, to fortify it, to develop our consistency in the units as regards our propaganda and agitation. Support for the UAW convention demands gives us the opportunity to expose the workers to the political line and program of our party. We must begin now with this work. Our party's program and out line arms us with the weapons with which to fight; the contract struggle is the arena .

BUILD THE FACTORY NUCLEI !!!

Lynn

For the Industrial Commission