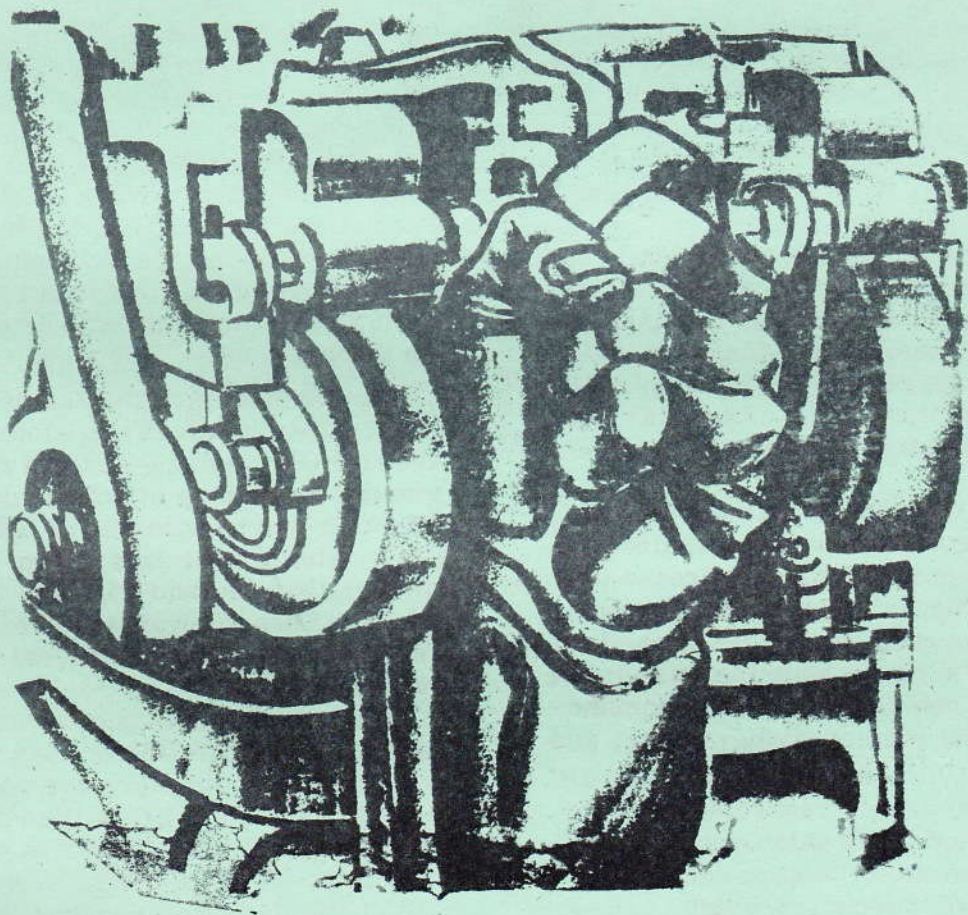


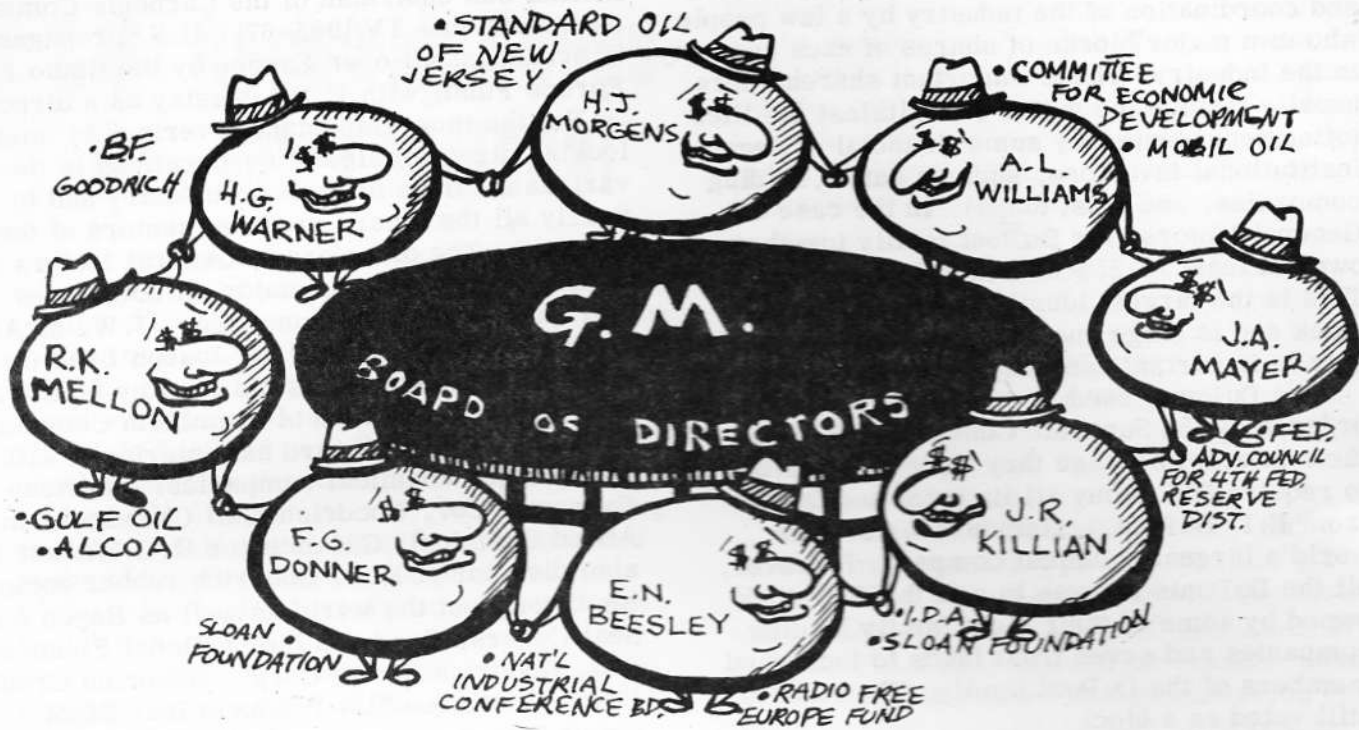
STRIKE AT GM



Articles on General Motors Corporation and its Adversaries

Collected by Pacific Studies Center

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GM: THE CORPORATE COLOSSUS

General Motors, the world's largest industrial corporation, accounts for over half of the automobile production in the country. And the auto industry is a very crucial part of the entire economy. One out of six businesses in the United States is involved in the manufacture, distribution and service of automobiles. These businesses include some of the most important industries in the country: about 30% of the nation's consumption of sheet, bar and strip steel goes for the manufacture of automobiles; and the automobile industry consumes 70% of the rubber, 50% of the lead, 45% of the malleable iron, 35% of the zinc, 12% of the nickel, 11% of the aluminum, and 9% of the copper used in this country. And the major share of oil and gas consumption goes to automobiles.

Many of the resources for production and use of automobiles must be obtained from Third World countries: 84% of the rubber used in the United States comes straight from Southeast Asia, where the U.S. is fighting largely to defend and expand its access to resources such as rubber and oil. General Motors and other giant corporations need the U.S. government bureaucracy and military to secure the expansion and

control over Third World countries to insure them a continual supply of crucial resources, as well as to provide markets for their products and cheaper labor than what they can get at home. Although the Vietnam war is a more overt and dramatic example of this, another important instance was the deep involvement of the United States in the 1965 coup in Indonesia, which installed a pro-American military dictatorship and opened up access to the country's oil and minerals for American corporations. This was accomplished only after the massacre of between 500,000 and 1,000,000 unarmed Indonesian "leftists." And Goodyear Rubber is now benefiting from the forced labor of Indonesian political prisoners.

The small group that owns and controls the major corporations is careful to ensure that the Government understands and pursues their interests abroad. An expanding economy--at home and overseas--is essential for the maintenance of corporate profits, and Government activity is necessary to allow the expansion.

Tight secrecy is maintained over the exact lines of ownership and control of a major corporation like General Motors. But some of the

Information is public about overlapping control and coordination of the industry by a few people who own major blocks of shares of each company in the industry. These important shareholders usually include the nation's wealthiest families (often represented by some financial or legal institutional investors, such as banks, holding companies, and trust funds). In the case of General Motors, the DuPont family together owns at least 17.25% of General Motors' stock. This is the largest identifiable block of GM stock and is large enough to have a determining vote in important company decisions.

The DuPonts used to control 23% of GM until ordered by the Supreme Court in 1962 to sell their interest because they were in a position to require GM to buy all its paint and fabrics from E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Co., the world's largest chemical company. However, all the DuPonts did was to sell the GM stock owned by some of their eight family holding companies and seven trust funds to individual members of the DuPont family. The stock is still voted as a block.

Shareholders with large enough blocks of stock can nominate and elect the directors of the corporations, and through the directors exercise control. Most of the board members come directly from the ruling class. Boards also have members who serve as "experts"--economists, engineers, statisticians, and corporate lawyers from the big Wall Street firms which are controlled by and serve the rich. Having experts on the board helps the coordination between ownership and management, and having outside institutions represented on the board helps consolidate ruling class control of all sectors of society.

Not only are other institutions represented on the GM board of directors, but GM directors sit on boards of universities, foundation, and government advisory agencies. Director E. N. Beesley is a member of the National Industrial Conference Board; J. R. Killian is a member of the Institute for Defense Analysis; J. A. Mayer is on the Federal Advisory Council for the Fourth Federal Reserve District; and A. L. Williams is a trustee of the Committee for Economic Development. GM directors influence education by serving as trustees for Wabash, Dartmouth, MIT, Mt. Holyoke, Carnegie Mellon, Carnegie Institute, University of Pennsylvania, Queens, University of Pittsburg, and Duke University. They also serve as directors of foundations and commissions which have a key influence in the development of the educational system along lines that will serve corporate interests. J. R.

Killian was chairman of the Carnegie Commission on Educational TV(1965-67). U.S. propaganda is broadcast all over Europe by the Radio Free Europe Fund, with E. N. Beesley as a director.

But the most important "overlap" is interlocking directorships of corporations in the various sections of the auto industry and in nearly all the other important sectors of the economy. The directors of General Motors sit on the boards of three major oil companies and four major steel companies. J. W. McAfee doubles as a director of St. Joseph Lead Co. R. K. Mellon represents his wealthy family on both GM and the board of Aluminum Company of America. The GM board has interlocks with three major chemical companies: American Cyanamid Co., Goodrich-Gulf Chemical, and Allied Chemical. GM director H. G. Warner is also director of B. F. Goodrich rubber companies throughout the world as well as Rayco Auto Seat Covers, Goodrich International Finance Co., Goodrich Realty Corp., Goodrich Credit Corp., and Aquadilla Products Inc. Eight major insurance companies have GM directors on their own Board of Directors.

One of the most important ways in which the ruling class consolidates wealth is through the big banks--the real power, in terms of accumulated capital, behind the American empire. The top ten banks, including those of the Rockefellers, DuPonts, Morgans and Mellons, have 25% of the assets of all banks in the country. These key banks have powerful ties with every important corporation. The GM board has

(cont. on p. 17)



GM: Runaway Shops Go International

General Motors, the corporate giant whose tentacles straddle the so-called "Free World," tightened its grip on the markets of Europe and Latin America in 1969. The proportion of GM's total factory sales of cars and trucks manufactured overseas and in Canada increased from 31% in 1967 to 38% in 1969, while the total sales of all products overseas topped \$3.4 billion, up from \$3.0 billion in 1968. While producing more than half of the vehicles manufactured in the U.S., GM also produces one out of every 3.6 vehicles manufactured in the non-socialist world.

The history of General Motors' expansion overseas can be divided into three distinct phases: export, assembly and manufacture. In the first phase, between 1911 and 1922, almost all overseas sales were exports. Starting with its formation in 1911, the General Motors Export Company took advantage of low foreign tariffs on imported vehicles to expand the export market. After 1920, when tariffs began increasing, GM turned to establishing franchises overseas and shipping parts and components to be assembled in Europe. In 1920, General Motors Acceptance Corporation opened its English branch, the first overseas. Between 1923 and 1928 GM began the operation of nineteen assembly plants in fifteen countries, shipping 70% of all the cars and trucks exported as parts and components. As Fred Donner, past chairman of the board, explained it (in World Wide Industrial Enterprise, Its Challenge and Promise), these assembly plants and dealerships laid the foundations for overseas growth by establishing a firm competitive position and a long-term commitment to emerging markets, as well as providing GM with invaluable experience in operating under varied economic, political and social conditions. GM got the jump on foreign competitors.

The third phase of expansion started in the late 1920's when General Motors began to actually manufacture parts overseas, as well as assemble parts. Local producers in Europe had been growing, so GM entered the European manufacturing sector by buying out some of its competitors. In Great Britain, where GM's

first assembly plant had been set up in 1914, the company started its move into manufacturing by purchasing Vauxhall Motors in 1925. By 1929, when it purchased Adam Opel of Germany, GM was still extending the assembly phase into Latin America, Africa and Asia by establishing assembly plants in Argentina, Brazil, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.

With the Depression and the trade restrictions which held back exports from the U.S., General Motors expanded its production overseas even more in order to maintain a high volume of sales. By 1935, GM had recovered its share of the 1929 market, supplying one quarter of the world demand outside the U.S. and Canada. Opel and Vauxhall made up half of GM's share of world production.

Immediately after World War II, while foreign manufacturing plants were being rebuilt, 40% of the vehicles GM sold overseas were manufactured in the U.S. and Canada. In 1945, Vauxhall reopened for manufacturing, and in 1948 GM started up manufacturing operations at Opel and GM-Holden of Australia.

General Motors expanded little in the 1950's but it accumulated capital for future growth from its two-thirds share of the profits of its foreign subsidiaries. At the beginning of the sixties it was used to finance a rate of growth unparalleled before World War II. By 1966 the value of all its holdings had increased to \$12 billion, six times the 1946 figure. Of this incredible expansion, only 10.4% was financed through sales of new stock. The remaining 89.6% was paid for from profits, the surplus taken from GM workers and customers through low wages and high prices.

Today General Motors' principal foreign operations are located in Canada, Britain, Germany, Australia and South Africa, with growing production in Brazil and Argentina. Besides cars and trucks, there are substantial sales of refrigerators, diesel engines, power generating equipment, locomotives and other products. In several instances, GM has used its financial power to try to secure the same monopoly position it holds in the United States. In Canada it accounts for 40.8% of the passenger car production and 34.7% of the truck market. In Australia, GM's Holden controls 38% of the market and yielded \$14 million in dividends to the parent company last year. Vauxhall Motors in Britain and Opel in Germany are used by GM as export centers to world-wide markets. Opel has started a drive to increase exports to the U.S., thereby giving GM a profit from its own foreign competition.

Now General Motors is entering a new phase as one of the handful of "multinational" corporations. GM markets are being integrated across national boundaries, and GM production is being divided and specialized for the world market. GM's activities are organized with complete indifference to the needs of a particular country where the corporation has facilities. In the early 1950's Latin American nations attempted to protect themselves from domination by American firms whose control of resources and technology meant they could produce more efficiently than domestic companies. In the auto industry high tariffs kept out assembled cars, while other laws required that any vehicles assembled or manufactured in the country contain a certain minimum percentage of locally produced components. But the policy failed. Production stayed low and prices of domestically produced autos were as much as 80-100% above the international level. The Latin American nations found that the technological superiority of the U.S. corporations, combined with their high volumes of production, secured their monopoly power. As these countries tried to produce the more specialized components of an automobile, such as axles, transmissions, brakes, and ignition systems, as much as 10-35% of the value of the components wound up back in the hands of U.S. corporations to pay for equipment, parts or licensing. These nations saw that the only way they could survive economically was to allow themselves to be "integrated" even further into the grand schemes of U.S. corporations. A bargain was struck--the U.S. corporations could structure production as they chose as long as they maintained the level of employment and exports for the host country.

The model for this kind of an arrangement has been the U.S.-Canadian Automotive Agreement of 1965. It allows U.S. firms to continue to sell assembled cars and trucks in Canada provided they increase purchases of Canadian-produced components for the U.S. market. This means that American firms will be able to develop specialized production facilities in their overseas affiliates, expanding and consolidating the trend toward monopoly in international industry. In auto production, two U.S. firms already account for over one-third of total world production, while nine other companies account for the second third. Overseas affiliates will become increasingly dependent on the U.S. parent corporation, as a source of new technology as well as parts and components.

The UAW understood that the movement of production facilities abroad put the old "runaway" shop movement on an international level, undercutting their bargaining power as a union and keeping wages low. As Walter Reuther put it, "this means the playing off of auto workers in one country against those of another." To combat this the UAW has been able to negotiate contracts with the Canadian plants of Ford, Chrysler and GM that provide for a common expiration date for U.S. and Canadian contracts and wage parity for equal work by June of 1970. In their efforts to extend this organizing to European auto industries, the UAW held a conference in 1969 with British autoworkers and announced they would work for the same goal of wage parity, with allowances for living costs differences, as well as a common world-wide expiration date for all contracts, to prevent the stockpiling of spare parts from abroad if strikes close any U.S.-owned plant.

But events in Canada show the limited effectiveness of the UAW's international strategy in serving the workers. What GM has given with one hand it has taken away with the other. As the price of wage parity, GM demanded increased productivity in Canadian plants. Instead of the plant-wide rest breaks Canadian workers enjoyed, they have now moved to the U.S. plan of staggered individual rest breaks. Workers fought to defend their rest breaks in February, 1968 by striking seven plants in six cities, 25,000 strong, but they stand to lose out finally in the 1970 contract negotiations.

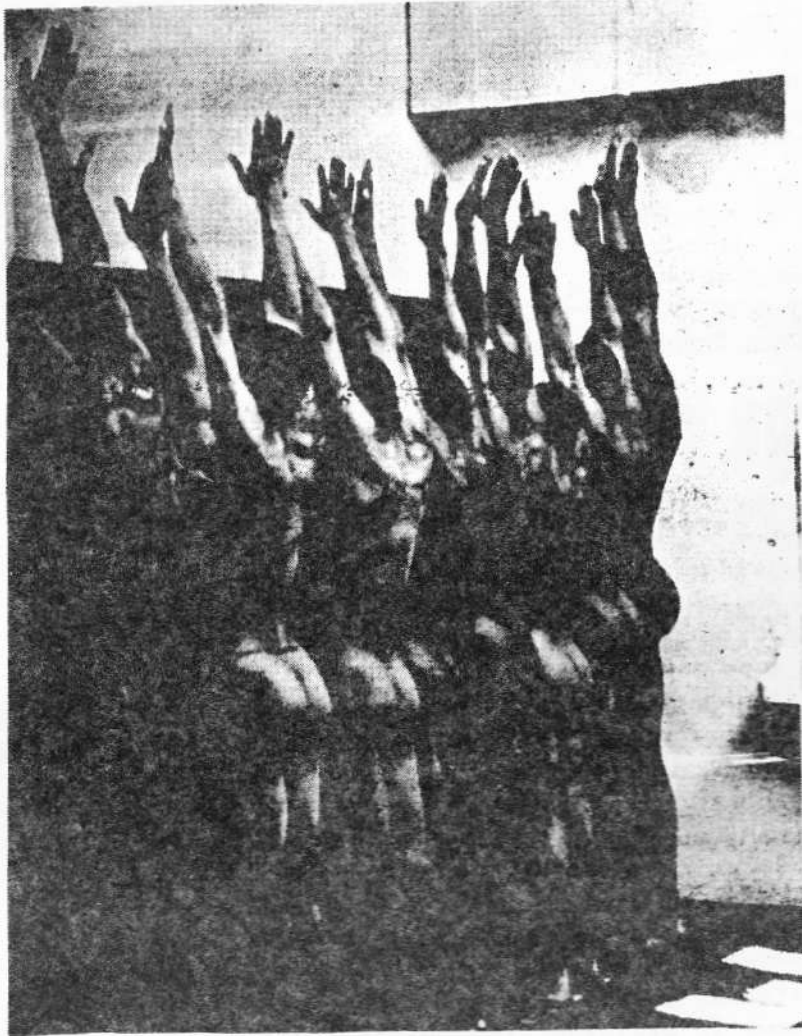
The UAW's final vision of a world-wide autoworker's strike can only be a pipe dream. The union has said that, because of jurisdictional disputes, it will not attempt to organize a completely international autoworker's union, even if it could. The most it will try to do is to help national unions organize their own plants, in order to build an international association of autoworkers' unions. But as the production of important parts and components moves even further abroad, international union-smashing will intensify. South Africa is a case in point. GM has been there since 1926. Wage slavery is developed to its highest degree. With a ratio of 11 million blacks to 3 million whites, cheap non-white labor makes up the foundation of the South African economy. Outside their tribal homeland, blacks have neither political nor trade-union rights. Non-whites are barred from specific positions, including all supervisory and control work,

welding, brazing, etc., and they are forbidden by law to strike for better wages or working conditions, even though their pay averages less than one-eighth that of whites. Organizing is very difficult, since public meetings are banned in many cities without government permission, and union organizers cannot go on plant premises to meet workers without being arrested for trespassing. In Port Elizabeth, where GM plants are located, spray painters(whites only) received \$33.78 per week in 1959, while general laborers(non-whites only) got \$8.68 if mulatto and \$7.80 if black. In the auto industry in 1963, whites averaged \$2881 annually, contrasted to \$924 for mulattos and \$590 for blacks.

For the Latin American auto worker problems are of a different sort. Although there is no racist legal code barring unskilled workers from higher jobs, the industry itself is plagued with rising costs for the procurement

of materials and components, as well as inefficient low volume production that results in unnecessary duplication of suppliers and producers. As these costs are passed on to the consumer, Latin American auto workers are less able to afford the cars they produce. In Argentina, for example, workers receive in wages only 1.4% of the cost of the vehicle they manufacture--to purchase even the most low priced car they would have to work two years and four months.

As the automotive industry moves production facilities abroad in search of higher profits and greater control over markets and resources, American auto workers themselves will be caught in a two-way squeeze. With little or no control over the production process, workers face the dismal choice of following runaway shops overseas or attempting to upgrade their skills ahead of the pace of automation.



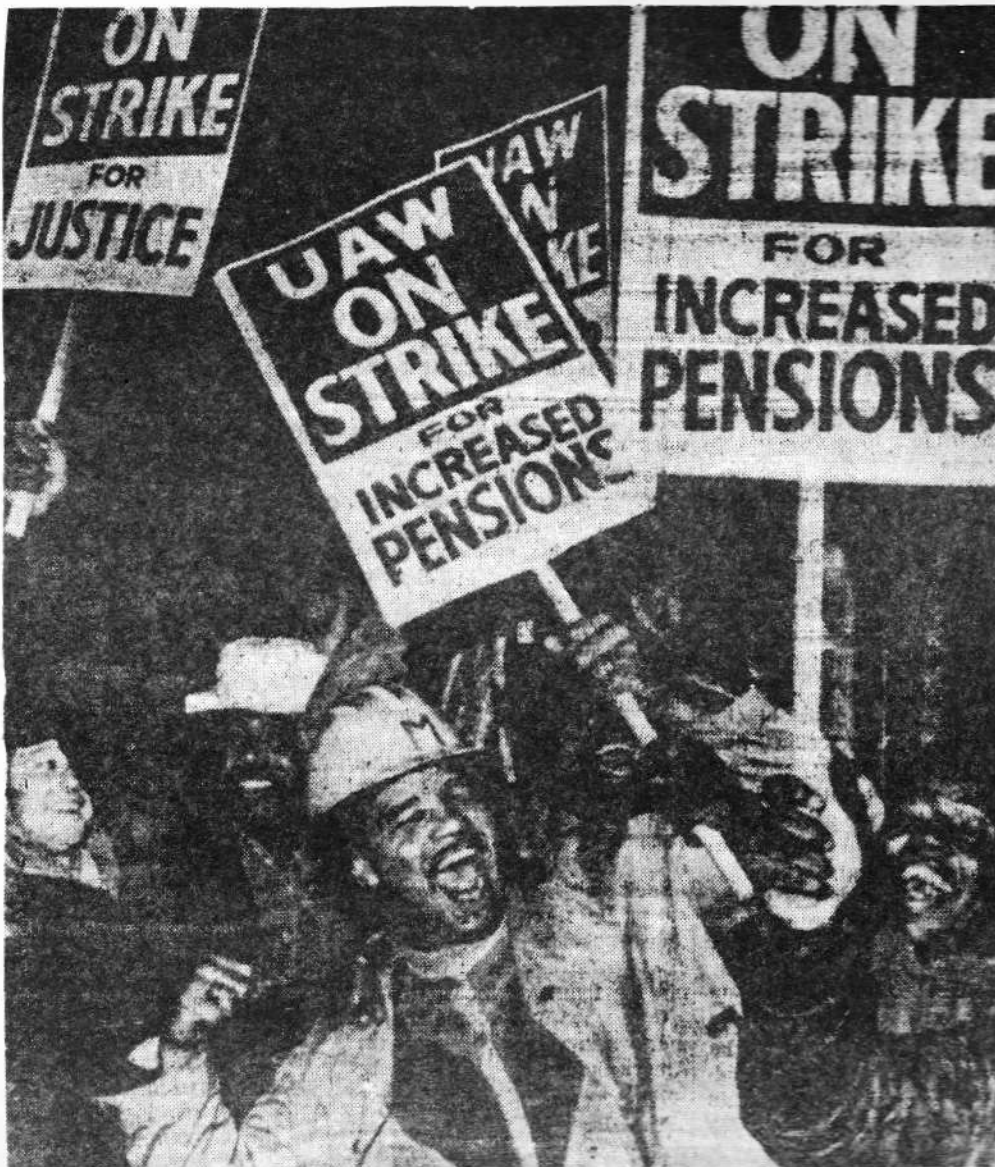
Black workers receive medical examination in South Africa.

Colossus (cont. from p. 4)

interlocks with the boards of First National of Chicago, First National of Cincinnati, First National of Boston, Continental Illinois National of Chicago, National Bank of Detroit, Chase Manhattan, Banker's Trust Co., Morgan Guaranty Trust, and Mellon National Bank & Trust. Through the banks, the big financial interests can control the selection of officers of corporations, can buy up competing concerns and make them non-competitive by price agreements, reciprocal purchasing arrangements, exchange of patents, and rebates.

These interlocking directorates are the mechanism that enable a few people to establish and maintain oligopolistic control of the industry. The objective is to keep profits high by avoiding price competition--the result of monopoly without its appearance. GM, as the

the giant of the auto manufacturers, is able to set the industry-wide price guidelines for automobiles. Its policy is to set the highest possible prices without losing too much to foreign competition or to a fall in total consumer demand. This usually nets GM about a 20% profit return. Oligopolistic control enables GM owners, along with the owners of the other major corporations in America, to steadily increase their concentration of power over all the key institutions in the society. Ultimately, a few thousands of individuals run the country (See G. William Dumhoff, Who Rules America?). A direct consequence of the system these men feed on is the social and economic oppression at home and abroad.



starting in 1965, they shot up much faster.

That leads to the second major cause of inflation: U.S. imperialism.

When the businessmen and politicians of one country dominate the economy and politics of other countries, that is imperialism.

Imperialism causes inflation in two different ways. First, in peacetime as well as wartime, it increases the monopoly power of the big corporations by giving them control of more foreign resources. Second, and more important, it makes the government spend lots of money for the military supplies necessary to keep foreign people under control—people who don't want their resources controlled by U.S. corporations. It is no accident that prices started to soar around the time that LBJ escalated the Vietnam war.

Why did this happen?

To finance the Vietnam war and the so-called "defense" budget, the U.S. government has had to "create" money. This doesn't

mean printing dollar bills. It means printing credit certificates sold by the U.S. Treasury. To put it simply, the government can "write checks" to pay for war material without putting money in the checking account.

The monetary system is based on the assumption that goods exist equal in value to the money in circulation. But when the government creates money, it's cheating. That new money doesn't represent the worth of anything.

The balance between the amount of money in circulation and the amount of goods in circulation is upset—and we have "too much money chasing too few goods."

As a result, it takes more money to buy the same amount of goods that less money would have bought before the new money was created. That is, prices rise.

(Reprinted from the San Jose Maverick)

BLACK PANTHERS TAKE ON GM

The largest industrial plant in Northern California is the General Motors Assembly Plant in Fremont, located between Oakland and San Jose. In 1968, a group of black GM workers formed the Black Panther Caucus. A number of the leaders of the caucus were members of the Black Panther Party, but the caucus also attracted large numbers of workers not in the Party. While the base of the caucus remains the GM plant, the caucus now has membership from a number of UAW plants in the San Francisco Bay Area. Following is an interview with Kenny Horston, founder and Chairman of the Black Panther Caucus.

Q: What about racist practices towards black workers at GM?

A: Any black worker in any UAW plant or in any union can tell you that racism exists. In Fremont it is so subtle that some workers do not relate to it. They've even got a vice-president who's a black guy, who stands up and says it does not exist. Our shop chairman and international representative took a position six years ago that there was no racism in the plant.

But now with the increase of black workers at Fremont, naturally the problem has come to the front. We find that the majority of newly-hired workers are black. They hire about five black workers to every two white workers. But after that ninety-day probationary period, we find that there is only one black worker left, and those same two white workers are still there.

Q: Are there some jobs that are reserved for white workers only?

A: I think you should say 'reserved for black workers.' There are such jobs mainly in the body shop, usually referred to as the sweat shop, the dark room, or the hot house. And they call it this because the body shop is where you do the welding and the sparks fly around. You get burned, and there is no ventilation. Or they put you in the pit where the cars roll over head and you have to work underneath, where the oil from the transmission and the gas and water drip down into the pit. And then there's the spray area on the production line where you have to climb inside the cab of a car or a truck and spray paint. You know how small it is inside of a car and you have to wear a mask because

when you spray it comes back on your face and gets into your nose and eyes and ears. You can hardly breathe.

As far as getting out of the pits, the body shops, the wet sanding area, or the spray booths, management has a provision in the contract that says they retain the right to job assignment and this means they can assign you to any job they want to. If you want to protest, you have to go through the grievance procedure, which might well take anywhere from 30 days to 7 months and by that time, they might come around and take you off the job.

Q: What percentage of skilled jobs are held by blacks?

A: There are about 300 or 400 skilled jobs and I think we have seven blacks. And they came within the last three years.

Q: Would you say that the bulk of the workers favor the war, oppose the war, or consider themselves part of Nixon's "silent majority?"

A: Well, I would say that they're split for and against the war. Not necessarily for it as hawks but for their patriotic feelings--that if we were to leave, we would lose face, even though some have never seen Vietnam. Then you've got the other guys who are against the war because we're spending too much money in Vietnam, that kind of thing. Our caucus held an anti-war rally Nov. 13 and the rally was fairly good. We got a fairly good response out of it. We didn't get as many people to attend as we wanted because of the time involved. But the guys came over to hear speeches, and that is the first time that something like this has even been done outside of the structure of union leadership.

Q: What is the relationship between the Black Panther Caucus and other groups in unions and auto plants around the country?

A: Since the beginning of the caucus, we have tried to establish communication with other black organizations or progressive organizations throughout the nation and the one black organization that we relate to the heaviest is the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement in Detroit. Hopefully, sometime in the future, we can come together and start dealing realistically with some of the problems that have to be dealt with surrounding the United Auto Workers convention in New Jersey. Hopefully the Black Panther caucus and DRUM can work together because we see the dire need for Reuther's consolidation

"I think there's a place for the factory workers in the struggle, definitely they will have to be depended upon at some point. I think that what will happen is that instead of the workers as they exist now being the backbone of the revolution--I don't see that happening--it will come another way. I see that the worker now in relationship to capital, that it's a bad relationship, but it's a temporary relationship. I think the worker's status is in transition at this time, with the development of technology from automation to cybernetics that it will displace even more workers because capital won't need them any more. That is what we call the lumpenproletariat, or the people that have no relation to capital at all. They've been kicked out from it. We think that this class will be the backbone of the revolution. But of course we can't wait until they are kicked out, we must recruit now, so we have a caucus in the UAW, at the Fremont, California, plant of General Motors. This is a Black Panther caucus. We're concentrating on the factory worker, but not on that old unionism thing, you see, because unionism alone is never a cause for revolution. You have to take that other step, or it's more than likely to have that sectarian thing where each union is trying to get more money and not really interested in transforming anything."

HUEY NEWTON
MINISTER OF DEFENSE
BLACK PANTHER PARTY
(From Hard Times, 9/7/70)

of power to be shattered and broken, and for Walter Reuther to come falling down off his mountain. And as it stands now, he damn near is.

Q: Is the caucus open to chicanos and whites or is it open only to blacks?

A: The caucus is open to all workers. It's a workers' caucus and even though this invitation was made clear when the caucus was first formed, at this time we have very few whites and chicanos. Most of the members who are in the caucus now are younger brothers, brothers who see the need for change, brothers who have gone through an education-

Black Panther Caucus

National Workers Program

1. Organize the Unorganized-There are more than 71 million workers in the U.S. Only 20 million of them (28%) are union members. In order for the workers to have the strength and unity we need in fighting the bosses, we must organize all workers into unions.
2. Shorter Work Week-The work week should be 30 hours per week (with no compulsory overtime) at 40 hours pay, or fewer hours if necessary to guarantee full employment.
3. Stop Runaway Shops-When a boss decides to move his shop, all workers must be given a choice of: a) going with the shop at the same wages and conditions (with transportation paid by the boss), or b) taking three years severance pay with continuation of health and welfare plans for three years or until they find new jobs. The union contract must go with the shop to its new location.
4. Women Workers-1/3 of the workers today are women. Unions must lead the fight for an end to discrimination against women. Women must have equal rights to jobs and must receive equal pay for equal work. Unions that represent women must guarantee leadership positions to women. As a part of the struggle for these ends, unions must demand child care centers to be provided by the companies and the government for the children of working women.
5. Automation-The unions must fight to win the right to negotiate all automation with the company before it takes place. The union shall set the conditions of automation so that there are no lay-offs and job safety is guaranteed.
6. Health and Welfare-Every year in the U.S. 14,500 workers are killed on the job; over half

a million fall ill with occupational diseases; 7 million are injured; and 2 million are disabled. Unions must fight for the right to set and enforce health and safety standards on the job. Unions must fight to win fully paid medical and dental coverage for all workers and their families. At the same time, labor must struggle for free medical and dental care for all the people.

7. Anti-Labor Laws-Labor must take the offensive against anti-labor laws by demanding their repeal and defying them when they are used.

8. End Racism-The labor movement must struggle against racism in the unions in order to effectively combat racism in the society. The unions must educate the workers to understand that racism serves the bosses by dividing the workers and preventing the development of class consciousness.

9. End the War-Labor must demand an end to the war in Vietnam and all aggressive imperialist wars. This must be coupled with a struggle in this country against racism and growing facism. The economy must be re-directed to serve the basic needs of all the people: full employment, food, clothing, housing, education, and medical care.

10. Union Sell-Out-All of the problems we have outlined can be blamed in part on the sell-out of union leadership to class collaborationist, cold war and racist policies. We must re-build a militant trade union movement by combatting these policies through the formation of rank-and-file caucuses and the fight for class consciousness.

al process, brothers who have struggled these first two and a half years.

Q: Do you find any problems involving blacks in the Black Panther caucus because the caucus also takes in whites?

A: No. You see, we hold political education classes and we make it very clear to these brothers before they come into the caucus that if we're going to engage in a struggle, we're going to engage in a struggle to overthrow the General Motors Corporation and the avaricious businessman and to run out

the bureaucrats and the racists and fascists and the union leadership. Now in order for us to do this, we can't be talking about the color of a man's skin, about whether or not he can stand beside us because we see that the union and management use this as a tool, a very effective tool until now, to keep us apart; not just in the unions, but in the communities and this is one of the problems that we deal with from the beginning. We clearly explain and show why it is necessary for us as workers and revolutionaries to deal with the problem of racism.

(cont. on p. 27)

pressure for higher profits has caused the speed-up to be pushed to the point where a worker cannot safely perform his assembly operation in the available time.

In the past twenty years there has been a 400% speed-up without the introduction of automated equipment. Black workers, who hold the bulk of the worst jobs, have a name for this: "Niggermation." Time studies are constantly made to check for "wasted motions" by the worker. It is not unusual for temperatures to get up to 120 degrees in painting sections. In the foundries, almost 95% of the workers have diseases caused by job conditions, including silicosis and other lung diseases caused by inhaling foundry dust. Men who work a number of years in departments where metal parts are crashed together often become deaf. Eyes are burned from the "flashes" a welding arc and skin is burned by the flying sparks. Nitrogen dioxide, frequently released when metal is heated, irritates lungs and can also harm the liver and blood.

The UAW seems to be avoiding talking about working conditions in its negotiations with the auto companies. Of 41 papers presented by the union to accompany its 1970 demands, not one was on working conditions. Demands by UAW locals usually include plant conditions, since each factory has a unique set of dangerous situations. For example, local demands at GM Fremont include line counters (which would limit the speed-up), adequate ventilation and temperature control throughout the plant, and temperature gauges and temperature control throughout the plant air filters in spray booths. These are nitty-gritty demands which relate to the real needs of the workers. But the local gets little support from the UAW leadership. The UAW is appearing to give in to a company demand for the right to discharge an employee after three days of absenteeism unless certified sick by a company doctor.

The auto companies have a strategy of allowing worker grievances pile up until the time of contract negotiations, and then make agreements with union leaders to "wipe the slate clean" of all previous grievances and set up a new contract. Locals often strike over these local grievances and

Plant conditions are not significantly improving. Those who work in

the plant have no say as to what is produced or how it is produced. Workers will never have safe working conditions under the present structure because the auto company owners find it more profitable to leave conditions as they are. The union fails to serve the needs of its members, especially the blacks. Local caucuses are developing in plants across the country to make sure that demands which most relate to the workers' needs can not be passed over by the UAW or GM. Ultimately, only when workers no longer have to compromise with the owners, who profit from their work, and unions, that cooperate with management, will the life and safety of the production worker come first.

Panthers

(cont. from p. 21)

Q: How did you get involved in politics?

A: That's kind of a funny thing. First of all, I was born in Detroit and my father was one of the old CIO organizers. My old man used to have to work two jobs; like he worked at Dodge Main and Ford River Rouge Plant, and still we never had enough bread to make it on. And this was a common thing. How you could look out your back window and see garbage stacked five and six feet high because the garbagement would only pick up so much garbage and leave the rest for the next time around. All along the wall of our house or any house in that area, you would see rat holes. When my father did work those two jobs, we would eat fairly good, but when he lost one or both, and Ford would lay him off two or three months out of the year even though he had seniority, we would have to sit back and tighten up the belt again. All these things, these questions, that were unanswered at that early stage in my life, but now they are answered as to why it happened. Now I know why it happened and I also think I know at this time how to deal with them.

Q: And that's really what this whole struggle is about?

A: Yes.