Crippling three major Chrysler facilities in this past summer's wave of sit-down strikes was a black plant takeover as historic as the earlier plant takeovers since the historic sit-down of the late 1930's. The Detroit newspaper is reporting, it was the first time Chrysler was forced to shut down a plant because of militancy of its black workers.

Unlike other black nationalist groups, the League insisted on the central role of the working class and, in the beginning, seriously oriented toward organizing at "the point of production." The LRW and its various auto factory groups (DRUM, ELRMU, ELMU) have relied mainly on the traditional fight and tactics of their own internal contradictions. But it is important for working-class militant trade unionists to challenge the evolution, which clearly reveals the incompatibility of nationalist and proletarian politics.

Reuther Betrays  Pave the  Way

It was no accident that such a group developed in Detroit, where blacks have long been an important element in the auto industry. Ford as a counter-force to unionism, the vast majority nevertheless refused to "sell out." Some, such as President of the 1940 River Rouge organizing strike.

The increasing population of blacks in the neighborhood of the Rouge and the World War II contributed to the pressure on the Reuther bureaucracy to support the early civil rights movement—a movement characterized by the non-violent philosophy and tactics of Martin Luther King and well within the framework of Reuther's "labor-Democratic alliance."

But despite Reuther's social democratic past and demagogic "progressive" image, the "red-haired wonder" failed to apply even these minimal liberal capitalist policies to the experience of the Rouge because of the lower levels of his own bureaucracy.

This situation led aspiring black businessmen to search for other, more revolutionary, forms of social change. The United Auto Workers, an American Federation of Labor chartered union, and black labor diplomats like venerable social democrat A. Philip Randolph, whose main concern was simply to garner a bit of face-saving independence from the Reuther machine, while maintainingSelectable.
out a field of 21 candidates. In a later election for vice-president, the in-and-out bureaucrats again blocked to support Andy Hardy (current Local 3 president), who defeated the DRUM candidate by 5,000 to 1,600.

Worst of DRUM's audacity spread to other plants and even outside the industry. ELRUM was formed at Chrysler's Eldon Avenue Gear and Axle plant in late 1968, and less important groups arose at Detroit Forge & Stamping, Anderson Assembly (JARUM), Mack Avenue Stamping (MARUM), Ford River Rouge (FRUM), Cadillac Freight (CADFRM), the Detroit News (NEWJRM), United Parcel warehouse (UPRUM) and other places. The Eldon plant, in particular, is crucial to Chrysler's entire operation, supplying parts to all of its assembly plants, and is part of the vital Lynch Road complex which includes the Detroit Forge and Plymouth Assembly. ELRUM launched itself by organizing a mass rally in front of the NLRB union hall in January 1969, demanding that the union act on the many unresolved health and safety grievances.

The firing of two militants who participated in the rally, and the local president's agonizing response, led to a wildcat the following week with an expatriate, by 3,000-odd workers, similar to those raised by DRUM, including the removal of the non-English speaking workers, the replacement of a black management assistant, and replaced with a Black doctor. (The South End, 10 February 1969). This second action resulted in the firing of a large number of workers, whom 25 were not reinstated.

By May, Eldon was again shut down by a two-day wildcat organized by the Elton Safety Committee, "a loose coalition composed by ELRUM, Elton Wildcat (a small syndicalist group) and several discharged union officials" (Radical America, March-April 1971). The wildcat, which resulted in the firing of three ELRUM militants, was a response to the death of a young, black fork lift driver and the mounting pile-up of safety violations.

Though the ELRUM newsletter pointed out that it was betrayed by those "Uncle Tom" union officials and ignored by "Our Uncle Tom President and Nigger Executive Board," ELRUM's solution "to break up the union-management partnership" was to "obtain BLACK representation," as though the problem were the lack of "blackness" (i.e., nationalism) of the sellout bureaucrats.

Concretely, this meant running a slate which included Jones Sima (now Local 961 president and co-chairman of the reformist United National Association) and later supporting the opportunists (though he cautiously refused to accept their support) in his bid for local president in 1970. This turn of events came from DRUM's (and ELRUM's) admitted emphasis on "seeking an all Black slate,... we have always been handed this slate or that slate none of which represents the best interest of Black Workers. We all remember how we used to go to the polling with a bag full of slates trying to pick out all of the black candidates. We were forced to many instances of vote for stone cut through politics, won white racist, and achieved nothing. We had no alternative candidates." (DRUM leaflet, February 1970)

From the Plants to the "Community"

Based on the apparent strength of DRUM and ELRUM after the initial wildcats and the obvious attractiveness of the DRUM concept to other black workers, yet seeing the need to transcend the isolation of individual plant caucuses, the ICV cadre moved to organize the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in early 1969. The impetus behind the League's formation led to conflicting notions within the leadership: whether to expand into the community or orient toward a pan-plant, pan-plantivity workers' organization.

Reflecting its success and base in the plants, the League introduced itself as follows: DRUM, FRUM, and ELRUM are organizations of and for the super-exploited, over-worked, teen-aged, first-tired, sick and tired Black workers. These organizations are dedicated to the development of united, disciplined, and militant action by Black workers in their own interests. We believe that this cadre has accomplished this through a League of Revolutionaries for the Black Community. DRUM, FRUM, and ELRUM are organizations of and for the super-exploited, over-worked, teen-aged, first-tired, sick and tired Black workers. These organizations are dedicated to the development of united, disciplined, and militant action by Black workers in their own interests. We believe that this cadre has accomplished this through a League of Revolutionaries for the Black Community.

"...Those Brothers and Sisters who are interested in a truly militant organization dedicated to the needs of Black labor and Black liberation... participate in the formation of Revolutionary Black Workers..." (DRUM, Vol. 1, No. 1)

But the inability to nationalize a militant organization with the realities of class struggle, the plants and the decline of plant-related activity, plus the growing realization that the section of the leadership, led to an increasing emphasis on the black worker's role in the community.

"Black workers have the ability to deal with the overall problems that exist within Black community... ELRUM will be concerned not only with problems that exist inside the plants but also to the problems that exist in the community—the Black Community. The issues that confront the CHRY-RUM taken are the International Black Awareness and Parents... and Community Control (of our school system)."

The abrupt IBA was conceived of as a black alternative to the United-Foundation—a charity fund to be supported by "communities of the black and poor." This is the logic of community control, the poor supporting the community.

Detroit had recently passed a school desegregation law which required the integration of regional school boards (which were to become centers of strike-breaking activity in the recent DFT strike). In response, the League's front group, Parents and Students for Community Control (PASC), demanded that regional boundaries be redrawn so that blacks would exercise a majority in most districts. Black worker-controlled faculties committees would then be elected to re-organize schools and kitchens and the "teaching of skills that have longevity and are marketable." A PASC proposal was run in the Michigan school board elections based on that program.

The League simultaneously developed a base in several ghetto schools. Its Black Student Union from apparently had no working-class articulation whatever. In an illustrative campaign financing, several students disciplined for taking part in a "revolt" at militant Johannesburg Street High School in 1969, was given a total amnesty for all disciplined in the tip of cops from the school, but also demanded pictures of whites be removed from the schools and "no incident had ever come to light... with pictures of our own heroes... [and... the Nationalist Flag of U'sty (Red, Green, White) be flown in each classroom."

(Inner City Voice, February 1970). While the League gave its community-control campaign some "working-class" rhetorical fluffiness, its basic appeal was nationalist. And, like the nationalist demand for black foremen, it simply oriented to changing the system while neglecting the essence of the racist, anti-working class educational system.

Defense of Black Militants

The other major arena of the League's non-plant work, and the most visible, was that of organizing and defending black militant defense campaigns. The campaigns, conducted in a highly political manner by the League's small cadre, were in the form of open letters, were largely under the control of Ken Cockrell, whose extensive use of open letters and leaflets was seen by many as viewed with disdain by the more "closed" elements in the organization.

The first major case was the New Black President. At the meeting of the black separatist Republic of New Africa, which was dedicated for allegedly murdering two cops during a police attack on a BNA meeting at the New Bethel church in March 1969. Cockrell mobilized a large staff of sympathetic liberal lawyers and supplemented the successful courtroom defense with massive demonstrations and open-air "People's Courts" staged in downtown Detroit. Later that year, JARUM supporters blocked the attempted extradition of RNA head, Robert F. Williams to North Carolina.

A later case was that of a black worker who killed two white foremen and a black worker, most of whom were killed by Cockrell on the grounds that the pressure of the assembly line and the relationship of subordinates to superiors (temporarily insane). The Labor Defense Coalition, a League front, led by Ralph David was composed of John Conyers and other black liberals (not to mention the Grand Rapids black policemen's association) against police harassment and U.S. Senate surveillance of the League. In a fine example of adaptation, the League demanded not the dismantling of the police, but rather that they be "de-concentrated" to concentrate its efforts on organized crime and the heroin traffic in Detroit." (Detroit News, 1969)

The response was a widespread national breaking of the black cops could easily support: "White-Skin Privelege" and All-Black Unions

It was the key programmatic point of "white-skin privelege" and separation which linked both political points of DRUM's approach to the plants. The strong support they enjoyed was largely in large part from the association facing the newly baked black youth. By the late 1960s, with the notion of "white skin privilege" and the "class struggle" dominated by cold-war and anti-communism. The "progressive" Realists who were called revolutionaries, the black dramatic increase in speed which greeted the black new-heroes and was of course hostile to the idea of national policy-fronts circulating in the ghetto. Being unfamiliar with the UAW's relatively more radical and democratic past, new black workers were presented with a view of the union as a hostile, white-owned and run company. The response was a widespread national breaking of the black cops could easily support: "White-Skin Privelege" and All-Black Unions.
Soul Power or Workers Power?

Continued from page 5

The working class needs not less but more trade unionism. "Trade unionism has not been strong enough. It is the working class to petty-bourgeois pressure. The struggle for the working class to petty-bourgeois pressure is not a struggle for a model for an "anti-inflation" movement. The "working class" is not an indigenous stratum in Australia."

The struggle of the working class and its political expression can be led beyond the boundaries of capitalism to proletarian revolution.

SWL Perverts Trotskyism

The reformist Socialist Workers League, which gives lip service to Trotsky's name, is thetip of the Socialist Workers League's views as expressed in a letter to the editor of the November 9, 1972, New Life. The Clydean Daily is the Socialist Workers League's organ, which is also supported by local trade unionists and by local politicians.

The letter begins: "The workers are lockout from company and union racism. The workers' movement must struggle to change the character of the League's political line and its labour control policies." The letter concludes: "The League is not an indigenous stratum in Australia."

This parochial outlook resulting from the absence of a program to unite the entire class eventually facilitated a motion away from the auto plants as well as the UAW and led the League to seek support from non-working-class elements in the black community. In 1975 the UAW, DRUM, LRBW leaders Hamlin said: "We always had an impulse to stay with the plants and organize the plants because that's where the power is. That's where blacks have power, they have the status, they can close down the economy. But after we re-organized that, we found that people in supporting those struggles in the plants, we began to look beyond factories, beyond that."

That the 'League represents a merger of a number of various elements in the black community and includes students."

That these "various elements," as well as the "League" itself, must be cohesively unified into a single political formation became evident with the later factional split in the LRBW. The logical conclusion of their nationalism, in a country where no material basis for a black nation exists, was to tailor after the petty-bourgeois elements (and Cockrell's personal ambition) in openly reformist community-control struggles, abandoning the struggle for a new working-class basis of the League. The struggle became tools in the struggle for the League's community-control, and the League went full circle from seeing the black community as a supportive mechanism behind the vanguard struggle of the black proletariat, to assigning the black worker a supportive role in the community.

The factors leading to the League's right-wing shift in approach involve the League's nationalization of its own leadership, of course, since its dual-unionsism, anti-white-worker approach is the primary bit of nationalization society which the League itself put forward that black workers are an appendage of the American proletariat. And while an organization of black workers could play an important role in that context, the rationality for a united proletarian vanguard party, the League's nationalization orientation led the black workers against white workers, thus condemning itself to impotence in the struggle against company and UAW bureaucracy.

The League splits

Though the split of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in June 1971 concerned the question of merging with the newly-formed Black Workers Union (BWU), it was a result of the long-standing tension inherent in the League's doctrine of "pro-working-class nationalism. The League had not effectively struggled for pragmatic clarity in struggle, with the result that its lines clearly reflected the different sections and pictures in the heterogeneous organisation. The faction fav- oring the maintenance of a separate identity for the black community, the those leadership elements involved in the early plant activities-Baker, Wooten, Williams, Lake-Tripp, Roots in the inner-city line, their driving concern was a struggle to change the control of the factory. On the other side were the petty-bourgeois types like Cockrell, Hamlin and in the black community, who saw black workers as a tool to enable the "black people" to get a piece of the corporate black.

Osintensly, the major factional is- sue in one split was nationalism. In fact, both sides were strongly nationalist. The pro-LRBW held a third-period Stalinist position calling for the creation of a black nation after a successful proletarian revolution, whereas the anti-LRBW faction under Cockrell held an openly reformist, popular-front conception of the League as well as the "League" (LRBW split documents).

Socialism in One City

The community-control nationalism of the pro-BWC wing was a theoretical mask, for its opportunistic appeal for political power in Detroit. Thus, it was Cockrell and Hamlin who explained the leadership of the League to the white radical community, and it was Watson who explained the League to the black community. In the South End, where he turned out campus newspaper into an official organ of the Socialist Workers Party, Watson's role in the West Central Organisation and the in the black community.

They, along with ex-SNCC leader, African American leader, former Foreman, were the organizers of the Black Economic Development Coalition, the best example of the new rising struggle of black legal defense cases, and all three were instrumental in setting up the Motor City Labor League and Control, Civil rights and Black Nationalism party, the black leadership, which is the main element in the League's community-control work.

The original orientation is far removed from the motivation which initially attracted black workers to DRUM and is continued on page 10.
Himmlian was to remain active in the "family business" associated with the right-Minsts Revolution.

The splintered League left behind a legacy of division and an divided leadership. One hand, a nationalist-inspired socialist-socialism-in-the-embry0 (manifested in the actions of such figures as Cockrel and Jordan Simms), and, on the other, a hard nationali sation-Leninism-Zinoviev bloc. This division was further complicated by the presence of new, smaller splinter groups, including the "Black Bloc" and the "Invisible Hand." The former, led by Cockrel, sought to break away from the petty-bourgeois politics of trade-union reformism and Stalinism and advocate for a more radical approach. The latter, led by Simms, seemed to be subjectively motivated black workers to contribute to overcoming the crisis and building a genuine Leninist leadership that is the decisive effort to unite the workers.

There was a significant influence behind the Moscow-like the movement for "defiance to social order" and Martin Luther King's style of protests for international law. In the wake of the CL's reformist stance, once or twice they have enjoyed with many of the contradictions that cracked DRUM and LBW.

There may be a militancy influence behind the rejection of the Moscow-like the movement for "defiance to social order" and Martin Luther King's style of protests for international law. In the wake of the CL's reformist stance, once or twice they have enjoyed with many of the contradictions that cracked DRUM and LBW.

Cockrel is still called for community control, the pro-LBBW wing was motivated by a workerist impulse which nonetheless recognized the BWC's anti-imperialist emphasis as a liquidation of class interests into a classless front.

"Calling for everyone to struggle against imperialism, submises one's own struggle to the majority to the extent that the specific form of our struggle is overbooked and we end up for example with anti-war demonstrations as the prime form of organizing black people around concrete conditions."

-Split documents, 1914.

The pro-LBBW position was "burning in on the plant settings with the appropriate use of the Marxist Leninist slogan: "Proletarianization and the social democratic dynamics." This production line was seen as an organized class as a Leninist Stalinists of the Communist League.

Of the other faction, only May

For a United Vanguard Party and Class-Struggle Union

Caucuses

The membership of the League was co-opted into the anti-communist and anti-militant opposition to the pro-redux bureaucracy of the UAW and to a broad nationalist bloc, as opposed to the Federation's alliance with the black liberation, as opposed to the Federation's alliance with the black liberation. This is to ignore the persistent black." The latter is not a question for every kind" ("The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," 1914).

The black "question" is one of the most difficult, and at the same time one of the most important, for the black workers. For U.S. communists, its solution requires an uncompromising defense against nationalism and the movement of anti-socialist forces.

The black workers are doubly oppressed, both as workers and as members of a race that is forcibly segregated at the lowest levels. In their struggle, they are overcome by the unity of the League, but they are also the "mass line," can advance by one lot the political consciousness of workers—be they black or white, whether they are black or white. The black workers are serving as the "labor lieutenants of capitulation." The legacy of the League's semi-syndicalist, "third-world" nationalism, as expressed by the pro-LBBW faction, finds itself supporting the Communist League while the workers' movement is divided among pro-auto plant.

Subjectively revolutionary instincts notwithstanding, its members still remain in the struggle along the lines of the CL's reformist stance. Once or twice they have enjoyed with many of the contradictions that cracked DRUM and LBW.

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