

In 1969, in response to protest of Black workers and the civil rights movement, the Nixon administration put forward the Philadelphia Plan as the solution to resolving employment discrimination in the building trades. The plan covered iron workers, plumbers and pipefitters, steamfitters, sheet metal workers, electrical workers, roofers and waterproofers, and elevator construction workers. The first plan required planning tables by the contractors which set forth the number of minority workers. However, the government set no standard regarding acceptable numbers. The plan was altered to state that all contractors working on federally assisted construction projects exceeding \$500,000 had to adhere to goals and timetables.

Another approach promulgated by the federal government was the hometown plan. These plans were voluntarily negotiated by all parties: labor, management, and representatives from the minority community. These hometown plans devised obligations that related directly to unions as well as contractors. Unions were required to accept minority employees as "trainees" and put them on a track that led to a journeyman's status. However, these workers were given "permits" and did not have the same rights as journeymen or apprentices.

PHILADELPHIA PLAN FAILS

Both the Philadelphia Plan and the hometown plan approach have been categorical failures. Under the Philadelphia Plan employees seldom made progress toward union status because employers could satisfy the plan by hiring non-union workers and minority workers were only used on jobs with federal contracts. It had no power over trades other than those enumerated above.

Also, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance, (OFCC), which was to enforce the Plan, has never aggressively

been able to make either labor or management comply. Similarly, the hometown plans were merely a buck-passing sham by labor and management. All hometown plans were voluntary and placed enforcement on the same parties, labor and management, whose history of racist practices had given rise to the need for the plans.

A survey of various locals in the Philadelphia area further illuminates the lack of progress in breaking down the racial barriers in the building trades. Except for the laborers' locals, which are the least skilled and lowest paid, there are no good examples, as the following will show:

	White	Black
Boilermakers	770	21
Electricians	1649	67
Ironworkers	846	9
Operating Engineers	4239	253
Plumbers	2451	28
Steamfitters	2873	62

The most successful attempt to integrate the building trades has been the struggle of the United Construction Workers Association (UCWA), a Black workers group in Seattle, Washington. They combined a Title VII lawsuit with massive job closures in Seattle to bring pressure on the unions and contractors. Five Seattle building trades, as a result of UCWA's struggle, went from less than five Black journeymen in 1969 to over 400 in 1976.

During the struggle in Seattle, the corrupt union leadership used thousands of dollars of workers dues to keep Black workers out of the union. They even established a temporary fund which workers were to pay into in order to fight the just demands of Black workers to join the union.

BLACK WORKERS FIGHT IN INTEREST OF ALL

As Black workers gained entrance into the unions in Seattle, they began to see that the rank and file were being misled by the sell-out leadership of the unions. They began to initiate and support struggles that benefitted all union members. One recent example was a strike initiated by Black electricians on a job site to support a strike of white operating engineers on the same site. This was done over the attempt of the leadership of the electricians' local to keep other trades from supporting the struggle. The Black workers have also been initiators of a struggle within the union bureaucracy to provide for rank and file control of the pension fund, to make the referral system fair to all workers, and to deal with safety concerns.

Struggles to break down the racial barriers in the building trades continue as can be seen by the recent events in Boston, New York, and the current court case against the operating engineers in Philadelphia. The tactics of the unions remain the same: use the union dues of its members to keep Black and other minority workers out of the unions.

Rank and file construction workers are currently under sharp attack. Cuts in government funded construction and the growth of non-union contractors like Altemose here in Philly have led to large scale unemployment in the trades. The only way out for construction workers is a policy of labor solidarity and militancy. White tradesmen have got to take up the fight to open up their crafts and end discrimination within them. The Seattle experience has shown that Blacks will support and initiate struggles as union members that benefit all workers. Only the contractors will gain if the unions continue to allow racism to divide the workers from each other and their real interests.

WOMEN IN THE AUTO INDUSTRY A Long Way to Go to Equality

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As the 1976-77 contract approaches, the auto industry is just recovering from the severe layoffs of 1974-75. In many auto plants women workers were among the first to be laid off.

In the Fremont, California GM plant there were no women left on the assembly line. At the Linden, N. J. Cadillac plant, hundreds of women workers, re-

cently hired, were on indefinite layoff. Across the country, thousands of women autoworkers had lost their jobs. At General Motors, largest of the auto monopolies, the number of women workers

decreased from 96,882 in 1973 to 79,602 in 1975. 17,000 women, a majority of whom were blue collar workers, lost their jobs in a three year period.

In the early 1970's larger numbers of women were hired in auto as a result of federal legislation that was passed in the '60's, following in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement's demand for equal employment opportunity. Later, the growing Women's Movement also forced many industries and professions to hire women, where they had formerly been discriminated against. The trend toward

fairer and larger employment of women in auto has been partially reversed by the economic recession.

WOMEN AND THE HISTORY OF THE UAW

Women have played a key role in the auto industry ever since the UAW was first organized. The "Flying Squads" of women in 1937 fought off hired thugs and sheriff's deputies, organized food distribution, and produced and passed out thousands of pro-union leaflets. They played a major role in building morale and unity that was necessary to win the early militant strikes that gave birth to the UAW.

During World War II, large numbers of women entered the auto industry as they did many other basic industries such as shipbuilding, transportation, and steel. Between 1940 and 1945 six million women entered the workforce. In many occupations, federally financed daycare facilities were made available during this period.

Women worked as welders, laborers, machine operators, and did jobs that were traditionally thought to be a 'man's' work. After the war, thousands of women stayed on in the auto plants, working side by side with their male counterparts. Women struggled to keep their jobs despite a national campaign to encourage them to return to the home and family. Federal daycare was abolished, no longer providing a service necessary to the continued labor of thousands of women who were the heads of households and the sole support of their family.

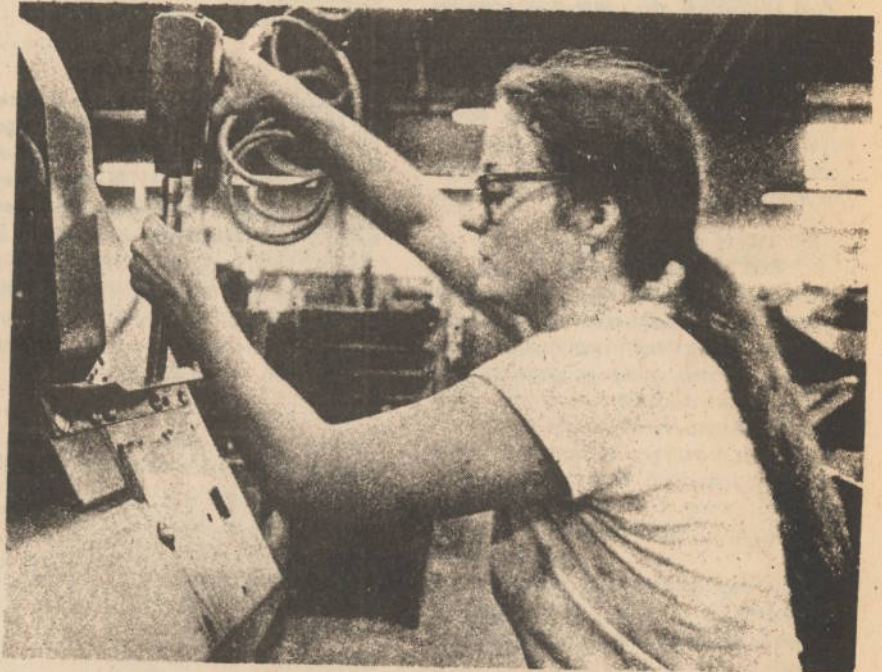
World War II was an important period for the integration of women into heavy industry such as auto. The variety of occupations and jobs successfully held by women during the war should put to rest once and for all the myth that women cannot do a "man's job". Only the most back-breaking labor, difficult for an average sized person, male or female, could be said to remain a man's job. In reality, such heavy labor was becoming more and more the job of machines and not people, as automation steadily increased.

WOMEN WORK TO SUPPORT SELVES AND FAMILIES

At present, an increasing number of women are entering the auto industry for the same reason that men are - out of economic necessity. One out of four women workers are heads of households. Inflation and higher costs for rent, food, clothing and education have forced women to become joint partners with their husbands in earning wages to support themselves and their families.

The auto corporations admitted women workers, as they did Black workers, as a result of the necessity of war production. And, like Black workers, women have been systematically restricted to unskilled job classifications in auto, as well as other industries. When the war ended, the auto monopolies no longer needed women to perform tasks formerly done exclusively by men. They therefore pursued a policy of discrimination against women. Management erected barriers to the access of jobs. "You can't do the work" was the familiar reason for refusing employment to women.

In 1976, close to 40% of the total workforce of the country is women. Although women remain a small proportion of autoworkers, their numbers are slowly increasing. In particular, large numbers of Black women are entering the ranks of the UAW, driven by the economic necessities of higher unemployment and lower paying jobs - the direct effect of continued racial and national oppression.



BROTHERS MUST SUPPORT UAW SISTERS

It is crucial that UAW brothers insure that women autoworkers are accepted as full members; that the corporations are not allowed to raise phony excuses to turn away women seeking employment. Corporate or government financed daycare should be a major goal of the UAW at the bargaining table and in the political arena. Working mothers or parents should not have to bear the financial burden of an extra "payroll deduction" to send young children to private daycare facilities.

Maternity leave should be improved. In Sweden, women are not only given six months leave, as in the UAW, but that maternity leave is also paid. Everyone has a right to a job. Women should not be penalized or denied that basic right because they have the added responsibility of bearing children who will be the next generation of workers. Health and safety rules must insure that no pregnant women are exposed to possible harmful fumes or working conditions that could cause harm to the fetus or miscarriages.

Much of the protective legislation covering women workers should be extended to cover men, as well. No one should be compelled to do heavy work that in the long run takes years off the lives of autoworkers.

The UAW must encourage the full participation of women workers in every aspect of union affairs and make sure that management allows fair access to higher skilled jobs. Sexual harassment and procurement in the shop is not only degrading to women workers, but it under-

mines the ability of women to take their rightful place on an equal basis with men. Sexual discrimination, like racism, weakens the unity of all workers and their strength to fight corporations like GM, Ford, or Budd.