

PLYMOUTH FURY

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T O O M U C H W O R K

Since the second shift was reinstated, we have seen the most murderous speedup. In 1973 and 1974, Lynch Road Assembly had around 5,000 hourly workers on two shifts and an output of 56 cars per hour. At this rate, 45 hours of work went into each car. (One gets the work hours per car by dividing 2,500, the number of workers in one shift, by 56, the cars produced per hour.) After the big layoff only 4,000 of us were called back and the line speed was 46 cars per hour. That meant, 43 hours of work went into each car produced. Two weeks ago, Chrysler increased the line speed to 51 cars per hour, yet the number of workers is around 4,300, and many are on vacation. This leaves us only 42 work hours to produce a car. And we all know that they will speed up the line again during changeover.

These figures do not tell us the whole story. Many jobs did not change much when they slowed down the line in 1974/75; in effect, they became easier. But in other cases two jobs were combined into one. Often this is clearly too much work for one person. Even if that person somehow manages to get all the work done, he or she never gets used to the job. They are always tired or nervous, their family life suffers, and sooner or later their health is damaged. Every day of this overwork makes their lives one day shorter, kills them a little more.

Since we have to work so much harder now every minute between punching in and punching out, we need shorter work hours. A shorter workweek is not just a goodie which it would be nice to get. A shorter workweek is a necessity, it is our hard-earned right for which we have paid with our sweat and blood. The bosses better take note of it. We are serious about our demands:

- (1) NO MORE SPEEDUP!!
- (2) 35 HOURS WORK FOR 40 HOURS PAY!!

FIGHT TOGETHER!!

Speed-ups mean more profits. Chrysler reports record sales of \$3.5 billion in the first quarter of 1976, and a profit of \$70 million. In their drive to make more and more money, the bosses spare nothing, not even our lives. But they meet our strong resistance. We all struggle almost daily in one way or another, because we have to defend ourselves. But before we can be really successful, we must raise the quality of our struggle to a higher level. We are still struggling too often individually, but since we work together, we also must fight back together.

For instance, someone may spend months of struggle with the foreman and steward and obtain medical excuses to get off a job which is so hard and inhuman that it is unfit for anyone to do. But as soon as he or she gets off the job, management puts someone else on it. They don't care who does the job as long as it is being done. As a whole we have gained nothing in this fight, but only went in a circle.

In another case someone leaves his job unfinished because he does not have enough time to do it, or because he is protesting against too much work. But one person is not enough to interrupt production or decrease the profits for Chrysler. As a rule someone else has to work extra to make up for it. Management is in no hurry and can either wait until the protest ends by itself, or until they have the chance to get rid of the person involved. One person makes no difference for them as long as they still have 999 others to exploit.

When they speed up the line by as much as five cars per hour, they ought to "rebalance" the line. That is, they must reassign all operations among a greater number of workers so that everybody has time to do the job. Our management is trying a cheaper way. They first speed up the line and then place on every single one of us the burden of proof that we have too much work. The union went right along with that and wrote up one grievance after another, as if they did not know what happens to all those grievences. However, the rank and file resisted fiercely. Despite the increased line speed, production hardly rose because of so many repairs, walkouts, breakdowns and fires. Who says we have no fighting spirit? But it is only a matter of time until production will run smoothly again. Individual