

2,500 Arab Workers Demand UAW Dump Israel Bonds

A Detroit B'nai B'rith dinner to support Israel bonds turned into a victory for Detroit's Arab community when a picket line called by the Detroit Arab-American Co-ordinating Committee turned out about 2500 demonstrators at Cobo Hall.

The picket line was called to protest the banquet, which presented UAW President Leonard Woodcock (a major supporter of Israel's war bonds drive) with a "Humanitarian of the Year" award.

The central demand was that the UAW end all purchases of Israel bonds, which finance the seizure of Arab lands at the expense of UAW members.

The mass protest drew almost its entire strength from the Arab community. The demonstrators, mostly young and many of whom are auto workers in Detroit Chrysler and Ford plants, formed a spirited and well-organized picket line around the entrances.

The attending celebrities—

businessmen, auto executives and UAW bureaucrats—had to slip around the back to honor Woodcock for his pro-Zionist stand.

Woodcock's "humanitarianism" was aptly summarized by a spokesman for the Arab demonstrators: "The UAW's investment in Israeli bonds is regarded by the UAW's large Arab membership as black workers would regard investment in South Africa."

Organizers were effective in pointing out that South Africa is virtually the only remaining African regime that still maintains friendly relations with Israel, and appealed for black workers' support on this basis.

The late evening TV news broadcasts, as usual, drastically underestimated the size of the anti-Woodcock demonstration. They also ignored a much more important fact: *the turnout of Arab workers was large enough to force the giant Dodge Main*

plant (where many Arab workers are employed) to shut down for almost the entire shift.

Even if the media ignored it, this is the central lesson to be learned from the success of this demonstration. Like other workers, Arab workers—who are subjected to harassment, discrimination and heavy intimidation in the plants—have the power to stop production when they organize to fight for their demands.

Until now, Arab workers have been severely restricted by the fear of deportation, or what would happen to their relatives, should they be fired for any kind of militant activity.

As a result, Arabs have not organized caucuses to fight for their own needs, and most have not played a role in rank and file action against Woodcock's policies.

If the success of this demonstration changes this around, it will be a turning point both for the Arab people of Detroit and

for all auto workers trying to organize a movement against the UAW bureaucracy.

A group called the Arab Workers Caucus, which was instrumental in bringing Arab workers to the demonstration, carried signs denouncing the whole "Woodcock Team" and led the chant "We Shut Chrysler Down" in Arabic.

Also seen for a few moments early in the demonstration was Joe Davis, an opportunist UAW Local 3 (Dodge Main) official who is angling to ride to power in the next election against the corrupt administration of current President Andy Hardy.

Davis evidently felt that showing up on the picket line would be good for his campaign for Black and Arab workers' support. He disappeared, however, as soon as his token appearance was completed—before any Woodcock or Hardy supporters attending the dinner were likely to spot him. ■