

Module 06: "Which Side Are You On?" The Flint Sit-Down Strike, 1936-37

Evidence 15: A Striker Dancing a Jig



Introduction

The sit-down strikers organized themselves with what one historian has described as "military precision." Everyone participated in rotating six-hour shifts, during which they were responsible for defending the factory, preparing and cleaning up food, maintaining sanitation, and protecting company property. UAW leaders wished to demonstrate to the public that the strike was orderly and would not result in the destruction of GM machinery, and so discipline remained strict. Those who violated minor rules were subjected to extra duties in the factory; those found guilty of committing more serious offenses (like bringing alcohol into the plant) were expelled.

When not working their six-hour shifts, strikers entertained themselves in a variety of ways. They played cards, checkers, and dominoes; read newspapers and magazines; and listened to UAW lecturers. They also wrote and sang songs, played musical instruments, put on comical plays, and danced, like the worker depicted in the photograph below.

Document



Source:

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University.