

The Flint Sit-Down Strike:
How A Defiant Action Changed America, and how the Media Covered the Strike

By Jesse James

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Thesis Committee:

Douglas Knerr, Ph.D., Chair

Thomas Henthorn, Ph D., Second Reader

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to identify the causes of the Flint Sit-Down Strike. It will identify the issues faced by both parties involved, as well as why the strike was successful. The issue one faces when recreating this event is trying to shift through biased sources. Both primary and secondary sources were used in my analysis. The primary sources used came from *The Flint Journal*, and accounts from the strikers. The basic storyline of the events is important to understand because it gives a person a great insight into how the UAW became such a pivotal union here in the United States. In the end, the strikers prevailed leading the way to influencing the American Labor Movement in the United States as well as parts of the rest of the world to this day. Much of the research done examines how *The Flint Journal* depicted the events of the strike, and what type of connotation could be found in the articles produced by the journal.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgments..... | ii |
| Abstract..... | iii |
| Preface | 1 |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 4 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review..... | 8 |
| Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Media and its Influence..... | 14 |
| Chapter 4: Week One- The Start of NewsCoverage..... | 27 |
| Chapter 5: Week Two-The First Full Week..... | 35 |
| Chapter 6: Week Three- The National Guards Arrive..... | 31 |
| Chapter 7: Week Four- The Struggle Continues..... | 78 |
| Chapter 8: Week Five- Both Parties Blame Each Other..... | 89 |
| Chapter 9: Week Six- More Violence in Flint, The Fight Continues..... | 109 |
| Chapter 10: Week Seven- The End Is Near..... | 145 |
| Chapter 11: What Was Won: Analysis of the First contract..... | 174 |
| Chapter 12: Conclusion..... | 177 |
| Appendix One: Number of Scans Broken Down by Week | 179 |
| Appendix Two: The Flint Journal- Research Regarding the Articles Weeks One and Two..... | 179 |
| Appendix Three: The Flint Journal- Research Regarding the Articles Weeks Three and Four.. | 180 |
| Appendix Four: The Flint Journal- Research Regarding the Articles Weeks Five and Six..... | 181 |
| Appendix Five: The Flint Journal- Research Regarding the Articles Week Seven and All the Weeks Combined..... | 182 |
| Works Cited | 183 |

Preface

There is something about a strike that evokes strong emotions, both positive and negative, in individuals — including myself. I am a second-generation UAW member, out of Local 651, the same local my stepdad retired out of in 2006. In 1998, my stepdad was working at the Delphi Flint East plant, located in the same city as the Flint Sit-Down Strike. I remember my dad walking the picket line and the family having to be on a strict budget because of how tight money was at the time. Just over 20 years later, I would be doing the same thing: having to put my family on a tight budget as I walked the picket line for forty days. In September 2019, I was a UAW member with just under 13 years of seniority. On Sunday, September 15, my Local as well as every other UAW member in the General Motors division, walked out. On Monday, at 12:01 am, the branch of the UAW which represents General Motors went on strike. I remember distinctly being at my local union hall, waiting to hear the news of the official start of the strike. At first, myself and many others were excited because we knew we were a part of something bigger than ourselves. We were in a battle with the company. For months, preceding the expiration of our contract, the leadership at my local union talked about being prepared for a possible strike.

As a historian, I often wonder what it would be like to experience the past. I wonder how I would view the events I am scholastically studying from a first-person point of view in that era. One thing I thought about while studying the Flint Sit-Down Strike is how the other strikes also affected the Flint area. How, as a reader of *The Flint Journal*, would I internalize the information presented to me and look upon the strikers myself. It's easy to say from a modern perspective that I would, of course, not only support them but also maybe even be a part of the strike itself. However, as I will be discussing, the strikers themselves fought against unbelievable odds. The fear of losing everything would have been on the strikers' minds and has also been documented.

The Flint Sit-Down Strike came at a time when Catholics were worried about the looming death of Pope Pius XI, and the possibility of the war in Europe. Many of the men in the shop could not have known that within five years, the United States would enter World War II. When a strike occurs on a major level, like that of the Flint Sit-Down Strike, it affects the community in which the strike occurs and the country overall. This concept is brought forth in many of the articles discussed in this thesis.

In the forty-fourth year of production, a patron could pick up a *The Flint Journal* for the price of three cents. My method, for this part of my research, was to look at every page individually from the day prior to the strike to the day after. After saving each article I found related to the strike, I also did another search using keywords including: strike, GM, General Motors, union, UAW, and sit-down just to be sure I did not miss anything pertinent to my research. By adding the keyword search, it ensured I did not miss any context and found smaller articles in which the headlines did not immediately pop out. I also found it interesting to see other articles not related to my research, such as articles on the Boy Scouts, prices on goods back then, events leading up to the start of World War II, and even one on how to treat your dog in the wintertime. Those examples are just the headlines which I found particularly attention-grabbing.

There were also cases when my searched keywords would flag an article, but the article did not relate to the strike. One prime example of this is other cases in which sit-down strikes had also been used. After a while, other organizations or individuals would also use the sit-down method as a form of protest. One protest happened when a man chained himself to a radiator in the lobby of an apartment complex to protest his girlfriend's non-committal answer to his marriage proposal. Over the course of multiple articles, the reader was informed that he would not take "No" for an answer from her. He would only unlock the chains once she had agreed to a date for their

nuptials. In one update, she fled the city by going out a window and catching a flight. However, in the end she did agree to marry him. Although the story was both serious and amusing it had a happy ending. This is just a one key example of how using key search words can create different results.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Presenting the Flint Sit-Down Strike in its historical content is best done by taking both the firsthand accounts via *The Flint Journal*, interviews of the workers involved, as well as secondary sources written about the subject. As my research will show, *The Flint Journal* had a major bias towards General Motors, and harshly criticized the UAW, the strikers, and the sit-down strike overall. Other scholars also agree with this:

The Flint Journal was 100 per cent controlled by GM, all the time. The corporation controlled the radio station directly; even paid-for time was denied to the union during the fight for unionization. The school board, welfare department and all other government agencies were directly under the thumb of the corporation. Billboards throughout the city acclaimed ‘the happy GM family.’¹

This opening quote by Walter Linder is fairly accurate. *The Flint Journal* was almost completely biased because articles that presented both sides were few and far between, and even made the UAW or the strike sound morally impermissible. The Flint Sit-Down Strike will be reconstructed by taking a special focus on how the event was portrayed within *The Flint Journal* as well as considering some of the personal narratives as presented by the University of Michigan’s Flint Labor History Project.

In *The Flint Journal*, there were eight hundred and twenty-seven articles, advertisements, and/or pictures to be scanned from the onset of the strike until two days after its conclusion. Each scan was digitalized because it either mentioned the United Auto Workers, or the General Motors Corporation in some way, shape, or form. Again, as part of my research, I made sure to look at every page twice. The second time around being important because of the use of the keywords. Again, those words are: strike, GM, General Motors, union, UAW, and sit-down, which were all used to double-check check each day for every possible news angle covering the ongoing story.

¹ Walter Linder. *How Industrial Unionism was Won: The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike Against GM 1936-37*. 93

Some scans proved to be directly commenting on any of those subjects, and others proved to be unhelpful as it was not related to the Flint Sit-Down Strike at all. For instance, some used car advertisements mentioned special financing for those affected by the strike. It could potentially be used, but it is not necessarily a direct link to the strike itself. Following that mode of research, each scan was also checked for multiple stories related to the topic at hand. Each article or advertisement scanned was then broken down into nine different categories, and those categories were: if they were front-page articles, full-page advertisements, if they had a negative connotation towards the strike, if they had a negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker, if they had a negative connotation of a statement by the General Motors Corporation or quote from an Executive, if they had a positive connotation towards the strike, if they had a positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker, if they had a positive connotation in favor of the General Motors Corporation, and finally if they had a positive connotation in favor with a quote from an executive. To keep track of every article, and its connection to the connotation, I had to create my own database on an Excel spreadsheet. Each of the categories listed above got its own column which is indicated in my appendixes as C-1 through C-9. That way each article's name and connotation could be easily tracked and cross referenced from week to week as I was reading the digital copies of *The Flint Journal*.

After classifying everything, some articles had both a positive connotation of a statement by the General Motors corporation or quote from an executive, and a negative connotation toward the strike or towards the UAW or the Striker. All in all, the total number of the articles which had a negative connotation of a statement by the General Motors Corporation or quote from an executive amounted to just over five percent.² The total number of the articles which had a negative

² By taking the total amount of all the statements made both positive and negative and dividing it by four, which was the total amount of all the articles which had a negative connotation of a statement by GM Corporation or quote for

connotation toward the strike, or towards the UAW or the striker, amounted to approximately sixty-two percent. General Motors had slightly over twenty percent where its publicity was a positive statement made by the corporation or quote from an executive.³

Returning to the background of the event, Flint became a historic town with great meaning to the American auto worker because of the significance of the strike. Flint was not only the birthplace of the General Motors Corporation but also the start of the United Auto Workers, more commonly referred to as GM and the UAW. It was in Flint where the UAW took a stance against GM in a sit-down strike that lasted forty-four days. In a statement to GM, the auto workers stopped production and sat down in the plants they worked in. The workers were men and women, fathers and mothers, but more importantly, they were simple people with big dreams.

The intent of this thesis is to not only recreate the events of the great Flint Sit-Down Strike, but also to understand the connection between the General Motors Corporation and the people of Flint. This can be done by looking at the way in which the local media covered the strike. I will connect this with the birth of the UAW, and briefly touch on its influence on Flint, Michigan as well. In examining *The Flint Journal* articles on the subject matter, I will look at both arguments made by the UAW and General Motors. With that, I will be able to reconstruct the sticking points which led to the necessity of having a sit-down strike, and why the strike lasted for as long as it did. The main portion of my arguments will be made by examining the connotation of every article presented in *The Flint Journal*, giving me a full understanding of the media bias during that time. After analyzing *The Flint Journal* from December 30, 1936, to February 12, 1937, one can decisively conclude that *The Flint Journal* was one-sided towards the General Motors

all seven weeks researched, the percentage came to a decimal of 0.053791 or 5.38%. Each of the four examples can be accounted in the form of statements made by either C.I.O. leaders or U.A.W. representatives towards the company.

³ See Appendixes One through Five for exact numbers and breakdown of the research week by week.

Corporation's point of view, and it portrayed the striker and the strike in a much more negative light than it did the corporation. Finally, I will analyze the first contract made between the UAW and the General Motors Corporation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There are three main books dedicated to the topic of the Flint Sit-Down Strike. The first one is, *The Many and the Few: A Chronicle of the Dynamic Auto Workers*, by Henry Kraus. This book was originally published in 1947. However, I purchased and used the second edition, which was last published in 1985. The book was also dedicated, “To the auto workers, whose courage, clarity, and resourcefulness must continue to serve America.”⁴ The second edition has both the original preface to the book, as well as a new one explaining why it was republished. When *The Many and the Few* was first published, it was ten years after the conclusion of the strike, and seven years after it had been completed. The author explains that although the piece of literature had merit, it was not originally appealing to publishers. With little interest from publishers, the author, with support from his wife, decided to self-publish. Consequently, the book took a long time to come to fruition because the author needed to wait until he could financially afford to do such a task. They found some success in publishing the first edition themselves, but found it was a tedious and difficult process to take on.

The introduction to the Second Edition states that it, “is a sign of ongoing strength of the current trend among social historians to further working-class studies.”⁵ It goes on to list extensive book and video academic works, which can be seen as a quick reference historiography on the topic. However, it also states that it is, “Not conventional oral history (though many individuals speak in its pages), the book is the first and only comprehensive attempt by a class-conscious participant to describe the forty-four-day strike that many acknowledge as a pivotal in the unionization of labor in the twentieth-century America.”⁶ I agree with the authors statement in

⁴ Kraus, Henry. *The Many and the Few: A chronicle of the Dynamic Auto Workers*. 2nd Ed. (University of Illinois Press, 1985.), 14.

⁵ Kraus, *The Many and Few*, 14.

⁶ Kraus, *The Many and Few*, 14.

part. It is easy to argue that the Flint Sit-Down Strike was pivotal in creating unions here in America. However, I would disagree that at the time of this publication, it is the only comprehensive on the subject; previously to the reprint, it could be argued that this was the case. Now, however, I would argue that distinction also applies to Sidney Fine's *Sit-down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937*. Perhaps in anticipation of criticism such as this, or as an attempt to justify his own assertion, the introduction maintains, "all (other) accounts have been produced by individuals whose varying distance from the moment-by-moment, day to day events is evident and acknowledged... Only *The Many and the Few* has been written by a scholar who was himself an activist and a participant in the strike."⁷ Kraus helped to shape the events he wrote about. Whether or not one believes the argument made by Kraus has merit, his book must still be used as an excellent secondary source for understanding the events of the Flint Sit-Down Strike. It should also be noted this book was published nearly 35 years before the third book I shall talk about later in this chapter.

The second book is Sidney Fine's, *Sit-down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937*, mentioned above. Published in Ann Arbor by the University of Michigan Press in 1969. Because of its publication date, it should be seen as the next major academic book written on the subject. Her book gives some great context with regards to Governor Murphy's background. This background is important in the overarching story of the strike. If one does not have this context, then they are missing how important his role was in preventing as much bloodshed as possible. In serving as a mediator during the sit-down strike, Murphy was influenced by his view of the law, and his abhorrence of violence. Additionally, he was guided by his long-standing sympathy for organize labor, his commitment to civil liberties, and his political ambition. As he wrote to a friend

⁷ Kraus, *The Many and Few*, 16-17.

just after the strike, “I am not entirely in sympathy with sit-down strikers as such, but I am and sympathy and deeply so with the worker and feel that he is justified in using the means at his disposal to safeguard his rights”⁸ Likewise, it is important to note, that if there had been a different person in office, whether that be the President of the United States or the Governor of Michigan, the strikers may have been met with much harsher force, especially once the courts had ruled the occupation of the plants illegal. There could have been a world in which the strikers were forcibly removed, and the union’s bargaining chip stripped from them. There are modern examples which I could see as applicable, or at least similar to that type of speculation. One example of this is the UAW Local 128 members, who were locked out of their jobs and forced to strike while negotiations were taking place. The workforce of nearly 300 members, were prepared to strike, but had wanted to stay on the job while negotiations were taking place.

One philosophy I would like to point out is that just because something is legal, does not make it morally right or ethical. Likewise, just because something is illegal, does not necessarily make it morally wrong or unethical. I do not believe this is a breathtakingly new concept in the world of philosophy, law, or history. However, I do think it is noteworthy because the whole sit-down strike was being portrayed as morally wrong and illegal, when, in actuality, it may have just been illegal. Clearly, America and the labor movement owe a debt of gratitude to the strikers for sticking up for their rights to unionize against insurmountable odds. This book is also good at depicting Sloan and General Motors’ disposition towards the strike. Especially in the chapter on Perkins. It shows how Sloan does everything he can to negate having to negotiate with the union. As well as, on multiple occasions, goes back on his word to stall the union more.

⁸ Sydney Fine. *Sit-Down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937*. (Ann Arbor, UM Press, 1969), 236

The third book entitled; *Midnight in Vehicle City: General Motors, Flint, and The Strike that Created the Middle Class* was published in 2021. Author Edward McClelland examines the Flint Sit-Down Strike from a modern perspective. Published in Boston, Massachusetts by Beacon Press, it is the newest book to take on the topic of the strike. With eleven chapters and just over two hundred pages long, this book recreates the events of the Flint Sit-Down Strike by using a narrative analysis. Not unlike the two previous books, McClelland's book also covers significant events such as the Battle of the Running Bulls, and the events of Chevy Four when there was an outbreak of influenza because of the conditions within the facility. The narrative given in his book is also like the other two previously discussed books. It also covers the magnitude to which the Women's Emergency Brigade had on the strike. This book covers both events not specifically called out in the other books as well. For instance, taking a whole chapter to discuss "The Perkins Boys".

I found chapter two called "The Perkin Boys" interesting because it was not something I remember hearing about in other labor classes. In my opinion, the point of the chapter is to give the reader an idea of the atmosphere and background on the relationships between the employees and management of General Motors shops in Flint, Michigan. The chapter adds context to the overall environment in Flint at that time, and how the organizing movement was going. McClelland quotes Victor Reuther, brother of long-time UAW President Walter Reuther, as saying, "Flint was a GM town to the bone. Eighty percent of Flint families were dependent for their living on Buick, Fisher Body, Chevrolet, or AC Spark Plug".⁹ According to McClelland, Victor Reuther had spent a year and a half working in an auto plant in the Soviet Union and was still surprised at the desperation he saw in Flint.¹⁰

⁹ Edward McClelland. *Midnight in Vehicle City*. (Beacon, 2021),29.

¹⁰ McClelland, *Midnight in Vehicle City*, 29.

Chapter eight titled, “Miss Perkins and Mr. Sloan”, I also found interesting in furthering my research. It shows the delicate working of the United States Federal Government, and how the Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins, attempted to resolve the conflict between the two parties in Flint, Michigan. It also gives the reader insight into the mindset of the head of General Motors. As a self-made millionaire, he is described as a man thoroughly dedicated to his job. The GM executive is one who, “works every hour, has no hobbies, never reads, never drinks, doesn’t smoke, never tells stories, and is too busy for friends.”¹¹ This quote shows Sloan’s drive and passion for stopping the union from forming at General Motors at all costs. For him, it was about the business. Sloan, steadfast in his stance, was also quoted saying, “My recognition of the union, or any dealing with the union, will almost immediately, within a very short time, raise our labor costs to the point that we won’t be able to compete in the general market, not only with other cars, but with other things that would satisfy the American people, other than a car.”¹² This is with whom the union had to contend, but the union also had a strong-willed individual. John L. Louis, founding president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), was seen as the “captain of labor” to Sloan’s “captain of industry.”¹³ The chapter recreates the events of the Flint Sit-Down Strike and the individuals’ motives and attitudes with regard to the negotiation process.

Out of the three books I would recommend *Midnight in Vehicle City* first, *The Many and the Few* second, and finally, Sydney Fine’s *Sit-down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937*. The reason I choose *Midnight in Vehicle City* as my favorite is that it is easily purchased, meaning it is not out of print, and I found the content more substantial. Additionally, I feel as though it is the most concise book, meaning to the point, and his writing is easiest to understand. Sydney Fines’

¹¹ McClelland, *Midnight in Vehicle City*, 130.

¹² McClelland, *Midnight in Vehicle City*, 119.

¹³ McClelland, *Midnight in Vehicle City*, 116.

book is good, but it is also full of information less pivotal to the story of the sit-down strike. It could be condensed by losing a couple of chapters or ‘fifty to seventy-five pages depending on how one looks at it. It is, however, still an exceptionally quotable book. Furthermore, even though I felt it was too long, it was also probably the most detailed book of the three. *The Many and the Few: A Chronicle of the Dynamic Auto Workers* has great examples of the strike situation from a first-person perspective, however, sometimes I got lost as a reader. This is what I consider to be the fairest and most honest criticism of Henry Kraus’s book: it has no citations. I followed the story just fine, but because of the lack of any type of citations, I would sometimes lose track of whom the book was quoting. I enjoyed reading his book slightly more than Fine’s, which is why I placed it second. In the edition I have, there is not even a bibliography or index.

Chapter 3: Media and its Influence

According to Sidney Fine, “The General Motors sit-down strike of 1937 has been described as ‘the most critical labor conflict of the nineteen thirties’ and as a crucial significance to the subsequent growth of automobile unionism in particular and industrial unionism in general.”¹⁴ The main goal of the strike was to get the UAW recognized as the collective bargaining tool for the auto workers by GM, but GM would not concede this fact without a fight. It is that fight, the back and forth between the UAW and the company, which made the Flint Sit-Down Strike such an ambitious incident that shall be remembered in history forever.

The Flint Sit-Down strike began on December 30, 1936. It was the start of a long fight between the UAW and GM that lasted forty-four days, finally concluding on February 11, 1937. By occupying the plant, it prevented management from getting other workers to replace the men, and it made it harder for the company to evict men who are already on the inside versus the traditional strike form of a picket line. It would also protect the strikers against direct forms of violence because they were surrounded by millions of dollars of company property. Morale could be kept up because the strikers were protecting their jobs in the actual place where they worked, and it also meant they knew no one else could have their job if they stayed in place.¹⁵ The workers were also protected from the weather; however, one tactic used by General Motors was to turn off the heat in the plants that were on strike. As a result, this was an effective means of coercion, especially in Flint, Michigan, in the middle of the winter. It made the strikers especially cold and miserable. This would also be a factor in the influenza outbreak of Fisher plant No. 4, which will be discussed further later in this thesis.

¹⁴ Sidney Fine. “A General Motors Sit-Down Strike: A Re-examination,” *The American Historical Review* 70, no.3 (1965): 691

¹⁵ Linder, *How Industrial Unionism*, 92-93.

Although the tactic of a sit-down strike had been used before Flint, this example was covered in more press and received more attention than any other. Ruth McKenney expressed this in her article, “Behind the Auto Strike”. She said, “The tactic of seizing possession of, and holding, great plants was not entirely unknown to the workers of the United States, but nothing like its mushrooming during the struggles of the mid-thirties had ever been seen before.”¹⁶ Flint had become the birthplace for General Motors because of the sheer number of manufacturing facilities located within its borders. In an interview, Floyd Root commented on the tactic of a sit-down strike:

The sit-down strike in my own opinion, it is altogether against the construction of the United States and anything else because it would be wrong for me to go to your house, walk in your door, run you out, and sit down and say I’m not going to leave until you give me so-and-so. Eh, it’s no, it’s, eh, it’s no more or less that, it just illegal forcible entry and taking over someone’s property, which is not in line with construction of the United States. No. effective? Yes. It was damned effective, because it brought General Motors to its knees, to cure some of these things that, without a doubt there, there was lots of, there were, there were abuses without a doubt.¹⁷

Flint was responsible for building most of the car bodies for the GM production line, as well as the Chevrolet engines, which is where the bulk of General Motors’s business came from.¹⁸ The UAW is cemented in history as the main force in bringing over five million people under the roof of one emerging organization in America called the Congress of Industrial Organizations, otherwise known as the CIO. Walter Linder talked about the importance of the UAW to the CIO:

One union more than any other, the United Auto Workers, can be singled out as the greatest contributor to the organization of the CIO and the success of industrial unionism because it took leadership and because its struggle was fought out most decisively. One company more than any other, General Motors can be singled out as the key to the organization of the auto workers because it

¹⁶ Ruth McKenney, “Before the Auto Strike”, 261-262.

¹⁷ Floyd Root. Interviewed by: U-m Flint Labor History PoOrject. Date of interview: 04-06-1978. Edited by Michael Van Dyke. Copyright: @ 2002 Michigan State University.

¹⁸ Linder, *How industrial Unionism*, 92.

was the largest manufacturer in the industry- and the largest corporation in the world- and was the first to be organized.¹⁹

Continuing with the story of the strike, one other major contributing factor to the onset of the Flint Sit-Down Strike was the working conditions GM employees had to endure. Workers had to endure atrocious conditions in the shop, so much so that many of them were in danger of losing their lives. GM employees outside of management had no sick pay, no overtime pay, no holiday pay, no unemployment benefits, and if production should stop, the men would have to wait without pay.²⁰ The conditions for the worker in a GM plant were so bad they could be described as, “having a ‘peculiar, grey, jaundiced color, like a city of tubercular’s, and in July 1936, when temperatures soared over 100 degrees, deaths in Michigan’s auto plants rose into the hundreds.”²¹ Another hazard to the employee was the pace of the work. They were constantly made to speed up their pace to a point that was past normal human limits. According to Sydney Fine:

‘The essence of Flint,’ a *New York Times* reporter, who covered the GM sit-down found, was ‘speed.’ ‘Speed, speed, speed, -that was Flint morning, noon, and night.’ Charlie Chaplin’s film *Modern Times*, a lampoon of the speed-up, played for two months in the flint and was shown to the sit-downers themselves with considerable success... A Buick worker complained, ‘we didn’t even have time to run to the toilet... You have to run to the toilet and back’... A fifty-five-year-old worker testified that the only difference he could discern between a penitentiary and the GM plant in which he worked was that the GM worker could go home at night. “It was cruel; it was absolute cruelty.” An employee of the Fisher Body No. 2 plant protested...²²

Other accounts talk about the complete exhaustion of the men. One man was described by his wife as, “coming home so dog tired he couldn’t even walk upstairs to bed but crawled on his hands and knees.”²³ With conditions like this, it was no wonder that there was such a need for a change. These changes needed to be drastic, and they needed to occur in order to secure the

¹⁹ Linder, *How Industrial Unionism*, 92.

²⁰ Movie: *Yesterday’s Witnesses in America: The Great Sit-Down Strike*.

²¹ Linder, *How Industrial Unionism*, 94

²² Sydney Fine. *Sit-Down: The General Motors Strike of 19363-1937*, 56

²³ Linder, *How Industrial Unionism*, 93.

workers' health and safety as well as their jobs. Back then, if a worker complained about their working conditions, the supervisor had the right to fire them on the spot. Leo Robinson recalls how he was treated in an interview:

Another thing that didn't have, that we had: if we went into work in the morning and started, we rung in our cards and went out on the floor and something broke down and tied up the floor, we didn't come home. (Really?) The boss sent us to this, to the uh, sent us to the dining room and set down until he needed you. But before you went up to set down you went back and rung out your clock card and you didn't get no pay if he kept you there three hours or whatever it was, you didn't get a nickel.

(Wow). But they kept you on the job because they said so, see, we had no say, and if you don't like it, well get out. That's the orders we had. We had to set there until, until they called us back down. If it was half a day, it was the same. Now, now we go in, these guys, at six o'clock in the morning, if they go in at six and if something broke down and they can't work they turn around and come back home and they gotta pay'em full hours for comin' in. That's what we won, that's one thing...²⁴

That was also coupled with the fear of unemployment. In the movie, *Yesterday's Witnesses in America: The Great Sit-Down Strike*, one worker recalled, "If someone were to complain, the boss would take them down the street and show him the unemployment line. The boss would tell the employee that all those people were waiting to take their job. This happened multiple times to different people, and they were sent back to work."²⁵ Another worker recounts, "We had to do it. We had to do it!" He continued to explain that it was worth fighting for, and organized labor is the reason why he can enjoy a pension.²⁶

Since Christmas had just passed and it was the beginning of the new year, the timing of the Flint Sit-Down was not the best. However, with word of impending layoffs and the possibility of a large movement of equipment, union officials decided to act. One scare came from the possibility

²⁴ Leo Robinson, Interviewed by: U-m Flint Labor History Project. Date of Interview: 13-07-1978. Edited by: Michael Van Dyke. Copyright: 2002 Michigan State University.

²⁵ Movie: "Yesterday's Witnesses in America: The Great Sit-Down Strike."

²⁶ Movie: "Yesterday's Witnesses in America: The Great Sit-Down Strike."

of GM running out of glass supplied by another company that was also on strike.²⁷ Another reason for the timeframe of the strike deals with the ability to hurt GM at the worst possible time.

Although it was Christmas season, late December, 1936, was by no means an inauspicious time for a GM strike from the UAW point of view. It was the rush season for automotive production as well as a time of record or near-record output for Chevrolet, Buick, and Fisher Body, factors that might conceivably have weakened GM's determination to take on a prolonged strike...²⁸

General Motors believed they could win the battle by using the court system to their advantage. The vice-president of GM, William S. Knudsen, thought the strikers were, "Clearly trespassers and violators of the law of the land,' and there would be no bargaining with the UAW while the strikers remained in 'illegal possession' of GM's plants."²⁹ Injunctions were issued to evict the strikers, but they were dismissed, in part because the judge, Edward Black, had stock in GM worth almost \$220,000. General Motors clearly knew what the UAW wanted as the UAW had formally given their demands to General Motors on January 4th, 1937. Their demands to be the exclusive bargaining agency for all employees was permitted and given official recognition by Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Act. The act led to the growth of unions all over the nation, and the UAW was also endorsed by the National Labor relations Act of 1935.³⁰

The Union's strategy held that the chief burden of the strike must be burdened by Flint's Fisher One and by Cleveland-Fisher with the former taking the lead. These two plants were the major body manufacturing units of the corporation- 'mother plants,' according to Gm terminology... Possibly three-fourths or more of the corporation's productions were consequently dependent on these two plants...³¹

²⁷Kraus, *The Many and the Few*, 80

²⁸ Fine. *Sit-Down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937*, 140

²⁹ Fine. "A General Motors Sit-Down Strike: A re-examination.", 692.

³⁰ Fine. "A General Motors Sit-Down Strike: A re-examination.", 692.

³¹ Kraus, *The Many and the Few*, 78-79

Although neither side wanted violence, a strike of this magnitude combined with special interests did lead to some injuries. The UAW website describes an incident in the Flint Sit-Down Strike:

When Flint Police attempted to storm Fisher 2, sending teargas and gunfire into the plant, the sit-downers responded with a rain of heavy door hinges and water from plant fire hoses. The police retreated, only to regroup and try again at intervals throughout the night. Several strikers and police were injured, but when the conflict ended the morning of Jan. 12, the workers were clearly the victors in what came to be known as the 'Battle of the Running Bulls.'³²

Between the cops and the strikers was the National Guard. They were sent there to keep the peace, but also to make sure the laws of Michigan were being abided. Even though a notice of eviction had been issued to the strikers, it was up to the discretion of the Policemen to act upon it; in this case like many others, the injunction could be stretched out timewise in order to allow for better results. One sit-downer commented on how he thought there could have been more violence. In an interview Joseph Skunda said:

To me this is something that they don't really get into too much today. But it could have been an awful nasty situation. And I've thought to, for instance, today how much violence there is, even when these people advocate or think they are doing something good, how much violence is involved. But, the thing that amazes me when I think about it.

Is this happened, and there was some, but it was caused by the authorities or the people in power. It wasn't caused by the dissident. And they didn't destroy the property. They stayed in the plant all that time and they didn't sabotage it. They didn't destroy it. Which today would probably happen.³³

The Governor asked for the negotiations to be given time before any forceful act was taken with the possibility of injuries. A striker talked about his feelings on the strike:

Some of the time we were scared because there were all kinds of rumors going around. We had a sheriff- he came in one night and read at Fisher One and all the boys the riot act. He told'em they had to leave... National Guard troops were there. Some from Pontiac, some from Detroit. I lived a block within where they

³² "Forty-Four days in Flint <<http://www.uaw.org/>>

³³ Joseph Skunda, interview: 03-03-1980.

camped. I would pass these young fellows every day. One boy, pretty, he had a union button on. The men sat there for forty-four days. Governor Murphy- I get emotional over him (laughs)- was trying to get both sides to meet on some common ground.³⁴

As the strike began, women were also affected. All female workers were told to leave the plant, as union officials did not want to give GM an angle to use against the strikers. If word got out those women were still in the plant, there might have been a possibility of accusations of sexual abuse and such. Many women were not happy with their husbands for participating in the strike. They too were afraid of losing their houses and having their husbands lose their jobs. They were also discriminated against in the formation of the union. When many of the strikes occurred, women were automatically sent to the kitchen to cook for the men. It was believed that they could not be a part of the picket line for very long and would be more useful cooking for the men.³⁵ As it turned out, one of the greatest assets to the UAW came in the form of the Women's Auxiliary. At the height of the Women's Auxiliary, there were close to a thousand members. They were not only useful for psychological support, but they were also able to stand in the way of the police as well as knock out windows for ventilation when tear gas was used. Genora Johnson was a great asset to the striker's cause. She became an important leader within the Women's Auxiliary.³⁶

I decided the only way to get out of this was to get more women down, and if we ever got up and made an announcement that mothers of the children were fired on I knew that men would break in from sidelines. I said I wanted to give a speech while the sound was still working. I started talking out to the women of Flint- first I called the cops cowards for shooting into bullets of unarmed men and into the mothers of the children- and then I asked the women to break through. I said, 'Stand with your brothers and sisters and your husbands and your sweethearts, Come down here and stand with us.'³⁷

³⁴ Colin Gordan. *Major Problems In American History 1920-1945*. "A recollection of the Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1936" (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 342.

³⁵ John Hinshaw and Paul Le Blanc. *U.S. Labor in the Twentieth Century: Studies in the Working-Class Struggles and Insurgency*. "Backward Attitudes Toward women." (Humanity Books, 2000), 167.

³⁶ Hinshaw and Le Blanc, "The Role of Women, and of Radicals in the First Sit-Down Strikes", 162-167.

³⁷ Hinshaw and Le Blanc, "Appeal to Women to Join the Strikers", 172.

Other sources of inspiration for the strikers came in the form of songs. Two songs were significant in capturing the feelings of the sit-down strikers. “Solidarity Now” became the cry for all labor organizations when it was written in 1915 by songwriter and union organizer Ralph Chaplin. The song lyrics inspire the strikers as they were sung by supporters. Verses one and three show the passion believers in the union had:

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run
 There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun
 Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one
 But the union makes us strong.

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn
 But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn
 We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn
 That the union makes us strong.³⁸

This song was also combined with the song “Sit-down”, originally composed by Maurice Sugar, and gave hope to the strikers. Verses two and three were also instrumental in explaining their positions. The second verse said, “When they smile and say no raise in pay. Sit Down! Sit down! When you want’em to know they’d be better go slow. Sit Down! Sit down!” and the third verse announces, “when the speed-up comes, just twiddle your thumbs. Sit Down! Sit down! When you want’em to know they’d be better go slow. Sit Down! Sit down!”³⁹ The song is relevant because it has all the major concerns of the striker. They want raises, they want to not be sore after a hard day’s work, they want a reasonable amount of time to do their job, and maybe most importantly they want to be respected for the work that they do.

At the time of the strike, much of Flint was directly linked to a General Motors wage, as 80 percent depended on the company for its livelihood. As noted by Walter Linder, “Forty-five thousand men and women toiled in the GM Flint plants, heart and nerve center of the corporation’s

³⁸ “Solidarity forever” <<http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/soc/lyrics.html>>

³⁹ Linder, *How Industrial Unionism*, 122.

world-wide empire. In the summer of 1936 every city official-the mayor, city manager, police chief and the judges – were GM stockholders or officials, or both.”⁴⁰ With so much at stake and so many high-powered officials with interests in the company against all odds, it was no wonder that Flint Sit-Down was unprecedented move by the employees. The multi-million-dollar company had the support of almost anyone who was in a good position to try and stop the strikers. General Motors also used the media to help break-up the cause of the union.

This type of total control has not been seen since this age in history, which further contributes to its historical significance. General Motors had total dominance over the workers and the community they were living in. According to author, Edward McClelland, Flint became known as the vehicle city even before General Motors existed because Flint was the nation’s first “transportation pioneer”.⁴¹ McClelland also says, “By the mid-1930s, the Vehicle City was even more dependent on the auto industry than the Motor City (Detroit): more than three-quarters of the workforce drew a paycheck from GM or one of its suppliers”.⁴² This is also a good reason why General Motors was able to net an average profit of 173 million dollars from 1927 to 1937.⁴³ This may seem insignificant compared to modern terms, as giant corporations can net in the multi-billions, but this was right in the middle of the Great Depression. This was during a time where many Americans lost their homes and were starving in the streets.

Kraus also gives a good example of the dependency of Flint residents on General Motors. He states that any outside goodwill for the auto workers fell on deaf ears. In other words, the feelings of dependency on General Motors beneficence were such, “that only in rare instances did

⁴⁰ Linder, *How Industrial Unionism*, 93

⁴¹ McClelland, *Midnight in Vehicle City*, 1.

⁴² *ibid.*, 1.

⁴³ Linder, *How Industrial Unionism*, 92

professional people show any sympathy” towards the plight of the auto workers.⁴⁴ He goes further into his explanation as to why that was the case. He gives the example of five pro-union teachers who no longer found themselves employed by the end of the year, as the school district refused to renew their contracts. He further explained that:

High School students were asked to write essays on the criminal wrongs and dangers of the sit-down strike, with palpable intention of causing a rift in family loyalties. Even physicians proved partisan. When later, a flu epidemic swept through the city, a number of them when called refused to attend several Fisher One sit-downers whom it was thought better to not move. Forgetting their Hippocratic Oath, they found excuses or even openly stated their objections...⁴⁵

Between doctors and teachers, these examples are best used to show how deeply General Motors had influence in the city of Flint, outside of politics and the people that the corporation employed.

When one reads an article that is so one-sided towards the company, it brings up a modern problem of bias in the news. Back then, there was no internet to stream multiple sources, and the TV had not yet become commonplace in the home. Therefore, the only two places one could consume media was the radio or in print. *The Flint Journal's* common practice of taking the side of General Motors reminds me of biased news organizations such as Fox, Breitbart, or The Blaze. In this thesis, the bulk of my research was done through the examination of *The Flint Journal*. By carefully reading every article I could find by the local news, I can recount the incidents of the Flint Sit-Down Strike, as well as see how the local media was controlled by the company. *The Flint Journal's* bias was a clear violation of any type of moral or ethical code to which media should adhere. It is also pivotal to study every line of each story. There was only a small number of articles which remained almost entirely neutral. Sometimes articles would only have minor negative commentary on the UAW or the strike. However, many articles had a blatant negative

⁴⁴ Kraus, *The Many and the Few*, 170.

⁴⁵ Kraus, *The Many and the Few*, 171.

connotation. Often, when workers are interviewed or given a platform to express their sentiments, it was anti-strike orientated. Many of them claimed they just wanted to go back to work— that claim is not up for me to decide.

However, when one goes over the secondary source material, the opposite theme emerges. The theme being that it was worth the fight, and that going back to work was only an option once their grievances had been addressed. This leads to an interesting dichotomy between how workers felt about the strike, and how they felt about the way they were being treated in the plants. Clearly, one cannot argue that workers did not want a raise or for conditions to be better. However, one could use the articles presented in *The Flint Journal* to assume at least some of the workforce truly hoped for a speedy resolve, even if it meant going back under similar conditions. Nonetheless, the workers who felt this way can by no means discredit the things which the union won for them. Better pay and working conditions were just the begging for the hourly employees of General Motors. Another thing I noticed in my research is as the strike went on, some stories would blur the lines a bit between negative and positive connotation for the strike and strikers. This can be seen in stories that start out discussing the negative impacts of the strike but pivoting to include points from organizers like John L. Lewis or Homer Martin.

An interesting thing I noticed in my research is how articles tended to cluster with one another. In other words, when there was a large article with a negative connotation about the UAW or the strike, there would also be smaller articles on the same page with the same message. There were a few challenges involved in my research. For starters, reading all the articles from a digitized source. Some of the digitized articles were difficult to read as they were not clear images. As can happen in any print media, sometimes the image was deteriorated even before it was digitized, therefore words or phrases could be missing in parts of the story. In these cases, I had to do my

best to use context to get an exact wording from the source. I also contended with trying to be as unbiased as possible when figuring out which categories the article fell into. Sometimes, I could not differentiate between any type of connotation as it appeared as if the article was straight facts. In those cases, I still counted the article, but gave it a straight “X” or 0 across the board. Meaning, I did not count it in any of the categories, but I did tally it in the number of articles I read. Finally, trying to differentiate between if an article was solely one thing and not another proved to be challenging. For example, if an article was clearly anti-strike was it also pro-company, or if it was using clearly inflammatory language against UAW officials, it also qualified as being anti-strike.

Trying to keep the categories separate but equal proved to be one of the hardest parts of my research, as I wanted to be as accurate as I possibly could. I wanted to make sure if it fell into an anti-strike category, it did not fall into a pro-company one unless there were separate examples within the same article one could point out as dissimilar from each other. Often there were articles that fell into dissimilar categories at the same time. In those cases, I would count it for both. This way I got as clear of a picture as possible on how the media was portraying the historic event. There were a few times I also had trouble connecting the headline with the correct news article. There were a few pages that the headline was just to get the reader’s attention, and then there would be two stories at the top of the page that had their own byline, meaning there was a sub-headline or sub-header. In those cases, I would often just go by the sub-headline, or distinguish between them based on content. It is no surprise that written media would use big and catchy headlines to attract the reader to drive up sales and create a buzz. I would also need breaks because after a while at looking at the text, lines would get difficult to differentiate. I knew it was time to step away if I had to read the same story more than three times to pick out all the information I needed to. One thing I kind of found surprising is that I thought articles on the day the strike ended

would have been more kind to the UAW or the strikers. Instead, I found a lot of the same themes. How they cost the company and many of its employees a lot of money. How they forced many people out of work, and therefore caused a huge resurgence in public assistance. Examples of this can be found in various articles I quote throughout the rest of this thesis.

Chapter 4: Week One- The Start of News Coverage

I started my breakdown of each week with the Sunday newspaper. This only seemed logical as new weeks obviously start on Sundays. Since the strike started on a Wednesday, the first out of seven weeks is shorter. This can also be said about week seven because the strike ended on a Thursday, leaving only two more days to look at coverage in the aftermath of the strike. Beginning on day one, *The Flint Journal* has two articles on page thirteen, which already start a negative campaign against the sit-down strike. The first article, “Strike Halts Car Assembly”, gives the reader two things to consider. The first is that the sit-downers were only comprised of twenty-two men but, because of their actions, put twenty-two hundred men out of work that day. The second thing to consider is that the company’s logic had merit and the union was being unreasonable. At that time, the union’s reason for calling for the strike was they had three members who were threatened with being fired and moved off their jobs. The company said no one had been fired and that they should be allowed to move people, and that General Motors’ long-standing policy of fairness on the job required they be moved.⁴⁶ The other article, “Issue Stops Orders to GM Suppliers” only states that because of other ongoing labor issues or rather strikes in their supply chain, they may also have more shortages of work.⁴⁷

On December 31, the first day following the official occupation of Fisher Body One and the on-set of Sit-Down Strike, *The Flint Journal* published two articles on page nine of its publication. The first article entitled, “Strike Activities Thousands Out of Work Here,” noted how the strike in that plant could directly cause others to be out of work. According to the article, the entire Buick Division of GM was shut down and more than thirteen thousand workers overall were affected by the sit-down Strike. The article also noted that negotiations were ongoing at the time

⁴⁶ “Strike Halts Car Assembly” *The Flint Journal*, December 30, 1936, 13.

⁴⁷ “Strike Halts Car Assembly” *The Flint Journal*, December 30, 1936, 13.

of the strike as well as the reason why the strike was called by the union involved the alleged movement of dies out of the plant to other Fisher plants. However, as GM explained in the article, it is often the practice to transport various dies to different plants in order to satisfy different production needs, and it was only going to be one particular die that would have been sent to Pontiac, pending repairs at its location.⁴⁸ There was no mention of possible reasoning for the strike or a justification from the UAW in the article. It was either omitted on purpose, or not asked for to begin with. Overall, twelve plants were affected, and *The Flint Journal* explained the incident by noting, “Many of the strikes took place without warning, no explanations were being made nor demands upon the company, officials said.”⁴⁹

Directly adjacent to the breaking sit-down strike article was a statement by the president of Buick. In, “Curtice Tells Strike Effect: Buick President outlines Status as it Affects workers” Harlow H. Curtice adds his personal feelings about the strike from the point of view of an executive. As the president of Buick, his opinion on the strike carries a lot of weight and the first thing he said is that the strike came at a time when Buick was thriving overall as a business. Curtice said, “This came at a time when Buick was setting an all-time record for production and sales with payrolls heavy, wage raises the highest we have ever paid a steadiness of employment that assured a substantial annual income.”⁵⁰ This quote was followed by an explanation that Buick, as a company, had regularly met with representatives of the workers as well as addressed many of the concerns which were previously brought forth by the worker. He also talked about how he was concerned for the loyal workers (those affiliated with the union or the strike) and their families, and as part of that concern, he would do his best to keep them working as long as it was possible

⁴⁸ “Strike Activities Thousands Out of Work Here,” *The Flint Journal*, December 31, 1936, 9

⁴⁹ “Strike Activities Thousands Out of Work Here,” 9

⁵⁰ “Strike Activities Thousands Out of Work Here,”9

to do so. This, of course, has nothing to do with the fact that if the worker is producing a product the company can make money. The president of Buick goes onto say that the amicable relationship the company and its employees share had thus far prevented outside labor organizers from making much progress in Flint, and that the relatively few employees who are tying up a large part of the workforce were causing thousands, that had no issues with the company, to be out of work. In the article, Curtice also states:

We are deeply concerned on behalf of these loyal workers who with their families must suffer through no fault of their own or ours. Among the other innocent victims are our dealers throughout the country who have been clamoring for cars and our suppliers with their workers and the many thousands of others who are dependent on all of all of these...It is unfortunate when a handful of strangers can meet in Washington and then in Detroit to determine courses of action and even create the demands that result in idleness for thousands of contented workers and disrupt a happy community. Out of consideration for the loyalty and welfare of our employees, we will continue such departments as we can as long as possible. If this were something that could be settled between management and employees, there would be no trouble in Flint.⁵¹

The combination of the two articles set a precedent as to how the workers would be portrayed within the local media at the time. With the two articles as the background to the event, an average reader would think that the strikers were unreasonable and that they were hurting innocent people by forcing them out of work at a time when work was especially valuable. It was during a time where the United States still had two years before the Great Depression would end, and most people were thankful to simply have a job. This, in turn, would make anyone who was losing their job because of someone else's actions bitter about such events. These themes will be seen throughout my research. The notion, of outside agitators and the minority of employees causing the majority to be thrown out of work, is seen countless times in *The Flint Journal*.

⁵¹ "Strike Activities Thousands Out of Work Here," 9

It was the first day of the new year, and the third day of the strike. On this day, the strike made the front page for the first time, under the headline, “Holiday Brings Strike Respite: Flint Plants at the Center of Attack, Crippled; GM Issues a Statement.” The headline alone speaks to the connotation of the article. The fact that GM was being attacked by the strikers, as well as it having a crippling effect, shows that the article is going to be sympathetic to General Motors and not to the strikers. The article blamed John L. Lewis and his “faction of unionization” for the strike in his attempt to “force recognition and collective bargaining for his contingent.”⁵² It also talked about the crippling effect of the strike to General Motors at a time where both employment and the production schedules were at an all-time high, meaning the company was doing well and employment in Flint was high due to the company’s product demand. It also specified that H.S. Knudsen, [the article uses H.S. however, it should use W.S. as in William S. Knudson], a General Motors’ Executive Vice President, claimed that most of the one hundred and thirty-five thousand men who were out of work at the time were unemployed through no fault of their own. According to him, “they and their families stand to lose \$1,000,000 in wages from General Motors.”⁵³ This would make anyone view strikers as selfish and unwilling to view others as more important than themselves, which is another one of the many examples of the negative portrayals of the strikers. Again, there is no mention of any type of statement from the UAW, and there is no quote from a UAW member or official.

Other headlines on January 1 included: “Spread of Strike Activities throws 14,600 Flint Workers Out of employment,” “Here is the Complete text of Knudsen’s Statement Outlining Attitude on Collective Bargaining,” and “Buick, Chevrolet, and Fischer Body ‘Employes’

⁵² “Holiday Brings Strike Respite: Flint Plants at the Center of Attack, Crippled; GM Issues a Statement.” *The Flint Journal*, January 1, 1937, 1

⁵³ “Holiday Brings Strike Respite...”,1

Affected Here.”⁵⁴ The three headlines take up three-quarters of the page. However, the most interesting article is that of the statement done by General Motors Executive Vice President Knudsen. In that statement Knudsen said:

Seven plants of General Motors are idle as a result of the strikes or shutdowns caused by the United Automobile Workers. The jobs mean 135,000 men imperiled, most of them through no fault of their own...How many other thousands are now or will be thrown out of work and deprived of wages as a result of these strikes is impossible to tell... Obviously the managers of these plants cannot bargain collectively with representatives of a faction of their ‘employees’ if these representatives themselves refuse to bargain collectively before a shutdown is called. Yet that is exactly what has been done in each instance. The union itself has refused to bargain collectively and has made real collective bargaining impossible by exercising coercion before the bargaining begins...The record cited above shows how little regard union representatives have real collective bargaining. Sit-downs are strikes. Such strikers are clearly trespassers and with sit-down strikers in illegal possession of plants. Collective bargaining cannot be justified if one party having seized the plant, holds a gun at the other party’s head.⁵⁵

In essence, that statement notes how General Motors is fine with collective bargaining on the local level, but to shut down a large portion of the company because of one agenda is illogical and, even more so, immoral. The strike therefore should not be taking place and, in the local setting (between the plant manager and the employee representative), there is a welcome discussion prompted by General Motors in many cases. Knudsen felt as though, “The union acted arbitrarily and without even seeking a meeting with management to discuss the situation. Within a short time, trucks drove up with blankets for the sit-down strikers.”⁵⁶ This makes it appear as though the union was being unreasonable, and before the strike took place, the union did not go through the proper steps for bargaining.

⁵⁴ “Here is the Complete text of Kudson’s Statement Outlining Attitude on Collective Bargaining.” *The Flint Journal*, January 1, 1937, 4

⁵⁵ “Here is the Complete text of Kudson’s Statement Outlining Attitude on Collective Bargaining.” 4

⁵⁶ “Here is the Complete text of Kudson’s Statement Outlining Attitude on Collective Bargaining.” 4

In that same day, *The Flint Journal* printed another interesting advertisement. Entitled, “A New Years Statement from Buick”, it was a yearly tradition to provide the reader a review of the previous year as well as outline plans for the future. It talked about the ongoing progress of the company in its sales and in its employment of Flint, Michigan residents. It also talked about both the previous and new owners of Buick being friends to the company and continuing that relationship. By retaining a positive relationship with the customer, their friends, they will continue to buy the Buick product. Therefore, the success of the company is guaranteed and consequently, the employee is guaranteed work. The statement, however, had to be amended to include the current situation with Buick considering the sit-down strike. Even though the strike had changed the situation, the goals of the company remained the same. The Buick Company does not place blame on the non-union-affiliated employee and in fact, feels sorry that they must go idle while the strike occurs. It also hopes that all those affected do not suffer too much and that those who are participating in the Flint Sit-Down Strike are removed promptly to continue an otherwise prosperous year.⁵⁷ The statement said:

...Since it [the Buick Company] was placed in type, a situation which has deprived thousands our employees of their right to work. Conditions beyond their control and ours, stopped our supply of bodies and forced down assembly lines. As I said yesterday, we will do our utmost to continue other departments to give as much employment as possible... ‘Here at Buick we look back on a fine record for the year... But what gives me the deepest pleasure in a different kind of achievement. We have increased several thousand the number of jobs for the people of Flint...’ Our sentiment and our purpose are unchanged by the deplorable situation which forces idleness on thousands who have the desire to work so that they and their families may continue to enjoy the advantage which were restored to them after a long period of depression... The fine relationship had been established with our ‘employes’ makes us feel more keenly on this idleness which they and we do not want. We regret the extent to which the community must suffer if a prolonged shut-down develops. A payroll that amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars daily cannot be stopped without at least an indirect effect throughout Flint and even beyond...⁵⁸

⁵⁷ “A New Years Statement from Buick.” *The Flint Journal*, January 1 1937, 29

⁵⁸ “A New Years Statement from Buick,” 29

January 1 had most of the stories from the week, since the strike started on a Wednesday, and the first of the year was an exception to the newspaper's typical length, coming in at just over one hundred pages total. In the first week, I had thirty-two scans altogether, twenty-one of which came from January 1. It also had four full page advertisements from the General Motors Corporation, one from Chevrolet explaining their new hydraulic brakes, one from Fischer body, one from the AC Spark Plug division of General Motors, and the last one was the New Year's statement from Buick which I discussed in the previous paragraph.

One final story worth mentioning was on page thirty-four of *The Flint Journal*, titled, "GM Xmas Checks and Increased Payrolls in 1936,". With a subtitle of "Savings Plan Fund Expanded", it has a clear positive connotation towards the company. Underneath the headlines, almost as a secondary title, it has in bold the statement, "\$26,000,000 was spent in building Projects and Expansion", meaning GM was investing in the Flint area and creating more jobs.⁵⁹ Showing how the paper was highly favorable towards the company, the article states, "Expecting the greatest single influence in the economic improvement Flint experienced during 1936, was General Motors corporation with distribution of its Savings plan fund, Christmas appreciation checks increased payrolls that surpassed considerably the 1929 peak figure." This tells the reader that the company which is so pivotal to the success of the city in which they live is General Motors and that the residents of Flint can thank General Motors for many of the positives the city of Flint had to offer. This article continues to boast about how General Motors is doing nothing but investing in Flint. How its contributions to the city have helped the people of Flint. It goes onto to say, "A 5 cents an hour wage increase, effective Nov. 9 increased the corporation's payrolls in this city at least \$4,000,000 over a 12 month's period, it was estimated. Establishment of the 40-hour week and

⁵⁹, "GM Xmas Checks and Increased Payrolls in 1936." *The Flint Journal* January 1, 1937, 34

time and a half for over-high figure following 1937 model introductions, with Flint plants operating at a peak output to meet an unprecedented winter demand for the cars made here.”⁶⁰

What more could the union possibly want? The workers already got time and a half, a forty-hour work week, and the employees already received a five-cent raise. The article continues to talk about the civic events put on by the company, to entertain the residents of Flint.

⁶⁰ “GM Xmas Checks and Increased Payrolls in 1936,” 34

Chapter 5: Week Two-The First Full Week

The second week was the first full week of the strike. Starting on January 3 and ending on January 9, the Flint Sit-Down Strike was now major, front-page news. During that week, the number of scans was slightly over double from the previous week, totaling sixty-five in all. The week prior had stories on page one, but they were not the main headline. They were not the first thing the reader would see as they began to read the news from the local paper. At the start of a new week, Sunday, January 3, the sit-down strike wasn't just one of the stories on the front page, it was headline news. In the January 3 newspaper, there were eleven articles which were either notable or related to the strike. From January 3 through the next couple of days, there were more and more articles covering the strike. The headline on page one for January 3 was, "Stay-In' Continues Despite Injunction." Directly underneath there is a sub-headline, "Action Ordered For Protection of Plants Here: Union Leaders Will Hold Conferences Here Today to Outline Course of Action With Regard to Situation in All General Motors Plants." The boldness of the headlines, as well as the font type, draws the readers' eyes to the story as the focus of the page. The article talks about how Circuit Judge Black issued an injunction against the strikers and that UAW officials were meeting on that day to discuss their demands. A quote from E.J. Parker, resident manager of Fisher Body, stated, "The injunction was issued upon the petition of the company solely to obtain possession of its own property and in nowise to be construed as an attempt upon the company's part to resume operations."⁶¹ The argument of the company wanting to take possession of its own property will be a reoccurring theme throughout many of the articles, and a sticking point of much of the negotiations.

⁶¹ "Stay-In' Continues Despite Injunction." *The Flint Journal*, January 3, 1937, 1

Mr. Parker is also given the opportunity to state the company's reasoning for going to court and seeking the injunction. Just below his statement and as a subheading for this article, the phrase "Intimidation is Cited" is written in bold. This, of course, is a clear negative connotation towards the strikers. Then the article goes on to assert, "The company believes it is entitled to the possession of its own property and the approaches to the same. We are reliably informed that many of those in the factory desire to return to their families but are prevented from so doing through intimidation by certain men."⁶² Following that statement, the company is quoted saying it is leaving it up to the men who are striking as to whether they choose to obey or defy an order from the court. This, of course, gives the strikers an unsavory reputation by making them seem as though they are criminals, which at that point in time and in all technicalities, they were. The article describes the attempt to serve the injunction to the strikers. Tasked with the duty of serving them was Sheriff Wolcott. He was accompanied by Captain Edwin Hughes, who was the head of the police patrol division, and Deputy Sheriff Gerald Ruddy. Sheriff Wolcott attempted to read it but was drowned out by the strikers making all types of noise. Quoted as saying, "I wanted them to understand how serious this was," Sheriff Wolcott knew they did not want to hear what he had to say.⁶³ President of UAW, Homer Martin, is quoted as well. He declares that corporations will use the court system to try and get their way. That the injunction is an attempt by the company to evade its responsibilities to bargain with the union.

Following that article, on page two, was a piece entitled, "Here is Complete Text of Court Injunction Issued Against the Strikers." This is only one of three articles on page two of the journal. My best guess is that it takes up approximately half of this page, competing only with a large advertisement and a few smaller ones. The plaintiff, General Motors, is given full reign in this

⁶² "Stay-In' Continues Despite Injunction," 1

⁶³ "Stay-In' Continues Despite Injunction," 1

article to give their points of contention for this case. The third point describes the plant and the work force needed to build the bodies of the vehicles produced. It also lists the payroll, once again alluding to the amount of money the workers are losing by being on strike, and to those that are losing more, even if they are innocent bystanders. The article states the charges against the union by the corporation as well. Some of those charges included property damage, trespassing, using intimidation to prevent others from working, among other charges. Once again it is hard to find any positive connotation for the union or the strike in this article. However, the company is given great publicity and lots of goodwill, which the reader must take in.

Before moving on, I would like to explain two other articles significant enough to discuss from January 3. The first one was on page eight, entitled, “Shut-Downs in Motor Industry May Produce Sensations in 1937.” It reads to me as mildly pro-union but anti-UAW. The first idea in this article worth mentioning says, “Can a few men acquire a monopoly of the largest single item in the entire economic structure—the cost of labor? And if labor is to be checked against such monopolistic practices, will it not mean government control of labor unions—the very foundation of a Fascist state?”⁶⁴ The questions being asked by David Lawrence, the author, showed his bias. Connecting the formation of unions to the idea of a fascist state is inflammatory. Then, the author goes on to say, “The auto industry, for instance, is one that has been especially good in payment of wages and bonuses. Likewise, the auto industry has recently conformed to government specifications under the Walsh-Healey law so that the 40-hour week is in effect.”⁶⁵ Of course, this makes the reader believe that conditions in the plants were great, therefore, the strikers were not morally correct in their attack against the company. The final quote near the end of the article says, “There is and always has been a general sympathy with labor unions on the part of the people

⁶⁴ “Shut-Downs in Motor Industry May Produce Sensations in 1937,” *The Flint Journal*, January 3, 1937,8

⁶⁵ “Shut-Downs in Motor Industry May Produce Sensations in 1937,” 8

generally. It has usually been assumed that employers were unwilling to grant living wages or decent hours. None of these objections can be expressed persuasively with respect to the auto industry.”⁶⁶ That is why I say it is not necessarily anti-union, but because the author craves out the exception of the auto industry, as a whole, it is anti-UAW, as those organizers already have it good, so why have a need to unionize.

The second article on page eleven was entitled, “Knudson, Martin and Brophy Discuss Strike Conditions: Issue Defined by Executive,” is important because it gives three important figures in the strike space in the paper. However, William S. Knudson, Executive Vice President of General Motors, is given way more space than the other two people on the union side. Knudson echoes the company’s position that collective bargaining must be done on the local level, with labor groups can be handled only by local plant managers.” Knudson also talks about how many people the company employs, and how much the company spends on wages: “General Motors has no objections to talking to union officials through local management... and has no objection to any organization activities except on the premises. Finally,” he asserts, “we think working conditions in our plants are equal to those in any given locality... Workers for instance are given a minimum of 80 cents an hour.” The article also gets the opinion of the President of the UAW, Homer Martin. His quote gives the union’s perspective, although not a lot of it. Understanding what the organization and the workers it represents are asking for, Martin is quoted as saying, “We will call all the strikes necessary,” in regard to what he believes it will take to end the standoff.

For January 4, most of the significant articles were on page one. There was also a page one extra, which was produced later in the day. This occurs frequently; whenever there is a breaking story that *The Flint Journal* wants to put out immediately. The first headline was the main cover

⁶⁶ “Shut-Downs in Motor Industry May Produce Sensations in 1937,” 8

story for the day. Entitled, “Prolonged Idleness Looms in Flint; Control Over G.M. Plants Basic Issue” and just underneath that, also in bold, was the header “Stay-in Strikers Continue to Defy Court To Vacate Fisher Body Plants; Governor Has Parley with Union Heads; Pledges Peace.” The story starts out by reiterating the belief that it is the demands of the United Automobile Workers which are causing the prolonged idleness in Flint. The author states, “Anti-Strike sentiment grows among workers in Flint plants who do not want wish employment interrupted and who claim the U.A.W.A. membership in Flint is only small portion of the total number of workers. Business interests and other community leaders disturbed because of the effect prolonged shut down will have on Flint.” The article also insinuates that the strikers are criminals by continuing to defy the court injunction. There are descriptions of violence occurring at the Cleveland Fisher Body location. According to the article, in Cleveland at a Fisher Body plant, strikers refused to allow the plant manager to enter the building and as a result, a policeman and two strikers were injured during a scuffle. “Other developments in the drive to unionize the automotive industry were forced on violence at Cleveland today and the forcing of 9,000 more employees from work at Anderson, Ind.”⁶⁷

This article is also important because it describes the differences in demands made by the union and answers to those demands by the company. It also takes the time to list all the current plants which are now striking, the total of which was, by that point, up to seven different facilities in five different cities. Of course, this also meant that three other General Motors plants were also left idle, making the total number of people out of work thirty-eight thousand eight hundred, corporate and country wide, according to *The Flint Journal*. The impact of seeing these numbers, as well as seeing the various places which are on strike, should not be glazed over. Having almost

⁶⁷ “Prolonged Idleness Looms in Flint; Control Over G.M. Plants Basic Issue.” *The Flint Journal*, January 4, 1937,1

forty thousand people out of work because of a strike would make anyone not feel too sympathetic to the cause. This does not quantify, nor can it really, the number of other people who also depend on those workers for their income. Towards the bottom of the article, it echoes the theme, once again, that the strikers are not obeying the law by defying the court injunction by Judge Black.

For the second release of the day, page one extra edition, the headline was, “GM Turns Down Demands Made by Automotive Union.” It starts out with a direct quote from Alfred P. Sloan stating, “General Motors will not recognize any union as the sole bargaining agency for its workers, to the exclusion of all others. General Motors will continue to recognize, for the purpose of collective bargaining, the representatives of its workers whether union or non-union.”⁶⁸ This is an important concept to draw out; if there were twenty-five to thirty different unions representing every one of General Motors different sites, then each one would be significantly less powerful. Problems between one location may be solved more easily with the help of union representation from another one. The realization that there is power in numbers is what helps unions have negotiating power for their workers against a company. Later Sloan says, “Work in General Motors plants will continue to depend on the ability and efficiency of the worker-not in the membership, or non-membership in any union organization whatsoever. This means that you do not have to pay tribute to anyone for the right to work”.⁶⁹ This also needs to be teased out as well. The phrase ‘right to work’ has been used against unions for years. This same logic has been used to create “Right to Work” laws all over the country. It is a direct effort to diminish the power of unions. By allowing, “free-riders or carpet baggers”, it reduces the ability for unions to raise funds for the organization.

The article also lets Sloan state his beliefs on all the “benefits” of working at General Motors. These benefits are already laid out in laws passed President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934.

⁶⁸ “GM Turns Down Demands Made by Automotive Union.” *The Flint Journal*, January 4, 1937, 1-Extra

⁶⁹ “GM Turns Down Demands Made by Automotive Union,”. Page 1-Extra

These benefits include time and a half after forty hours, seniority rights, and the forty-hour work week. “General Motors will continue to pay the highest justifiable wages in the future, as it has in the past, and just as it is doing in the present. It believes in high wages. It is justly proud of its record in that respect.”⁷⁰ A few things I would like to point out from this quote. The first thing is who classifies, “the highest justifiable wages?” It can be seen time and time again that to many companies (including General Motors), profits come over wages for its employees. It also states that it believes in high wages. Now, there is no doubt that working for General Motors did pay wages higher than other jobs at that time, but high wages are a relative term.

Finally, thinking in terms of the reader, if one does not know the conditions or the wage structure at General Motors, then one would more than likely side with the company. Thinking in terms of this article, it is tremendously anti-union and pro-company. It is also important to note once again, that it is front page news. Sloan then reiterates his position that it is not the position of the company that you should have to join an organization in order to work, “I tell you this not only in your own interest, but in the interest of your family and for the future progress and stability of the business, as well.”⁷¹ Sloan asks the readers, “In other words, will you pay a tribute to a private group of labor dictators for the privilege of working, or will you have the right to work as you desire?”⁷² The use of the term “labor dictators” is both loaded and divisive. Clearly, it was meant as a direct insult to the UAW, and to those attempting to organize employees at General Motors. Sloan rallies against all the talking points of the union. He makes it seem as though everything the union is expressing is a lie, and that no one should be organized by untrustworthy individuals. He states that everything that, “you are being told...” is “positively not so. Do not be

⁷⁰ “GM Turns Down Demands Made by Automotive Union,”. Page 1-Extra

⁷¹ “GM Turns Down Demands Made by Automotive Union,”. Page 1-Extra

⁷² “GM Turns Down Demands Made by Automotive Union,”. Page 1-Extra

misled. Have no fear any union or labor dictator will dominate the plants of General Motors corporation.”⁷³ Sloan’s disposition is that his employees are being forced out by the strikes and widespread intimidation, as indicated by his final statement, “Your employment and wages and welfare of your families are being endangered by actions beyond your control and that of the company. The same ruthless tactics are threatening the general recovery of business, in which the automotive industry has a leading part.”⁷⁴ This article takes on a lot of the themes which consistently appear in my research.

The following day, January 5, there was no sign of either side budging on the matter. On page one, the headline article was called, “Union Leaders Admit General Strike Under Way Against General Motors: Situation Grows Critical; Federal Intervention Seen.” In it, the UAW expressed its stance that it will continue to close facilities as long as the company refuses to recognize it as the organization with sole bargaining agency. The article states, “Nearly 50,000 General Motors workers have been made idle by Strikes and corporation officials expect that 135,000 will be thrown out of work by the end of the week. Sit-down strikers continued to defy the circuit court injunction holding possession of the two Fisher Body plants in Flint.... Continued anti-strike was manifested in Flint, with opposition to the U.A.U.W. action growing hourly.”⁷⁵ If this is the case, then a reader must believe that their thoughts on the “evilness of the strike” must be common sentiment within the city of Flint. The CIO is referred to as a “militant organization” in this article. This leads one to believe this whole article is not written by an unbiased person. The other strikes, which are expanding at this point, get a small blurb as well, giving a bit of context to the whole picture and mentioning that the employees out of work approached the forty thousand

⁷³ “GM Turns Down Demands Made by Automotive Union,” Page 1-Extra

⁷⁴ “GM Turns Down Demands Made by Automotive Union,” Page 1-Extra

⁷⁵ “Union Leaders Admit General Strike Under Way Against General Motors: Situation Grows Critical; Federal Intervention Seen.” *The Flint Journal*, January 5, 1937, 1

mark. The rest of the article refers to the five sticking points of General Motors and the beliefs of Sloan.

On page four of the same day, an article called, “Three-Fourths of G.M. Potential Output This Week Cut Off by Labor Strife” also has implications for the paper’s views on the strike. The negative connotation towards the strike comes from the numbers presented of all those out of work. That is at the start of the article, however, midway through, the connotation switches towards a negative one against the General Motors corporation by giving Homer Martin a chance to speak. Martin gets a chance to briefly explain the unions side, which works as a positive connotation towards the UAW: “First, the employees through the plants of the General Motors corporation have encountered widespread discrimination and wholesale discharge because of their mere affiliation with this union at the hands of plant managers. In other words, there appears to be a nation-wide policy on the part of the General Motors corporation not to permit the organization of a union among the employees. This policy has been in practice in absolute violation of the national labor relations law, and also in contravention of the accepted principles in the United States today...”⁷⁶ His second point is that issues across the company can only be fixed on the national level, by the executives of the corporation. The union’s demands were also reiterated in this article, giving the union more publicity. The two sides to the story are why this article was one worth mentioning.

Another pivotal piece of writing was not really an article or an advertisement. It was an entire page spread where General Motors gave out a statement to all of its employees entitled, “To All Employees Of General Motors Corporation”. On page twelve of *The Flint Journal*, the statement by the corporation was reproduced, but first it was posted on all General Motors

⁷⁶ “Three-Fourths of G.M. Potential Output This Week Cut Off by Labor Strife.” *The Flint Journal*. January 5, 1937, 4

domestic manufacturing bulletin boards. In it, General Motors tries to explain the current situation regarding the Sit-Down Strike. There are a few important things to note about the spread. One is that it starts out by saying the factories were closed by force, however, it is a lack of force that constitutes a sit-down strike. It then notes that business and demand for such business has not been as good since 1929, the year of the stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression. It also said that people are being forced out of their jobs by the sit-down strikers. It goes so far as to say that the employees' families are being "endangered" by the tactic of the Sit-Down Strike. Later, it composes General Motors' position on the strike using a five-point analysis of what everyone should know about the strike from their point of view. This propaganda is important because it shows how the company was attempting to manipulate the situation to their advantage. General Motors, by using its economic resources, was able to buy full page spreads in *The Flint Journal*. The sit-downers had no way of opposing such an action and, from the research conducted thus far, *The Flint Journal* made no attempt to show the other side as well.⁷⁷

The full-page spread addressed to the General Motors employees begins by telling the reader that considering the plants are being forced to close, the corporation thought it might be a good idea to let them in on the circumstances; therefore, they could make a more informed decision on what the situation was all about. Then, in the next paragraph, it talked about how General Motors business is strong and their cars are in high demand, consequently, the corporation can provide plenty of jobs to the public. Referring to 1929, the onset of the Great depression, the statement from General Motors also lets the reader know that they are paying their employees more than they have ever done and, because the dollar can buy more than it could in the past, is also a cause for celebration. However, it is because of the sit-down strikers that employees have

⁷⁷, "To All Employes Of General Motors Corporation." *The Flint Journal* January 5, 1937, 12.

cause to worry because it is the fault of those people involved that other jobs from General Motors are in jeopardy. Then there are few sentences regarding the UAW and how they are mandating the General Motors employees to join, even at the cost of their own jobs. After that, the statement said that General Motors is totally for collective bargaining, however, GM does not believe that it is necessary for the worker to join a union in order to have that right. Subsequently, it lays out four positions by General Motors, and finally it makes the declaration that GM is only trying to look out for its employees and the families of its employees by letting everyone know how much the security of its workers is important to the corporation; if the business is doing well, so can the employee and the stockholders.⁷⁸

In view of the fact that several of our manufacturing plants have been force to close down, possible necessitating similar closing on the part of others in the non-distant future, and realizing that this means a great to you and your families, as well as to the business, it seems only fair that I should tell you circumstances have brought this in order that you may better understand and therefore judge more intelligently.

First let me say that General Motors products were never in greater demand than today. This good business insures plenty of jobs, with generous hours of employment, for some time to come. Wages are higher today, by far, than the corporation has ever paid before... Yet under these conditions you are being forced out of your jobs by sit-down strikes, by widespread intimidation, and by shortage of materials by similar tactics... You are being told you must join a union. You are being told that to bargain collectively you must be a member of a labor organization... I want to say most frankly, that this is positively not so. Do not be mislead... General Motors grew up on the principle that a worker's job and his promotion depend on his own ability-not on the say-so of any labor union dictator... Alfred p. Sloan, Jr., President⁷⁹

From January 5, there are two quick headlines, both on page fourteen, which show a direct contrast between the positive connotation of the coverage given to General Motors, and the negative connotation given to the coverage of the UAW and strike. The additional articles

⁷⁸ "To All Employees of General Motors Corporation," 12

⁷⁹ "To All Employees of General Motors Corporation" 12

published on the January 5 were also interesting because of how the strikers were portrayed. The first article found on page fourteen reads, “Says Strikers Have Weapons: Worker under arrest Avers 800 to 900 Are Armed with Blackjacks.” According to the article, a striker was found at a restaurant at 4 am and was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon (the homemade blackjack). The worker was portrayed as an unintelligent drunk. According to the worker, he had half dozen beers and three “highballs” before settling at the restaurant where he was arrested.⁸⁰ This article gives the impression that the strikers are violent group of people and perhaps even alcoholics. That a majority of the strikers were violent and prepared to fight. On that same page, there was also an article which denoted that, “8,000 Workers at Buick express Loyalty to Company During Crisis.” The article said, “Spontaneous expressions of loyalty and good will to the company were pouring into the office of Harlow J. Curtice, today as thousands of hourly rate workers in various Buick production divisions placed their signatures to petitions of management.”⁸¹ That article was filled with compliments towards the company and for the Buick President, Harlow H. Curtice.

I thought the picture below was also important to comment on. The picture on the left depicts the strikers inside the plant receiving information from the outside. Titled, “information” it has an important idea as the last sentence in its description. It has the demands from the strikers. The demands were also covered in various articles throughout the length of the strike, and in the same section of that day’s journal. However, I liked the picture as it showed the strikers, and it did not ooze with negative connotation. The picture on the right also shows the commissary for the strikers, which is how they were fed throughout the length of the strike.⁸²

⁸⁰ “Says Strikers Have Weapons: Worker under arrest Avers 800 to 900 Are Armed with Blackjacks.” *The Flint Journal*, January 5, 1937, 14

⁸¹. “8,000 Workers at Buick express Loyalty to Company During Crisis,” *The Flint Journal*, January 5, 1937, 14

⁸² The Flint Journal. Pictures: “Information” and “Commissary”. January 5, 1937, 25



The next day would be Wednesday, January 6, 1937, and the front-page headline read, "Settlement of Strike Not in Sight; 21 General Motors Plants Affected." Just below that headline, in bold, it also read, "Two More General Motors Plants are forced to Close by Union Heads; 135,000 Likely to be out of Work by the End of This Week." This type of doom and gloom headline is not uncommon. There have been countless headlines covering different pieces of bad news before this event, and there have been countless negative headlines covering various adverse events since then. It is no secret that headlines sell newspapers. The article talks about how the strike was leaving fifty thousand workers idle at this point. It claimed, "No settlement in sight, with strike spreading to other plants many thousands of workers in other industries made idle."⁸³ The use of the word "made" tells the reader that it was against the workers will, giving the union a bad reputation and leaving the strike with a negative connotation. It also says, "Instead, nearly 135,000 General Motors workers face the prospect of being thrown out of work by the end of this week."⁸⁴ The expression "thrown out" also exhibits a negative connotation, as it implies being

⁸³ Pictures: "Settlement of Strike Not in Sight; 21 General Motors Plants Affected", *The Flint Journal*, January 6, 1937, 1

⁸⁴ Pictures: "Settlement of Strike Not in Sight; 21 General Motors Plants Affected". January 6, 1937, 1

forced out of the job as well. The article goes on to say, “Striking union heads launch bitter personal campaign of attack against Circuit Judge Edward D. Black of Flint and announce plans to seek impeachment of the 83-year-old Genesee County jurist, for issuing an injunction against them.”⁸⁵ The idea that the union heads are attacking an older, distinguished judge, who had served Flint for much of his career, also gives the union a bad name. Towards the end of the article, there is one more subheading titled, “G.M. to remain adamant.” It explains Sloan’s disposition, and his belief that General Motors would refuse to acknowledge the UAW as the sole bargaining unit for their employees. In terms of the reader, this allows the company a positive spin on the situation or, in other words, has a positive connotation towards the General Motors.

An additional article on page fifteen, also connects to the “union’s attack” on the district court judge. Titled, “Strike Chiefs Assail Judge,” the article has a negative connotation towards both the strike and the UAW, because it starts out by stating they are personally attacking an 83-year-old judge, who is also a lifetime Genesee County resident. In the article, UAW President, Homer Martin, says that his rulings against the union were unethical because Judge Black has a stake in the company. Martin goes on to saying that Judge Black has, “flagrantly violated the law which he himself had sworn to uphold.”⁸⁶ Judge Black said he did not want to comment directly outside of what he had to say in court. However, he was quoted in saying, “There’s not a man or a woman or a child in Flint who is not an interested party and who does not have an interest at stake.”⁸⁷ In this, he is not wrong: the fate of General Motors was truly tied to the fate and well-being of the city of Flint. The article makes its worst claim against the strike and strikers when it claims those involved are also involved in racketeering, “These groups [people representing

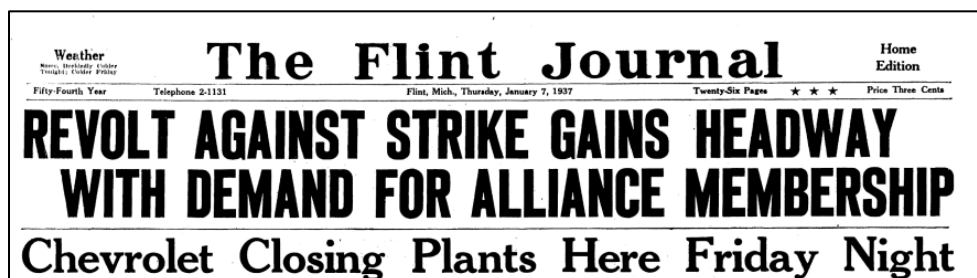
⁸⁵ Pictures: “Settlement of Strike Not in Sight; 21 General Motors Plants Affected”. January 6, 1937, 1

⁸⁶ Pictures: “Strike Chiefs Assail Judge”, *The Flint Journal*, January 6, 1937,15

⁸⁷ Pictures: “Strike Chiefs Assail Judge”,15

themselves as members of the UAW] are making their appearance in Flint stores and demand either financial aid or food for the strikers, threats of violence following refusal to help prolong the strike which has now more than 15,000 Flint General Motors employes out of work.”⁸⁸ Not necessarily a violent threat, the article alludes to the possibility of being put on a blacklist if the stores do not comply. Finally, the article makes the connection between those laid off or out of work because of striking, and the increase in requests for welfare.

On January 7, there was two front pages. The second one, although similar in nature, was produced later in the day as an “Extra.” The two pictures below show the distinction between the two. The first picture was the one produced first, and the second shows the extra edition.



Both headlines are large, bold, and of course have negative connotation towards the strike.

More on January 7, there was also an article on the first page titled, “Draft George Boysen to Direct Activities for New Civic Group.” It starts out by saying, “Anti-strike sentiment has been

⁸⁸ Pictures: “Strike Chiefs Assail Judge,”¹⁵

rumbling beneath the surface in Flint plants and throughout the city, burst forth into open revolt today with the launching of The Flint Alliance organized ‘for the security of our jobs, our homes and our community’. Within a few hours after announcement of the alliance of Flint workers and their families, a spontaneous demand for membership in the organization for under way.”⁸⁹ This is clearly an anti-strike and negative connotation towards the UAW and the strikers. The article also describes how there is “bitter resentment’ towards the outsiders who have brought distress to the city with their strike. The goals of the organization include keeping the anti-strike movement orderly, as well as showing the true sentiments of Flint residents. Boysen is quoted in saying, “This is the job of everyone interested in Flint and its homes and we welcome volunteers... There are no fees. We merely wish an enrollment, for its moral effect toward smothering the strike movement, restore peace in flint, and men and women their jobs.”⁹⁰ The belief that grievances can be met without having to leave one’s job, meaning strike. The article denotes that the organization was inspired through several meetings, and that it would continually work towards perfecting its goal. It goes onto say that those meetings indicated, “the true attitude of the men and women forced with the loss of their jobs for some time through no fault of their own...”⁹¹

The article continues to talk about petitions “which have been in circulation throughout the plants during the last several days.” It quotes one directly and shows a sympathetic worker to the company, a worker who does not want to be associated with the shutdowns or work shortage. Other petitions speak on how the men would just like to work. One even going as far as to say that he wishes to continue to work, “unmolested by any labor organization.” I’d like to quote one more example of what a petition says, “Believing that the great majority of Flint workers are not in

⁸⁹ Pictures: “Draft George Boysen to Direct Activities for New Civic Group,” *The Flint Journal*. January 7, 1937, 1

⁹⁰ Pictures: “Draft George Boysen to Direct Activities for New Civic Group,” 1

⁹¹ Pictures: “Draft George Boysen to Direct Activities for New Civic Group,” 1

sympathy with union activities in Flint, we are asking your aid is bringing this fact to light.”⁹² Last two paragraphs also give negative connotation to the strike and UAW, making it a good case in point to the themes pulled out in my research. The extra edition of the paper uses the title, “Boysen Drafted to Direct Drive” to convey much of the same information from the article mentioned in earlier. So, the paper has two editions on the same day, both having front-page headlines which used disparaging remarks towards the strike or UAW.

One other article not on page one to consider is titled, “Genesee Bar Rushes to Defense of Black; Censures Union Chiefs Ouster Demands.” The news article published on page sixteen, starts out with a severe criticism of Homer Martin. Stating Martin used bitter and personal attacks against Judge Black, which in turn angered the president of the Genesee County Bar association, Charles D. Beagle. “Incensed over ‘unjust and vicious’ treatment of Judge Black by the union official and the movement to bring impeachment charges the 83-year-old jurist, attorneys in the city rushed to the defense of the judge and explained the legal procedure of injunctions.”⁹³ The article also states how it is an outsider’s attack on a lifelong resident. Beagle goes onto say, “Judge Black’s ‘ownership’ of General Motors stock does not invalidate the injunction,” and adds that, “any person to whom knowledge of the injunction comes who is violating the order should forthwith cease violating its terms and if he does not, he is in contempt of court.” In describing the strikers and the UAW president, the article says they are defying the law, and the President is using threats of impeachment to try and get his way. The article goes into more details on the integrity of Judge Black.

⁹² “Draft George Boysen to Direct Activities for New Civic Group”. *The Flint Journal*. January 7, 1937,1

⁹³ “Genesee Bar Rushes to Defense of Black; Censures Union Chiefs Ouster Demands, *The Flint Journal*. January 7, 1937, 16

There were two notable articles on page one of the January 8 edition of *The Flint Journal*. The first headline called, “Thousands Join Alliance as Strike Paralysis Closes Another Factory.” In terms of this headline, Alliance is referring to The Flint Alliance, an organization created and headed by former Flint Mayor George E. Boysen. The organization is in direct contradiction to the UAW, meaning it was a “company union.” The organization listed its goal as having the objective, “of providing ‘security for our jobs, and our home and our community.’”⁹⁴ Any coverage which uses The Flint Alliance as a source, or as an example of the sentiment in Flint, it must be considered anti-strike and viewed as having a negative connotation towards the UAW or strikers. The article goes into a multifaceted context on the creation of The Flint Alliance. For example, the article says that Boysen had been threatened by the union with a subpoena for his efforts to end the labor difficulty in a peaceful manner. The article also talks about the numbers of individuals who will be forced from their job due to the strike.

The second notable page one article from January 8 is, “Every effort to Negotiate Strike Futile: Cadillac Plant is Closed as Result of New Sit-down.” The article described a nation-wide paralysis of the General Motors company, with seventy-six thousand two hundred workers out of the job. Meanwhile another seventy thousand workers in allied industries have also found themselves without a job, as they were “forced into idleness.”⁹⁵ Efforts of the federal and state government appear to be in vain, as Homer Martin declared, “I do not consider we are any nearer a solution than ever.”⁹⁶ This sentence sounds irregular, but the intent is that the UAW’s head does not see the point of meeting with General Motors since he does not see them as being any closer

⁹⁴. “Thousands Join Alliance as Strike Paralysis Closes Another Factory.” *The Flint Journal* January 8, 1937, 1

⁹⁵ “Every effort to Negotiate Strike Futile: Cadillac Plant is Closed as Result of New Sit-down.” *The Flint Journal* January 8, 1937, 1

⁹⁶ “Every effort to Negotiate Strike Futile: Cadillac Plant is Closed as Result of New Sit-down.” *The Flint Journal* January 8, 1937, 1

to a resolution. The article proceeds to talk about other developments, and the fact that there are now more strikes going on. Those strikes add additional pressure to the company to find an applicable solution. The strikes are even close to threatening General Motors operations in Ontario as well. Martin expresses how he will use every legal means to protect the strikers, and that he is preparing a case for the National Labor Relations Board.

Homer Martin asserts that workers have been pressured to sign anti-union petitions. He is also prepared to go against the newly formed Flint Alliance, which he also deems as a threat to the strike movement. One important idea drawn out in this article is the use of a sit-down strike as its own tactic to bring the company to the bargaining table. Martin believes the fact that sit-down strikers occupying the Flint Fisher plants and several smaller factories gives him a powerful weapon. He is not ready to surrender it unless he receives an equally important concession from General Motors. In contrast, General Motors refuses to bargain with the UAW until they have removed themselves from GM property. There was a counter protest in Cleveland by four craft unions, presumably because their jobs were in jeopardy. "In Baltimore, cheering employes of two General Motors plants gave management a vote of confidence signed by 2,000 workers. 'Complete satisfaction' with working conditions was expressed."⁹⁷ A similar display of loyalty is talked about as well with twelve hundred Chevrolet employees. "In another Wisconsin city, Janesville, the Chevrolet parts and service department was closed after the union threatened to picket it unless operations were suspended."⁹⁸ These two quotes combined show how the paper is giving bias towards the company and giving more negative coverage of the strike overall.

⁹⁷ "Every effort to Negotiate Strike Futile: Cadillac Plant is Closed as Result of New Sit-down." *The Flint Journal* January 8, 1937, 1

⁹⁸ "Every effort to Negotiate Strike Futile: Cadillac Plant is Closed as Result of New Sit-down," 1

Page twelve of the January 8 publication has another article titled, “Bar’s Resolution Defends Integrity of Judge Black,” which also is largely a criticism of the union. Under the main headline is the subheading, “65 Attorneys Called Into Special Session Unanimously ‘Regret Attempt to Besmirch his Reputation; Court Procedure is called Adequate.’”⁹⁹ There was a special session called just so other lawyers in the area could defend Judge Black: “Judge Black has been subjected to a bitter personal attack by Homer Martin, president of the United Automobile Workers of America, following issue of an injunction enjoying striking employes and officials of the union from occupying the two plants of the Fisher Body corporation here.” Quoted in this article is Charles D. Beagle, the president of the association, who believes the legal matter of the strike is not something the association should place judgments on. Rather, he believes the issue at hand is the attack on Judge Black. In another subheading, in bold black letters, it states, “Rally to his defense.” The association, however, does feel the need to comment that they will one hundred percent back Judge Black where his character and judgement are concerned. This article shows how the union is not respected for its attack on Judge Black. Whether or not one agrees with the injunction placed on the strikers is a moot point when they read this article. The fact that Judge Black had stock in General Motors was of little concern to the author of the article, nor to those coming to defend Judge Black. They drafted a resolution, written by prominent legal figures in the association, such as current and former protestors as well as judges. The resolution also takes the side of General Motors, stating that the injunction per the law is legal, and therefore, the strikers are morally wrong. It also reiterates the confidence the Genesee County Bar association has in Judge Black, with regards to his honesty and integrity. Finally, ending with a damnation of the

⁹⁹ “Bar’s Resolution Defends Integrity of Judge Black.” *The Flint Journal* January 8, 1937, 12

attacks on the judge. The implication of which is that any attacks on him by the UAW or its leadership was out of line, and only done by those who come from outside of Flint.

On day eleven of the strike, the last day for week two, the front headline was, “Strike Situation Remains Deadlocked; 11,300 Chevrolet Workers in Protest.” On Saturday, January 9, 1937, *The Flint Journal* continued its negative bias towards the strike and strikers. The subheading read, “No Progress is Made Toward a Settlement of Industrial Crisis.” By calling it a crisis, it shows the negative impact of the strike, and, of course, it is the strikers who are to blame for that. Just below the subheading, it announced, “Wave of Public Sentiment against Strike Rolls up; American federation of Labor Unions in Protest Against Auto Workers Activities.”¹⁰⁰ The article states, “With strikes and layoffs in General Motors plants and allied industries carrying the threat of a national economic catastrophe, a swelling tide of public sentiment, fearful of the results of the industrial paralysis that is slowly spreading to all parts of the country, began to be felt today as federal and state mediators admitted there is little hope in sight for a settlement.”¹⁰¹ It continues to give the number of unemployed across the country and at twenty-seven GM plants at that point as ninety-five thousand, seven hundred and sixty-five. James S. Dewey, a federal labor conciliator, and Governor Frank Murphy’s efforts have had little success due to one major point of contention, that the strikers were in possession of General Motors property. It is described as the one great obstacle holding up the negotiations. “The obstacle is the demand that General Motors obtain possession of its own property, now held by the stay-in strikers of the union before conferences are held. Homer Martin, president of the striking union, has steadfastly refused to allow the strikers to vacate the Fisher Body plants in Flint. General Motors has openly announced that it will not

¹⁰⁰ “Strike Situation Remains Deadlocked; 11,300 Chevrolet Workers in Protest.” *The Flint Journal*, January 9, 1937, 1

¹⁰¹ “Strike Situation Remains Deadlocked; 11,300 Chevrolet Workers in Protest,” 1

consider any negotiations until these men leave the plants.”¹⁰² The UAW said that it will negotiate with the company so long as work is not moved, and the plants remain closed until they have come to an agreement. Under the subheading of important developments, it says “General Motors employees-those most seriously affected by the strike situation – are behind an anti-strike movement that is gaining terrific momentum over a wide front.”¹⁰³ The simple use of terrific puts a positive spin on the anti-strike movement. Pushback from the A.F. of L. comes from not wanting to be pushed out of representing some of the crafts. However, the Flint Federation of Labor voted unanimously to support the strike. “With 11,300 of 11,485 men work in the Chevrolet plant in Flint signing petitions protesting against the strike situation and declaring their working conditions, rates of pay and hours of labor are satisfactory, another strong anti-strike movement got under way here.”¹⁰⁴

Three more following paragraphs describe more anti-strike sentiment in the area and workers support for the company. What is suspicious to me is I do not know one person who believes they are paid enough and would not want more money in their pocket. The quote from William S. Kudson, executive vice president of G.M. is telling. Kudson is quoted, in a response to a call from clergymen, to help the two parties to come to an understanding. Kudson says, “We appreciate your message we are trying to do the right thing for our men. We are willing to bargain with any of our employes on wages and working conditions or anything affecting their welfare, but we cannot permit occupation of our plant’s contrary to law.”¹⁰⁵ Both the metal trades

¹⁰² “Strike Situation Remains Deadlocked; 11,300 Chevrolet Workers in Protest.” *The Flint Journal* January 9, 1937,

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¹⁰³ “Strike Situation Remains Deadlocked; 11,300 Chevrolet Workers in Protest,” 1

¹⁰⁴ “Strike Situation Remains Deadlocked; 11,300 Chevrolet Workers in Protest,” 1

¹⁰⁵ “Strike Situation Remains Deadlocked; 11,300 Chevrolet Workers in Protest,” 1

department of the American Federation of Labor and the federation of building trades both are seen as aligning with one another in opposition to the strike and the unionization drive.

On the same front page is a small, anti-strike article which I would like to show. Only three paragraphs long, it makes the ridiculous claim that in order to combat the sit-down strike, others should go to the homes of those striking and sit-down as a form of protest. See picture below:¹⁰⁶



I have two other headlines I believe are worthy of note before ending this chapter on week two of *The Flint Journal's* coverage of the strike. The first one is, "Huge Petition Aids Alliance Protest Move," which is also on page one. A quick quote from that article can sum up its content nicely, "Organization of the Flint Alliance has brought crystallization of anti-strike sentiment into one

¹⁰⁶ "Suggests Sit-Down in Strikers Homes." *The Flint Journal*, January 9, 1937, 1

coordinated unit and developments today indicated the true sentiment of Flint men and women with regard to present critical situation that finds 28,275 workers idle today.”¹⁰⁷

The second article can be found on page twelve, and its titled, “Labor Federations Take Actions in regard to Strike Situations.” It is interesting to note because it is different from the connotation of the other articles, which are either pro-company, anti-strike, or anti-union. The Labor Federation indorses the strike, and in a striking quote, rebuts the conditions General Motors puts their employees through. The Federation states that the company has, “unbearable conditions in the automobile factories such as speed-up, low wages, discrimination, etc.”¹⁰⁸ The article continues to say the Federation condemns the Flint Alliance, the I.M.A. News, and its efforts to break the strike, and Judge Black.

Finally, the article also gives the reasons the Federation is also condemning the Flint Police. This might be the first wholly constructive article in opposition to all the positive things said about the company, the Flint Alliance, Judge Black, and the actions of the Flint Police in *The Flint Journal* thus far. Consequently, it has both a positive connotation towards the strike and the UAW, as well as a negative connotation towards all the subjects listed previously. That is until one reads the second half, which can seem like a completely separate article all to itself, however, even though they are separated by a line, it is still under the same headline. This is where the trade unions are stating their opposition to the UAW being the sole bargaining organization for General Motors employees. Josh Possehl, the General President of the International Union of Operating Engineers, as well as D.W. Tracy, the president to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, were both quoted as being opposed to the UAW’s efforts.

¹⁰⁷ “Huge Petition Aids Alliance Protest Move.” *The Flint Journal*, January 9, 1937, 1

¹⁰⁸ “Labor Federations Take Actions in regard to Strike Situations.” *The Flint Journal*, January 9, 1937, 12

Chapter 6: Week Three- The National Guards Arrive

For week three, I scanned one hundred and forty-four articles, pictures, and advertisements. Sunday, January 10, at the start of the third week, the front-page news article was called, “Stay-in Issue Blocks Peace Parley; Many Cities Join Anti-Strike Move.” This of course already shows a negative connotation towards the strike. Underneath the heading was, “G.M. Workers Go on Record in Petitions.” The idea that the strike agitation has “forced” ninety-five thousand, seven hundred and sixty-five workers into idleness at the twenty-seven General Motors plants also shows the article has negative connotation towards the strike. For example, the article states, “Spurred into action by the threat of a national economic catastrophe resulting from the industrial paralysis that is slowly spreading to all parts of the country, workers are uniting to seek security for their jobs, their homes, and their communities.”¹⁰⁹ The last phrase has been used a few times by the paper. It denotes an angry group of people who are dissatisfied with the strike causing them to be laid off. The group just wants to work without the hassle of the agitators, or organizers of the union, depending on which side of the fence you sit on, interfering with their ability to do so.

It also gives the address of the Flint Alliance and gives it credit for being the base of the anti-strike sentiment, stating that the objective of the organization is to find people who are interested in, “seeking industrial peace and security of employment.”¹¹⁰ Stating that George E. Boyson was drafted by a movement of factory leaders to be the head of the organization, it is said to already have thousands enrolled in the organization. Quoting Boyson, he says, “this is not another labor union...This is merely the banding together of [the] people of Flint as an expression against industrial strife.”¹¹¹ The article also talks about the General Motors Loyalty committee,

¹⁰⁹ “Stay-in Issue Blocks Peace Parley; Many Cities Join Anti-Strike Move.” *The Flint Journal* January 10, 1937, 1

¹¹⁰ “Stay-in Issue Blocks Peace Parley; Many Cities Join Anti-Strike Move.” 1

¹¹¹ “Stay-in Issue Blocks Peace Parley; Many Cities Join Anti-Strike Move,” 1

formed in Saginaw, Michigan. In Cleveland, there is a non-strikers committee, headed by a Mr. Peter G. Schick, which has approximately half of its employees at its Fisher Body Plant signed on in support. Furthermore, the article talks about similar anti-strike efforts in Terrytown, New York and Detroit, Michigan.

On page one of January 10, there were three other articles. The first one, "Here is the Statement Issued By General Motors Executive," gives full reign to the General Motors executive, William S. Knudson. In the article, he reiterates, General Motors could not accept demands laid forth by the union because it would mean it agrees with the illegal actions of the group. General Motors has since responded to the Governor in hopes of making progress towards the strike situation. He agrees that the company will meet with UAW representatives on general policy. Knudson states it is the union's fault for stalling the negotiations. Believing that if they would just leave General Motors property, both parties could bargain in good faith and without prejudice. The inflexibility of the UAW is why so many of "its" [GM] employees are out of work at the moment. "We propose to do everything consistent with law and good will towards all our men or their representatives but cannot condone illegal occupation of our plants."¹¹²

In contrast to the previous story, mentioned there is a statement and picture of Homer Martin. In the article, "Here is the Statement Issues By United Auto Workers Chief," Martin writes to Governor Murphy. In his letter, Martin expresses his gratitude towards the governor's efforts. It is the company's refusal to bargain which is the cause for the thousands of people being out of work. "We are willing to place our case fully and frankly before the bar of public opinion, in the belief that a general knowledge that all the facts in the case will most effectively hasten a settlement satisfactory to all concerned."¹¹³ The UAW is willing to negotiate with the company at any time.

¹¹²"Here is the Statement Issued By General Motors Executive." *The Flint Journal* January 10, 1937,1

¹¹³"Here is the Statement Issues By United Auto Workers Chief," 1

“We have at no time presented to the General Motors corporation any ultimatum nor any demand that we are not ready to discuss and negotiate upon, we are still ready to accept any reasonable basis for opening negotiations.”¹¹⁴ This back and forth is also depicted in *Midnight in Vehicle City: General Motors, Flint, and The Strike that Created the Middle Class* book, chapter seven, “General Motors Has Double-Crossed Us!”

On page five, “Bitter Labor Battle Looms as A.F.L. Orders Craft Unions back to Work,” describes it as a civil war between organized labor unions. John P. Frey, president of the American Federation of Labor’s metal trades division, made an order public to go back to work. Now Frey was not willing to use force to break picket lines, however, he did want those in his union to be able to work. “The action was regarded here as bolstering the cause of General Motors in its fight against John L. Lewis Committee for Industrial Organization which is sponsoring the strike.”¹¹⁵ Frey’s disposition is that his members were not given a choice or asked about the strike, and it has since then forced his members out of work. He believes his members should be allowed to work in whatever capacity they can while the strike is ongoing. In the same regard, a message from General Motors was released, by H.W. Anderson, of the company’s labor relations department. The company’s position is it has no intention of reaching any agreement which gives exclusive rights to bargain to any organization. The article also refers to the strike is to as a runaway strike.

¹¹⁴“Here is the Statement Issues By United Auto Workers Chief.” *The Flint Journal*, January 10, 1937,1

¹¹⁵ “Bitter Labor Battle Looms as A.F.L. Orders Craft Unions back to Work.” *The Flint Journal* January 10, 1937, 5

On the same page there is a nice picture, seen below, which has anti-strike connotation because it is about the Flint Alliance.



To briefly touch on one more article, “Costs of Current Trouble Keep Pace with Suffering,” describes Flint as a busy and prosperous industrial community until there was a few weeks of strike by some workers within the main source of jobs in the city. The city is described as being, “Stricken with the blight of professional strike agitation imported from outside the city’s gates.”¹¹⁶ The article goes onto to say, “The efforts of this small group, however, have forced more than 28,000 Flint men and women into idleness through no fault of their own.”¹¹⁷ Finally, it claims, “They have sowed seeds of descension and hate until neighbors and friends of long standing have become

¹¹⁶ “Costs of Current Trouble Keep Pace with Suffering.” *The Flint Journal* January 10, 1937, 11

¹¹⁷ “Costs of Current Trouble Keep Pace with Suffering,” 11

enemies...They have caused fights on the streets of Flint. They have openly defied local law enforcement officers to the extent of staging a demonstration of two hours in front of police headquarters.”¹¹⁸ Considering these quotes, one can easily see how the article is pro-company and anti-strike or union. The bottom line is the strike is affecting other businesses in Flint and negatively impacting its residents.

The next day, January 11, I scanned twenty-one total articles, four of which were on the front page. Page seven and thirteen, constituted the bulk of the rest of the articles scanned for that day; page seven has five scans, and page thirteen has six scans. Both page one articles were anti-strike and anti-UAW. The first one, “City’s Leaders Back Flint Alliance and Launch Campaign Against Strikes,” gives much of the context and tells the readers that non-General Motors employees are also unhappy with the situation. The article asserts, “a meeting of 200 of the city’s business and professional leaders took place, they took a vote which had unanimous endorsement for the Flint Alliance. The Flint Alliance’s purpose and objectives are given support, and the group wants to start a campaign to inform both the governor and the president of, “the overwhelming sentiment of Flint against the strike.”¹¹⁹ It also says, “Store managers, pastors, attorneys, doctors, and workers took part in the meeting, leaving their work at their busiest hour of the day to consider the grave situation confronting Flint.”¹²⁰ The rest of the article quotes attendees all of which either show positive support for the Flint Alliance, or a negative feeling towards the strike.

¹¹⁸ “Costs of Current Trouble Keep Pace with Suffering,” 11

¹¹⁹ “City’s Leaders Back Flint Alliance and Launch Campaign Against Strikes.” *The Flint Journal* January 11, 1937, 1

¹²⁰ “City’s Leaders Back Flint Alliance and Launch Campaign Against Strikes,” 1

Also, on page one, was this small article, pictured below, which is another example of the Flint Alliance coverage, and how the organization was anti-strike.

**Chairman Outlines
Complete Purposes
Of Flint Alliance**

The complete purpose of The Flint Alliance was outlined today by George E. Boysen, chairman of the organization, in the following statement:

"The purpose of The Flint Alliance is to give the great majority of workers in Flint plants and other citizens a medium through which to express their sentiments on the present labor difficulties.

"The Flint Alliance is convinced that differences of opinion between employer and employe can be solved in a legal and orderly manner.

"The Flint Alliance objects strongly to the methods which have been used in this community and which have resulted in unemployment for thousands of men and women who want to work and have so expressed themselves by petition and otherwise.

"The Flint Alliance proposes to convey the sentiments of its thousands of supporters to the President of the United States, the governor of the state of Michigan and other constituted authorities so they may know the majority opinion in this city.

"The Flint Alliance solicits the active co-operation and support of every reasonable man and woman so that peace and orderly procedure may be reestablished in this community."

Most of the time, anything published that was anti-company and/or pro-union and strike, was published because it was directly quoting a labor leader from the strike. A good example of this comes from the article, "Martin Tells Striking Workers Union Won't Be Turned From Its Course." The story is covering a meeting for the UAW where various speeches were made by union leadership and labor organizers, as well as positive affirmations about the strike and strikers. The article covers ceremonies that were held at Fisher plants, which included having children hold banners in support of their striking fathers. Criticism of the Flint Alliance was also covered. The demand for collective bargaining was covered as well. "Martin said workers want collective

bargaining because the automobile industry ‘does not pay them a wage commensurate with their services.’”¹²¹ The article has subheadings which also organize the points of the story. One such subheading, “Seeks industrial Freedom,” is used to setup Martin’s criticisms of General Motors. There is also a subheading which is used to attack a statement made by Sloan. Another example of an article that is more pro-union because it takes the view of a labor leader is, “Lewis Declares Fight to Finish: Unionization Drive Pushed on Two Major Fronts.” The article talks about the C.I.O.’s plans and wanting to finish the strike against General Motors. As the bulk of the story is devoted to John L. Lewis, the head of the C.I.O., it does not go without taking some negative shots at unions and their attempts to organize: “The Bookings institution issued a public warning that the dispute between the federation and the C.I.O. as well as vigorous unionization drives constituted a serious menace to the nation’s prosperity.”¹²²

On day fourteen of the strike, the headlines heat up because it was the day after what has been labeled as the “Battle of Running Bulls.” This was the first time in the strike things got violent between the strikers and the police. The front-page headline was, “Militia Starts for Flint After Rioting Injures 28.” Under the headline was the subheading, “Strikers Battle Flint Policemen at Fisher No. 2.” The article begins by asserting, “The governor’s action in mobilizing troops followed a wild night of rioting and bloodshed during which at least 28 persons were injured in fighting between strikers and police and sheriff officers.”¹²³ It goes onto say, “Far outnumbered by the rioters, whose ranks were reinforced by strikers from outside Flint, four of whom were wounded during the melee, police and sheriff’s deputies fought against overwhelming odds in their efforts to obtain command of the situation brought about when the strikers took position of the

¹²¹ “Martin Tells Striking Workers Union Won’t Be Turned From Its Course.” *The Flint Journal* January 11, 1937, 7

¹²² “Lewis Declares Fight to Finish: Unionization Drive Pushed on Two Major Fronts.” *The Flint Journal* January 11, 1937, 7

¹²³ “Militia Starts for Flint After Rioting Injures 28.” *The Flint Journal* January 12, 1937, 1

Fisher No. 2 plant after overpowering plant police shortly before 7:45 p.m. Monday.”¹²⁴ The battle “raged throughout the night” and was led by three out-of-town organizers. “Everything within reach became a weapon in the hands of the rioters and bottles, clubs, stones, bricks, pieces of cement and thousands of pieces of equipment such as door hinges, handles and wrenches were hurled at police by strikers... Three police cruisers and one car operated by Sheriff Wolcott’s department were battered into ruin. The sheriff’s car had been turned over by one group of the rioters after everything within reach was smashed.”¹²⁵ Overall, there was nothing positive to say about the strike or the union is that article. As the quotes show, it makes it seem as though the violence came completely from the strikers, which of course gives both the strike and strikers a negative overtone. On the next page, there was this picture:



The title of the picture was, “Rioter in Action,” and it stated that “rioters held police and deputies at bay after taking possession of Fisher Body No. 2 plant on Chevrolet Avenue during Monday night’s battle.”¹²⁶

¹²⁴ “Militia Starts for Flint After Rioting Injures 28.” *The Flint Journal* January 12, 1937, 1

¹²⁵ “Militia Starts for Flint After Rioting Injures 28, 1

¹²⁶ “Rioter in Action.” *The Flint Journal*, January 12, 1937, 2

Page two also had the article, “Murphy Here to See Crisis: He Issues Statement Before Returning to Lansing Early Today.” In it the governor is quoted in saying, “A serious riot has occurred. Local police are evidently inadequate to handle the situation and preserve order.”¹²⁷ Rather than forcefully make the strikers leave, the governor is hoping for an amicable settlement between the two parties. General Motors officials were said to have been appalled by the situation. There was also a request for help by the mayor’s office and Sheriff Wolcott. A quote by Robert C. Travis, an organizer for the UAW said, “Full responsibility for the police attack on Fisher plant No. 2 on Monday night, the wounding of these workers, and the deaths that may result rest squarely on the shoulders of the General Motors corporation and its agents, the police of Flint... Company police provoked the trouble by prohibiting passage of food to the sit-down strikers. Early in the strike, after we had been passing food through the windows, management requested us to put it through the doors so that police could inspect it and prevent entrance of liquor. That was agreeable to us.”¹²⁸ This goes back to my point that most of the anti-company quotes only come from labor organizers, not from community members or Flint residents. Showing this point again, Robert C. Travis asserts, “Irrefutable evidence that the attack was deliberately planned is found in the fact that city police already armed with guns and tear gas makes already on, were on the scene long before any trouble started...they were holding themselves in readiness for the moment when company guards would provoke trouble as they had been instructed to do.” The paper itself in this article does not place blame on the company, but it does seem to find fault in the strikers.

One other important type of article to note is when *The Flint Journal* prints letters to the editor. On January 12, page thirteen most of the page was filled an editorial of this type of article.

¹²⁷ “Murphy Here to See Crisis: He Issues Statement Before Returning to Lansing Early Today.” *The Flint Journal*, January 12, 1937, 2

¹²⁸ “Murphy Here to See Crisis: He Issues Statement Before Returning to Lansing Early Today,” 2

The article headliner was, “Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers’ Letters to the Editor.” On this date, there was no good thing mentioned about either the strike or the UAW. Every letter was completely on the side of GM, and most either condemned the strikers, or the strike in multiple ways more than once during the letter. The first one entitled, “Sees Workers Betrayed,” claims that “80 percent of the workers in Flint are opposed to the Strike...”¹²⁹ The writer claims:

The thousands of families who have just emerged from a depression, which has left horrible imprints upon their minds, who were just beginning to look forward to paying their debts, and now they are just being thrown back into the abyss by this power seeking dictator [John Lewis] whose only object is to promote itself regardless of how many mouths are going hungry, or how many may lose their homes and be thrown out into the cold...¹³⁰

Another writer speaks on the conditions of GM before the strike as a great place to work, thereby making any claim of the UAW that conditions needed to improve, and that it could only be done by collective bargaining null and void. In his letter, he talked about working for the company for three years and getting transferred from a department he did not like to a better one upon his request to a foreman. He also said, “After four months on the job, I went to the foreman and requested a raise. This was on a Tuesday. On Wednesday my raise was granted, and it began on the proceeding Monday...”¹³¹

Much of the twenty-eight articles on January 13 were dedicated to the National Guardsmen arriving in Flint to help keep order. Both headlines invoke strong feelings as they denote the military’s presence in Flint. In the article, “1,200 National Guardsmen Arrive Here,” Governor Murphy believes it is now up to the state to mediate the situation and is quoted in saying it was an “unfortunate situation” in Flint.¹³² It also has a statement by General Motors which says the

¹²⁹ “Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers’ Letters to the Editor.” *The Flint Journal* January 12, 1937, 13

¹³⁰ “Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers’ Letters to the Editor,” 13; *See Workers Betrayed*.

¹³¹ “Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers’ Letters to the Editor.”; 13 *See Chevrolet Man’s Reactions*.

¹³² “1,200 National Guardsmen Arrive Here.” *The Flint Journal* January 13, 1937, 1

situation the night before was deplorable. According to William S. Knudsen, the trouble was caused by, “an outside organizer with a sound truck incited pickets outside and induced them to storm the gate and imprison the plant police. The city police were called but were too far outnumbered to be effective.”¹³³ This quote directly applies to one of the themes of the organizers as being outsiders. The other headline story on page one was, “1,200 Troops Arrive To Serve as Military Aides to City Police.” Again, the company’s defense is given a spotlight. The article states, “The guardsmen are here solely to prevent trouble, the governor emphasized this afternoon. They will not patrol the strike area where squatters have been in illegal possession of General Motors plants since Dec. 30.”¹³⁴ The term illegal possession and squatters is used to criticize the strikers and gives a negative overtone to their cause.

On page two, “Clio Civic Group Registers Protest: Seeks Aid of President to terminate Strike” is another story used to criticize the strikers and give a negative overtone to their cause. In it the author asserts, thirty-five business and professional men of Clio voiced protest to the strike in Flint: “The resolutions urged these federal and state leaders to exert their influence for an immediate orderly, peaceful, and legal settlement of the conditions existing in Flint, MI.... Our communities and our interests are closely allied with those of Flint, and it is our sincere belief from the canvas of the opinion of our customers and associates that the majority are not in sympathy with present suspension of operations and wish only an opportunity to return to work and provide for their families, the resolution stated. We further object, the resolutions read to violence and methods used by small minority which resulted and will continue to result in untold hardships and

¹³³ “1,200 National Guardsmen Arrive Here,” 1

¹³⁴. “1,200 Troops Arrive To Serve as Military Aides to City Police,” 1

losses to innocent persons.”¹³⁵ This quote illustrates the notion that those out of work due to the strike are being wronged as they are innocent bystanders of the strikers, who are a violent minority.

On January 13, there was a full sheet of pictures printed on page twenty-two. Most of these pictures were on the National Guardsmen’s deployment in Flint. Pages one, three, twelve, and seventeen also had pictures relating to the National Guard coming to Flint. As it turns out, the National Guard would remain in Flint until a peace treaty, or rather an agreement between the two parties, was reached, and the strike was over. On page seventeen, there were two other articles of note. The first, “Knudsen Statement on Riot,” was another incident of General Motors getting good press while the strikers received negative coverage. The article said, “The riot in Flint on Monday night is very much to be deplored...The strikers were not prevented from handling their food themselves. The trouble started when an outside organizer with a sound truck incited pickets outside and induced them to storm the gates and imprison the plant police.”¹³⁶ The second article, “Sentiment in Favor of Returning To Work Growing, Alliance Says,” was another piece on the Flint Alliance and George E. Boysen. This of course is a reliable example of the negative connotation given to the strikers and the UAW.

On the sixteenth day of the strike, the Flint Sit-Down Strike took over ninety percent of the front page. With four different stories, and a picture relating to the strike, there was only three small blurbs which competed for the attention of the reader. Pictured below is the headline for January 14.

¹³⁵ “Clio Civic Group Registers Protest: Seeks Aid of President to terminate Strike.” *The Flint Journal* January 13, 1937, 2

¹³⁶ “Knudsen Statement on Riot.” *The Flint Journal* January 13, 1937, 17



With more Guardsmen coming to Flint and people petitioning to return to work, the reader has a damaging undertone to the strike in bold letters. The article on the new arrival of Guardsmen gives a lot of details on the ins and outs of their arrival. The headlines shown above are actually all part of one article, which in cases like this can sometimes make it hard for researchers to distinguish that they are not all separate news articles. The title, “Governor’s Strike Conference Opens” has the top headline, accordingly that is what I will keep as the title. Therefore, I considered, “More Than 2,000 Guardsmen Due Here Tonight” and “Thousands Petition Return to Work,” to be subheadings. The article asserts, “Reflecting the sentiment of the people of Flint and other cities where strike conditions have thrown thousands of workers into idleness, the wave of protests voiced by workers opposed to minority domination reached a climax today.”¹³⁷ It also claims, “various cities all on board and wanting a resolution to the strike that has more than 200,000 idle.”

On January 14, there was another chance for people to express their opinions to the editor through their letters. Again, most of the letters were either positive toward GM or negative towards the strike or the UAW. One letter was interesting to note as it provides further proof that *The Flint Journal* was corporate owned media and not sympathetic or not even fair toward the strike or the UAW worker. The letter reads:

¹³⁷ “Governor’s Strike Conference Opens.” *The Flint Journal* January 14, 1937, 1

Inasmuch as your newspaper is dependent upon the advertising from the business establishments, which in turn, dependent upon the factory worker, we think you are being unfair and unwise to adopt the anti-strike policy in the present crisis. Because the automobile workers are asking for collective bargaining (which means, also, job security), the 6-hour workday (putting more men back to work and more money into circulation). You very plainly take sides with Mr. Sloan and General Motors. The only plausible reason we can think of as an excuse is that perhaps General Motors owns the controlling interest in 'our' local paper.¹³⁸

Other letters in that same article are more predominately anti-strike and union. One letter compares John Lewis to Hitler.¹³⁹ A second letter claims that because the United States is a democratic nation, the strikers are being radicals in disturbing industry and therefore, are being unreasonable in performing the sit-down strike. A different letter, "The Third Party's View," asserts, "Unless these strikes are stopped, they will put us back into the depression."¹⁴⁰ The writer considers themselves to be the voice of the people and believes John L. Lewis has overlooked the welfare of the public. The author also thinks that Lewis is seemingly the one which has a personal issue with the company. "We have not been asked or consulted as to our wishes or willingness to be sacrificed for the personal ambitions of a few leaders."¹⁴¹

Still, under the letters to the editor portion, there was an interesting op-ed with the subheading, "Workingman's Opinion." In it the author declares, "As a democratic nation we have no right to disrupt the industrial and commercial status of anyone who is not directly involved."¹⁴² He also considers the leaders of the strike as dictators. The author said, "Any true American would tell Homer Martin and his organized band of the political racketeers that they are in the United States and not Germany, Russia, or Italy, and he is trying to dictate the American people who have

¹³⁸ "Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers' Letters to the Editor: Think Policy Otherwise," *The Flint Journal* January 14, 1937, 3

¹³⁹ "Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers' Letters to the Editor: The Third Party's View," 3

¹⁴⁰ "Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers' Letters to the Editor: A Wife's Opinion," 3

¹⁴¹ "Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers' Letters to the Editor: The Third Party's View," 3

¹⁴² "Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers' Letters to the Editor: Workingman's Opinion," 3

no room for such political leaders...”¹⁴³ It goes onto say, “Just because there are a few narrow-minded brain trusts at the head of some of our organizations, strikes, riots, and destruction of life and property are occurring throughout the United States...The men who actually do the work do not want to strike.”¹⁴⁴ The article goes past the three hundred-word limit after the third paragraph, and it went on for another three more.

On January 15, the front-page story seemingly had good news for the strike and the residents of Flint. The headline was, “Truce to End General Motors Stay-In; Leaders of Strike Face Arrest Today.” Regarding arresting the strike leaders, that is clearly a negative connotation towards the UAW. The article declares, “Seventeen days of Industrial warfare, marked by rioting and bloodshed in Flint, were halted by a truce today which paved the way for negotiations looking forward towards a peaceful settlement of the strikes and shutdowns in General Motors plants which have forced more than 150,000 workers into idleness.”¹⁴⁵ This quote is another essential example of how the strike was covered. It has two main themes of violence by the strikers, and innocent people being thrown out of work by the minority. In regards to the truce between the company and the UAW, the truce involved: Union workers leave the plant, General Motors will not move any machinery, equipment or materials, General Motors will not discriminate against union members, and guardsmen will leave Flint once the Governor is satisfied.¹⁴⁶ In another article, the strikers were referred to as “squatters” once again.¹⁴⁷ Concerning those leaders whom were facing jail time for their actions during the strike, the page one article also addressed their fate in, “Seven Agitators Expected to Surrender at County Jail Later Today.” The article declares:

¹⁴³ “Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers’ Letters to the Editor: Workingman’s Opinion,” *The Flint Journal*, January 14, 1937, 3

¹⁴⁴ “Strike Situation in Flint is Discussed in Journal Readers’ Letters to the Editor: Workingman’s Opinion,” 3

¹⁴⁵ “Truce to end General Motors Stay-In; Leaders of Strike Face Arrest Today.” *The Flint Journal*, January 15, 1937, 1

¹⁴⁶ “Truce to end General Motors Stay-In; Leaders of Strike Face Arrest Today.” 1

¹⁴⁷. “How Strike Truce Affects Employees of General Motors.” *The Flint Journal*, January 15, 1937, 1

Arrangement of 17 men, including seven agitators, accused of malicious destruction of property in the rioting Monday at the Fisher Body No. 2 plant, is expected this afternoon at the county jail... The agitators said to have taken turns at the loudspeaker in car from which the rioters were incited against police... 'Being unlawfully assembled, did demolish, pull down, destroy, and injure the building known as the Fisher Body company, plant No. 2, in the city of Flint, Michigan.'¹⁴⁸

This quote of course points to the leaders of the strike as lawbreakers.

January 15 stands out for other reasons, in terms of news covering the Flint Sit-Down strike. It had a total of twenty-four scans for the day, which was on the high-end for scans but not the biggest day of the week for scans. It did, however, have a lot of good substantive articles as well as an extra page one and two, published later in the day. In one article, it was reported, "One Chevrolet worker learned that it is even dangerous for a non-union man to attempt to get his paycheck in strike-torn Flint, he reported to police today."¹⁴⁹ The man's name was not given for fear of retaliation. On page nineteen, the article, "4,000 Flint Workers Assail Outside Agitators at I.M.A. Mass Meeting," was almost the entire page of negative points towards the UAW and strikers. It condemns the UAW and strikers as being outside agitators. It claims that what the strikers are doing is un-American, and that the strikers need to avoid any further violence. The article also says, "'This is not a fight between General Motors and labor... This is a fight between Lewis and Green. Green kicked Lewis out of the A. F. of L. To get back at Green, he is using the employes of Buick and General Motors corporation as catspaws to pull his chestnuts out of the fire. No question of that.'¹⁵⁰

Page twenty had five articles and one picture taking up the majority of the page with Flint Sit-Down news. In one of the articles scanned, it claimed, "Joining with workers in Buick,

¹⁴⁸ "Seven Agitators Expected to Surrender at County Jail Later Today." *The Flint Journal*, January 15, 1937, 1

¹⁴⁹ "Chevrolet worker Reports Attempts of Intimidation." *The Flint Journal*, January 15, 1937, 9

¹⁵⁰ "4,000 Flint Workers Assail Outside Agitators at I.M.A. Mass Meeting." *The Flint Journal*, January 15, 1937, 19

Chevrolet and AC Spark Plug plants who have registered their emphatic protest against strike conditions in Flint caused by outside agitation, employees of the two Fisher Body plants here took action today to enroll all anti-strike workers into one organization.”¹⁵¹ It went onto claim, eighty-one hundred letters were mailed to employees, which they can mail to the government in order to show their support for the anti-strike movement. It also stated that workers are volunteering to show their sentiment and hatred towards their forced idleness. More anti-strike sentiment is covered by the two stories, “Strike Position by Rector,” and “Strike Protests Lodged By Solon,” both found on page twenty. In, “Strike Protests Lodged By Solon,” the writer claims, “Strong protest against continuance of sit-down strikes were lodged with the department of labor and the national labor relations board Wednesday by Rep. Fred L. Crawford, Saginaw Republican... The Saginaw congressman made copies of these three protests and delivered from personally to both the labor department and the national labor relations board.”

On page twenty-five, the article, “Lawrence Asserts Sitdown Strikes in Labor Warfare Have developed into Extortion,” emphasizes that, “many lawyers here [in Flint] are pointing out, for instance, that when a group of individuals forcibly seize a portion of a manufacturing plant and refuse to give it up unless something in the way of financial gain is given to them as a condition to their giving up property, it is really a form of extortion.”¹⁵² It continues to say, “That’s what the ‘sit-down strike’ has developed into in modern labor warfare. Carried to its logical conclusion, it means if sustained by public opinion or by the courts the following things...”¹⁵³ He lists five examples of ridiculous scenarios in which people just take what is not theirs, unless given a price they demand.

¹⁵¹ “Employees of Fisher Body Join Protest Move Against Strike.” *The Flint Journal*, January 15, 1937, 20

¹⁵² “Lawrence Asserts Sitdown Strikes in Labor Warfare Have developed into Extortion.” *The Flint Journal*, January 15, 1937, 25

¹⁵³ “Lawrence Asserts Sitdown Strikes in Labor Warfare Have developed into Extortion,” 25

Almost any form of industrial sabotage is possible if the ‘sitdown strike’ is to be regarded hereafter as a legal strike. Example, should exhortation in labor negotiations be sustained, then the protection of property rights as well as management will doubtless undergo profound transformation... On the outcome of Michigan’s experience with the ‘sitdown’ strike will depend the nature and extent of the labor conflict in the United States in the year 1937, which confidently believed would be a year of real recovery, but which may turn out to be a year of frustrated hopes and faltered business, as well as a year in which, unless checked by public authority, communistic theory of revolution by physical force may derive from the ranks of workers its greatest support thus far in America.¹⁵⁴

I pulled out this quote and condensed the five examples because I thought the heart of the matter was that the sit-down strike would lead to communism in America, and the downfall of all private property.

Saturday, January 16 was the final day of news for week three. On that day, the number of scans was much lower at a total of thirteen. The article, “Arraign 4 Leaders in Riot,” with the subheading, “Governor’s Intercession Brings Dismissal of Men Held Since Monday Night” was one of three articles on the front page. The company is quoted in saying, “General Motors Not Recognizing U.A.W.A. as Exclusive Workers Bargain Agency, [but on the opposing side] John L. Lewis insists that the company must recognize the U.A.W.A as labor’s ‘exclusive bargaining agency.’”¹⁵⁵ It also mentions the fact that the U.A.W.A. was suspended by the A.F. of L. because of their affiliation with the C.I.O. which of course, is an anti-union point. The A.F. of L. was in favor of organizing by crafts, but General Motors and Knudsen did not want to recognize any single entity as the sole bargaining unit. The article also says the archbishop made a plea to, “labor that it demand its leaders to ‘sink their differences in order to retain industrial peace.’”¹⁵⁶ Meaning, he thought that the workers should demand their leaders end the strike. The article also referred to

¹⁵⁴ “Lawrence Asserts Sitdown Strikes in Labor Warfare Have developed into Extortion,” 25

¹⁵⁵ “Arraign 4 Leaders in Riot.” *The Flint Journal*, January 16, 1937, 1

¹⁵⁶ “Arraign 4 Leaders in Riot,” 1

the sit-down strikers as squatters, and Knudsen is quoted once more, stating that they can get operations going in no time, once the strike is over with.

The other page one article of note, was “Reuther Brothers, Travis and Krause Hearing Thursday.” The governor asked not to prosecute anyone because he believed it would maintain the progress accomplished thus far in the negotiations between the two parties. The details on who was given leniency and the reason why they were was also detailed in the article. Still negative as it all leads to the outbreak between the police and the strikers as only being the fault of the strikers. One quick thing to note, “With charges being pressed in the labor situation only against the seven said to have incited the mob that battled police Monday night, four of the seven surrendered today were arraigned.” I choose this quote because it has the term mob in it. Again, the term mob gives a negative connotation; I cannot think of a time when a mob was depicted in a positive light.

Chapter 7: Week Four- The Struggle Continues

For the first day of the new week, the main headline was, “Bargaining Parlay For Flint Non-Union Workers is Asked of General Motors.” Underneath it was the subheading, “Boysen Seeks Meet Tuesday With Knudsen.” The article reveals that a telegram from Boysen was sent to Knudsen in order set a meeting regarding collective bargaining for General Motors employees. The whole telegram was provided to the reader. According to Boysen, it is the intention of Knudsen to get his employees back to work as soon as possible. However, the article also talks about how Knudsen will be meeting with UAW leaders as well. Homer Martin is also quoted in saying, “the union has at no time receded from its stand on this all-important point, which recognition of the union as the sole collective bargaining agency for General Motors employees.”¹⁵⁷ This of course becomes a sticking point between the two parties: the fact that Knudsen is given credit for wanting his people to return to work as soon as possible, but Martin is not seen in the same fashion is telling.

On page six, “New York editors Pay Tribute to Gov. Murphy for efforts in Bringing Strike Truce,” has some more connotation worth discussing. The article says, “U.A.W.A. is to withdraw its sit-down strikers from the five plants they have victimized.”¹⁵⁸ Victimized is a powerful word, one which clearly shows how the writer feels about the strike. “Lessons of the Flint riot has not been lost on Mr. Homer Martin and his organizers. They realize that their strikers were dealing there with no mere effort at coercion on the part of capital, but with community uprising in which the local police reflected the resentment of an overwhelming fraction of fellow workers, not to mention general populace.” This quote speaks volumes, as it shows that the belief that it was the

¹⁵⁷ “Bargaining Parlay For Flint Non-Union Workers is Asked of General Motors.” *The Flint Journal*, January 17, 1937, 1

¹⁵⁸ “New York editors Pay Tribute to Gov. Murphy for efforts in Bringing Strike Truce.” *The Flint Journal*, January 17, 1937, 6

minority of works, working against many people, both inside and outside of the workforce. To reiterate, the sit-down was conducted by minority of workers. ““On the other hand, the General Motors executives have shown their wisdom in seeking to avoid the violent ejection of the sitdown strikers’... The pressure of many thousands of non-union employes anxious to get back on the job and of the communities damaged by their idleness will be exerted in their favor during the forthcoming negotiations.”¹⁵⁹ The pitfalls of the failures by Lewis was also discussed.

Most of the scans I found on this day were not as eye-catching as other days with bold, straight forward headlines. However, a quick note on the page seventeen article, “Auto Output Reveals G.M. workers Bearing Brunt of strikes in Auto Industry.” It states that, one hundred and twelve thousand men were thrown out of work in strike-ridden plants. It also says, “The so-called John L. Lewis ‘strangle hold’ on the automobile industry is not as serious as it might appear locally... If Lewis is prolonging the partial tie-up of the industry by playing these competitors against General Motors, he is getting further and further away from a showdown and merely prolonging the agony for the workers in the plants he has been able to close.”¹⁶⁰ The quote shows the attack on the character of Lewis, as well as how according to the author he (and by proxy the UAW) is responsible for the suffering of those one hundred and twelve thousand men who were forcibly not working because of the strike.

On Monday, January 18, the sit-downers remained in the plants. Of course, this was cause for General Motors to accuse the union of not honoring their previous agreement. In modern vernacular, General Motors was accusing the union of bargaining in bad faith. *The Flint Journal* quotes the UAW, and its stance that the company did not keep its word. This is because of the

¹⁵⁹ “New York editors Pay Tribute to Gov. Murphy for efforts in Bringing Strike Truce.” *The Flint Journal*, January 17, 1937, 6

¹⁶⁰ “Auto Output Reveals G.M. workers Bearing Brunt of strikes in Auto Industry.” *The Flint Journal*, January 17, 1937, 17

telegram discussed earlier, which was published on the previous day. The major contention was still the UAW's demand to be the sole bargaining unit for the employees employed at General Motors. The main contention is that the UAW does not believe General Motors in their word, if they are going to meet with the Flint Alliance. On page one, "Strike Conference Breaks Up; Series of Daily Negotiations is Called Off," summarizes this very contention between the two parties. It starts out with the subheading, "Union Refusal to Quit Plants Causes Company to Terminate Meetings." The two parties were not agreeing on a common set of facts, as they were both blaming each other in public for the breakdown of the negotiations. Just below the subheading, in smaller print but still in bold, the article states, "Knudsen Statement Answers Charges Made by U.A.W.A. Asserting Peace Terms Were Violated." Knudsen calls the strikes far-flung. The article asserts, "Thus the strike tie-up paralyzed assembly lines in each of the corporation's automotive divisions and has thrown more than 200,000 wage-earners out of work, remained in as tight dead-lock as it was before Gov. Murphy brought both sides together last week."¹⁶¹ The article also, mentions the twenty-three hundred guardsmen stationed in Flint to maintain peace. It does say that the union replied to the charges, and the organizations belief of ill-will by the company, or rather, an unwillingness to adhere to the parlay: "Martin charged that it was a 'breach of faith' on the part of the corporation to notify the Flint Alliance that it would negotiate with it also until this point has been settled. He said that the union 'has proceeded in good faith to carry out the agreement' and called the Flint Alliance a 'company-inspired vigilante outfit.'"¹⁶² The union asked the LaFollette senate commission for an investigation into the General Motor's labor practices, and it also says The Flint Alliance is "'not a workers organization.'"¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ "Strike Conference Breaks Up; Series of Daily Negotiations is Called Off." *The Flint Journal* January 18, 1937, 1

¹⁶² "Strike Conference Breaks Up; Series of Daily Negotiations is Called Off," 1

¹⁶³ "Strike Conference Breaks Up; Series of Daily Negotiations is Called Off," 1

An anomaly to my research presented thus far can be found on January 18, on page thirteen of *The Flint Journal*. On this page, there is one of the only examples of the UAW getting a full article itself without any type of negative connotation or spin on the facts by the journal. This is because *The Flint Journal* printed a statement by Homer Martin, the president of the UAW at that time. In the article, “Full Text of Homer Martin’s Statement,” Mr. Martin claims that the UAW, in good faith, started to evaluate the buildings it was in the possession of, but on word that General Motors was going to back out of the tentative agreement that had been reached thus far, stopped all evacuations and went on with the strike as previously conducted. It also states how, against the tentative agreement with GM that had been reached thus far, it stopped all evacuations and went on with the strike as previously conducted. Likewise, the article goes onto to say how, against the tentative agreement, GM started talking with a faction group attempting to undermine the discussion between GM and the union. This faction was known as The Flint Alliance. “The union regards any such conference with any group claiming to represent General Motors employes a breach of faith and of the agreement until the questions which corporations agreed to negotiate with the United Automobile Workers have been disposed of. The reaction of the automobile workers to what can only be termed a double-cross by the corporation, after they had proceeded to carry out the union’s side of the agreement, is such that they would not, under any circumstances, until a settlement is reached.”¹⁶⁴ This in turn left the union without a belief that GM would keep their word, and therefore, the strike would continue.

From that same page, I decided to add two pictures showing three stories, as shown below. The first picture, although seemingly positive, is titled “Greets Fisher No. 1 Squatters.” As discussed previously, the term ‘squatters’ has a negative connotation. “Boysen Favors Alliance

¹⁶⁴ “Full text of Homer Martin’s Statement.” *The Flint Journal*, January 18, 1937,13

Quiz,” is all about the president of the Flint Alliance, George E. Boysen, welcoming a congressional hearing on the actions of the organization in which he heads. In the article, Boysen is quoted saying, “The Flint Alliance was formed because the majority of workmen in Flint refused to be coerced into furthering the political ambitions of a labor dictator; because we wanted our jobs back and because we believed through organization we could provide a peaceful method of presenting our cases.”¹⁶⁵ Finally, the “Closely Observing” article is just a minor one in terms of length, but it also points to a need for Congress to investigate the actions of General Motors.¹⁶⁶



Greets Fisher No. 1 Squatters—Wyndham Mortimer, first vice president of the International union, United Automobile Workers of America, is shown here shaking hands with one of the squatters in Fisher No. 1 plant Sunday afternoon after the strikers had refused to leave the plant in accordance with their agreement with Gov. Murphy. Mortimer was one of the speakers at the outdoor meeting held in front of Fisher No. 2 plant later in the day. (Journal Photo)

Boysen Favors Alliance Quiz

Telegram Follows Martin's; Also Asks 'Propaganda Probe' of Union

Declaring The Flint Alliance welcomed any investigation by the senate civil liberties committee, George E. Boysen, president of the Alliance, today sent a telegram to Sen. Robert M. La Follette, chairman of the committee, offering to appear before the Senate group.

In his telegram, Mr. Boysen also suggested that the Senate committee make a complete investigation of the United Automobile Workers of America and "its propaganda mill under the direction of the union's several professional publicity men who are grinding out inaccurate and unreliable information in an attempt to influence public opinion and attract new members."

Mr. Boysen's telegram welcoming the chance to testify before the Senate committee on behalf of The Flint Alliance, followed sending of a telegram Sunday night by

'Closely Observing'

Washington — AP — The Senate committee investigating alleged violations of civil liberties said today it was "closely observing the General Motors strikes. It added, however, it did not expect to hold any "immediate hearings" on the situation.

Two Senate agents are "working constantly" in the Michigan strike areas, committee officials said. They said they had not received a telegram from Homer Martin, president of United Automobile Workers, requesting an inquiry into the Flint Alliance, an organization he has asserted was "inspired" by General Motors.

Homer Martin, president of the U. A. W. A., in which Martin demanded the Senate committee investigate the Alliance.

¹⁶⁵ "Boysen Favors Alliance Quiz." *The Flint Journal*, January 18, 1937, 13

¹⁶⁶ "Boysen Favors Alliance Quiz," 13

On the January 19, I was only able to find thirteen scans relating to the strike. In the article, “Today’s Strike Developments,” it simply states that both sides did not want to budge on their claims. In the article, “Complete Co-operation with Governor is Pledged by Boysen,” the Boysen agreed that The Flint Alliance will stay in the background until the negotiations are over. On page fourteen, one can also find a pro-union, anti-corporation story. In the article, “Here is Complete text of the Statement Issued By Union After Peace Negotiations,” it was revealed that membership cards were distributed by management to employees for The Flint Alliance. That is clearly a violation of labor laws and gives merit to the argument made by the UAW that The Flint Alliance is a pro-company organization.

January 20 was a slow news day for the sit-down. There were only eight scans applicable to the strike. I will quickly touch on two stories. The first one, “Buick to End All Operations Tonight,” states that because of a lack of parts more people will be out of work. It also mentions the fact that Buick was doing great before the need for the shutdown, but because of the shutdown, the strikers will be “throwing another 10,000 Flint men out of work.”¹⁶⁷ The second article was on page four. The article, “Shortage of G.M. New Cars to Be General in 20 days If Dispute Continues,” talks about the cost of strike, leaving one hundred and twenty-five thousand workers off work in nine different states. “Unofficial estimates today placed the workers’ loss of wages at almost \$10,000,000 and the company’s loss of current net profits at between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000...Thousands of other workers, investors and their dependents would be affected, directly or indirectly, by a shutdown of all 69 General Motors Plants.”¹⁶⁸ It goes onto say, “With

¹⁶⁷ “Buick to End All Operations Tonight.” *The Flint Journal*, January 20, 1937, 1

¹⁶⁸ “Shortage of G.M. New Cars to Be General in 20 days If Dispute Continues,” *The Flint Journal*, January 20, 1937, 4

Flint strikes in their third week, Genesee county's welfare load has increased by 500 families since last Thursday to 3,000."¹⁶⁹

The next day was also a lower scan day, at only twelve scans. A majority of the articles were on pages two and fourteen. On page two, there were two articles of the six which were of note. The first article, "Emergency Aid Load In Genesee Appears Headed for All-Time Record," connects the idea of the increasing need for government aid to the ongoing strike. "Emergency relief loads in Genesee County appeared headed toward an all-time record today as industrial employes flocked to the offices of Genesee County emergency relief administration in increasing numbers... If the strike continues to cause reductions in the number of employed workers, it is possible that the load will go over 10,000 families."¹⁷⁰ One can easily see this as a negative. The second article, on page fourteen, "Alliance Acts To Aid Relief: Plans Pushed to establish field of recreation for Idle Workers," also connects the idea of the strike to the rising need for government assistance. The Flint Alliance helping flint by getting "representatives of both public and private relief and welfare agencies in an effort to co-ordinate their activities". It goes onto say,

It is not the plan of the alliance to establish a relief bureau of its own, but rather to assist existing agencies in making their work easier at this time when demands are likely to be very great, George E. Boysen, head of Alliance announced in a statement today. 'The closing of Buick throws an additional 10,000 men out of work. Among the families of those men as well as among those already made idle by the strike, there is likely to be a great danger of suffering and hardship. Most of those who face such hardship may be forced for the first time in their lives to apply for some form of relief.'¹⁷¹

Readers of these two stories together create a negative connotation towards the strike and UAW.

¹⁶⁹ "Shortage of G.M. New Cars to Be General in 20 days If Dispute Continues," *The Flint Journal*, January 20, 1937,4

¹⁷⁰ "Emergency Aid Load In Genesee Appears Headed for All-Time Record." *The Flint Journal*, January 21, 1937, 2

¹⁷¹ "Alliance Acts To Aid Relief: Plans Pushed to establish field of recreation for Idle Workers." *The Flint Journal*, January 21, 1937, 14

Contrary to the past two days, January 22 had more stories to shift through, with a total of eighteen scans for the day. On page two, the article, “Michigan Representative Charges Lewis Is Seeking to Become Dictator” connects the idea of UAW leadership and socialism. The author also mentions the fact that it is the sit-downers that are the cause for the need to use the National Guard to keep the peace. On page twelve, “Monument Convention delegates Are Unanimous in Condemning Union In Questioning on Strikes,” talks about how Flint has been hit the hardest by the strike. It also talks about the strike as being labor trouble and gives praise to the Flint Alliance. Finally, the article expresses that the Michigan Memorial Craftsmen “denounced the U.A.W.A strike and called for the speedy action to stem the tide of destruction in business and industry.” One union denouncing another clearly gives a negative connotation.

Another article on page seven, “General Motors Statement Reveals Wave of Protest Against strike Conditions,” was also significant. It takes up half of the page as the only article on it, and the rest of the page was advertisements. There was a statement by the company declaring that, “110,262 employes in 43 plants in 36 cities had registered protests against the strikes which have tied up General Motors production. Accordingly, this represented 79 percent of the total work force of the company.”¹⁷² This statistic was repeated three times in the first five paragraphs of the article. It goes onto to say, “Through petitions mass meetings and other demonstrations, employes have expressed satisfaction with present bargaining methods to secure adjustment of grievances, and more favorite wages, hours and working conditions and request immediate resumption of operations in letters and telegrams.”¹⁷³ It claims that almost thirty thousand of the thirty-seven thousand, eight hundred employees in Flint signed a petition against the strike. Another claim is

¹⁷² “General Motors Statement Reveals Wave of Protest Against strike Conditions.” *The Flint Journal*, January 22, 1937, 7

¹⁷³ “General Motors Statement Reveals Wave of Protest Against strike Conditions,” 7

that twenty-two thousand, nine hundred and two employees in Detroit also want to go back to work. Saginaw is also listed with staggering numbers; the article claims sixty-nine hundred and seventy out of seventy-one hundred and eighty workers have signed a petition against the strike. The article continues to boast on the numbers from other cities including: Pontiac, Lansing, Baltimore, St. Louis, Bay City, Cleveland, Atlanta, etc. Each paragraph gives a majority number of employees who wish to return to work or are against the strike in some fashion.

I found an advertisement on page eighteen interesting, mostly because it was not anti-strike, and it was being used to sell future papers. One could argue it may even fall into the pro-strike category.



**SIT-DOWN STRIKE
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Nevertheless, other stories which are negative toward the strike still outweigh the positive ones by a far margin. One such example states that there was a “sit-down” demonstration in Washington D.C. to show the support for GM, and to try and get President Roosevelt to act on its behalf to end the strike promptly.¹⁷⁴ Another good example of the biased media is the story “What The Strike Has Done to the City.” In it the story asserts,

Forced 38,600 workers into idleness. Caused a loss of \$3,855,000 for G.M. workers. Cut retail trade more than 50 percent and caused stores to lay off employees. Increased the welfare load by 250 families a day. Brought rioting and bloodshed to an otherwise peaceful community. Turned father against son and brother against brother in an industrial dispute affecting the lives of every man, woman, and child in Flint. Demoralized the city’s law enforcement agencies. Brought troops into the city and caused the occupation of the city schools by armed forces and upsetting educational programs. Turned the city from one of the brightest spots in the nation’s economic picture into the scene of the economic paralysis within less than a month.¹⁷⁵

It is important to note that this is not presented as one person’s opinion, therefore it is meant to be straight facts without interpretation. This is a condemning piece of writing which has the media’s spin on the strike as it was presented.

On the last day of week four, there was a total of fourteen scans. Two stories on the front page talked about General Motors’ attempt to partially reopen its plants to provide as much work to its employees as possible. On page one, there was also a rundown of the current events of the strike in the article, “Today’s Strike developments.” It was mostly pro-company, once again listing the high number of individuals off due to the strike, and it also quoted Knudsen and Sloan. On page four, there is a statement provided by General Motors. The article, “General Motors Issues Statement As Washington Conferences Close,” talks about the company only wanting to get their people back to work, and the company believes most of its people wish to return to work as well.

¹⁷⁴. “GM Workers Plan Sit-Down at Capitol Until F.D.R. Acts.” *The Flint Journal*, January 18, 1937, 13

¹⁷⁵ “What The Strike Has Done to the City.” *The Flint Journal*, January 22, 1937, 20

It also says that “The strikes were called in the beginning without any attempt on the part of the union to bargain collectively.”¹⁷⁶ Meaning, the union struck without giving the company enough time to address the grievances of its employees. Another article, “Emergency Aid Costing \$6,000 Daily as Applications Increase,” talks about how the caseloads increasing daily, and that more social workers are being sent to Flint to help alleviate the load. The strike is listed as the cause in for the need for assistance.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ “General Motors Issues Statement As Washington Conferences Close.” *The Flint Journal*, January 23, 1937, 4

¹⁷⁷ “Emergency Aid Costing \$6,000 Daily as Applications Increase.” *The Flint Journal*, January 23, 1937, 11

Chapter 8: Week Five- Both Parties Blame Each Other

For Week five, I have one hundred and twenty scans in total. For Sunday, January 24, 1937, there were seventeen scans. For page one, I found the article, “Flint Workers Plan Program of Action as Company Prepares to Reopen Plants,” that is worthwhile spending some time on. It states that workers are idle through no fault of their own, and that the company is attempting to bring people back to work as soon as possible. However, there will be no attempt to reopen the already striking sites. The article asserts, “General Motors officials announced Saturday night that 125,613 of its employes in 25 cities are idle as a result of the strike situation.”¹⁷⁸ Under the subheading, “Evacuation Remains Issue,” the article emphasizes “the company’s position that illegal possession of Fisher Body plants by the stay-in strikers is blocking all efforts at a settlement... [and that] The strike is an issue between property rights and no property rights.”¹⁷⁹

Shortly thereafter, the article asserts:

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States... said that ‘increasing labor disturbances constitute a major threat to continued business expansion and re-employment.’ It also termed ‘significant’ the growing opposition to the strike by workers themselves... In Pittsburgh, the Carnegie-Illinois defense committee of employe representatives, recently organized in the Pittsburgh-Youngstown steel district, declared that ‘John Lewis and his CIO would erect a vicious despotism over the steel industry’ and urged the support of all workers in a counter drive against Lewis and his committee... We also want you to know that we will not stand for any intimidation or coercion and we intend to protect our rights. We aim to use every lawful and legal means to stop this strike so that the suffering your organization is imposing will end.¹⁸⁰

These two quotes touch on much of the themes found throughout the local news coverage of the Flint Sit-Down. The idea of property rights, which leads to the notion of the strikers as trespassers,

¹⁷⁸ “Flint Workers Plan Program of Action as Company Prepares to Reopen Plants.” *The Flint Journal*, January 24, 1937, 1

¹⁷⁹ “Flint Workers Plan Program of Action as Company Prepares to Reopen Plants,” 1

¹⁸⁰ “Flint Workers Plan Program of Action as Company Prepares to Reopen Plants,” 1

lawbreakers or squatters, is one. Another idea is that John Lewis and his union would lead to communism, or at the very least harm American industry, hurting America's recovery from the Great Depression. Finally, there is the idea that the strikers are violent and are causing the residents and businesses of Flint to suffer.

On page five of the January 24 issue, we get another taste of how the Flint residents feel. On this page, "Readers of the Journal Offer Their Views on Strike in Letters to the Editor" give the opportunity, once again, for the people of Flint to comment on the situation going on in their city. The unique thing about this article is that every letter has its own subheading or headline, as well as, at the end of the letter to the editor, the authors full name and Flint address. It is also an article that, minus the small advertisements, takes up the entire page. Under the first headline, "Assails Communist Tactics," the author recollects events of a previous strike a couple of years before this one at No. 1 Fisher Body plant, and he mentions strikers getting violent with troopers. He also gives credit to police officer's for handling themselves well. Under the subheading, "Blames it on President," the author claims, John Lewis and Roosevelt are working towards dictatorship. He also believes people are victims of the French (foreign) policy of the sit-down strike. In another letter to the editor, the author says the labor dispute is a crisis. There is one whole letter where the author expresses his non-desire to join a union, meaning, he has no interest in becoming a union member at all. There is at least one pro-union and strike letter, where the author points out that the paper itself is one-sided and does not give enough positive voices to the sit-down strike overall.¹⁸¹

In a longer letter, "What Will You Gain," the author expresses resentment that the sit downers are able to solicit for help. He declares, the taxpayers are the ones helping with their cause

¹⁸¹ "Readers of the Journal Offer Their Views on Strike in Letters to the Editor." *The Flint Journal*, January 24, 1937, 5

while non-sit-downers suffer. He believes strikers should not get assistance because they are capable of doing work, and work is there to be done: “Would a Flint life-long resident and taxpayer be permitted to incite lawlessness and riot, call our city officials and police officers things, liars, cowards, yellow rats all this on our public streets?”¹⁸² He takes issue with how the strikers are seen in the public eye, making it seem as though any positive coverage was too much. “And you strikers, what will you gain? You are losing your wages, your friends, loading yourselves with debt, making your families public charges. You are being urged on by well-paid agitators, men paid to make trouble and believe me when I say that while your debts are piling up, they are drawing their salaries.”¹⁸³

The final letter, “Sees Flint Spirit on Top,” describes labor organizers as clever salesmen—not in a positive way. The author also praises Boysen and his leadership of the Flint Alliance. He asserts that both strikers and non-participants both want to go back to work. There is also some praise of General Motors and corporate officials, believing they are on good terms with employees as they, “take initiative towards bettering their workers’ circumstances...A happy workman is a better workman, and the corporation has built upon that theory for years.”¹⁸⁴ The company just got done giving away liberal Christmas bonuses. There’s even more positive talk about the company’s cultural contributions in the city, which promote health and happiness among employees and their families. Finally, the term ‘agitators’ is once again used for labor organizers.

One final article from that day was of consequence: “First Settlement in Auto Strike Drive Indicates What Workers May Expect.” It gives the reader various important developments in the strike. Its subheading, “Glass Union Drops Strife: Three Years Required to regain Lost Wages at

¹⁸² “Readers of the Journal Offer Their Views on Strike in Letters to the Editor.” *The Flint Journal*, January 24, 1937, 5

¹⁸³ “Readers of the Journal Offer Their Views on Strike in Letters to the Editor,” 5

¹⁸⁴ “Readers of the Journal Offer Their Views on Strike in Letters to the Editor,” 5

8-Cent Pay Increase,” shows a negative connotation right off the bat. “The strike deprived the \$1-an-hour worker of \$640 in wages, which will require four years of work for him to regain his loss at the 8-cent an hour increase.” It mentions the fact that the union gave up its demand for a closed shop and dues checkoff. The article itself is about another strike in the auto industry, connected to, but not considered to be a part of the Flint Sit-Down strike:

If the glass strike settlement can be conceded a retraction in the Lewis strategy, then the glass workers paid a high price for their leader’s mistake. If the settlement is considered a Lewis victory, then it is a hollow victory for the men he avows he is trying to help... Meanwhile Flint workers had lost a total of more than 4,000,000 in wages since Lewis drive was launched here Dec. 30. Wage losses continue in Flint at the rate of \$308,000 a day, with the minority strike throwing more than 100,000 G.M. workers in other cities out of employment.¹⁸⁵

The staggering numbers does not give the strike any type of good publicity. Instead, any reader looking at these statistics would clearly wonder why anyone would support the strike that is costing the employees, General Motors, and the city so much money.

On January 25, there was still plans by General Motors to try and open certain plants and put some of its employees in part back to work. On page three, “Writer Sees Lewis in Danger of Overplaying His Position,” takes another jab at the union and its leader John Lewis. The author, Dorothy Thompson, claims that the President already should have rebuked the request of help from Lewis. She continues to mock the demands made by Lewis and the union. Another claim is that the U.S. is still a democracy, and the President can’t just put demands on private companies. Government needs to be a neutral party. The government represents everyone in the U.S. not just Mr. Lewis or “labor”.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ “First Settlement in Auto Strike Drive Indicates What Workers May Expect.” *The Flint Journal*, January 24, 1937, 28

¹⁸⁶ “Writer Sees Lewis in Danger of Overplaying His Position.” *The Flint Journal*, January 25, 1937, 3

Another great article worth examining, also from page three, was “10,000 Detroit Chevrolet Workers Demand Lewis Action to End Sit-down.” Directly under the headline was sub-header, “Telegram to C.I.O. Leader Calls him ‘Menace to U.S.’ and just below that, still in bold but smaller front, “Message warns Labor chief ‘We Will Not Be Responsible for What May Occur in Near Future; other Groups Also express Views on Strike in Wires.” The telegram says that John L. Lewis was un-American and should be sent to jail. In the article, it calls out the strikers as well as John I. Lewis: “Your sit-down Strikers have taken illegal possession of property and holding same as a means of forcing collective bargaining.... We repudiate your vicious lies, and misrepresentation, which reeked venom, in every statement you give to the general public.”¹⁸⁷ In a further rebuttal of the strike and the UAW cause, the article goes onto say, “We are prepared to fight against collective bargaining without being represented. We cannot condescend to join a union where every principle of justice, honesty and respect of law and order has been disregarded, where the health and happiness of the worker and his family is sacrificed for the gratification of wealth and power for tyrannical so-called labor leaders.”¹⁸⁸

The article, “Workers to Vote Plan to Be Used in getting Jobs Back,” talks about how The Flint Alliance only wants people to be able to return to work as soon as possible. It also states that the Flint Alliance has no interest in getting between GM and the UAW. The author declared, “It was with a heavy heart that the employes found themselves forced idle through no fault of their own, just at a time when wages were the highest ever and the prospect of a good yearly income the best of any kind...The good relationship existing between Buick and its employes is known throughout Flint.”¹⁸⁹ Again, we see the theme of forced idleness on the workforce by the strikers.

¹⁸⁷. “10,000 Detroit Chevrolet Workers Demand Lewis Action to End Sit-down.” *The Flint Journal*, January 25, 1937, 3

¹⁸⁸ “10,000 Detroit Chevrolet Workers Demand Lewis Action to End Sit-down,” 3

¹⁸⁹ “Workers to Vote Plan to Be Used in getting Jobs Back.” *The Flint Journal*, January 25, 1937, 14

It also talks about how well the company was treating its employees. Another article on page fourteen, “Sit-Downers’ Feminine Relatives Organize ‘Rolling Pin Brigade,’” talks about the formation of violence by women helping the strikers. It says they will help in any future riots. It is quoting the leader, and in the quote, she says, they will also use, “mops and brooms ‘and anything else we can get’ if called into action.”¹⁹⁰ It also says, “Mrs. Johnson, a vice president of the women’s auxiliary of the United Automobile Workers, took part in the riot in front of the Fisher Body plant No. 2 two weeks ago tonight.”¹⁹¹

The next day the main headline was that strike talks were breaking down. In the article, “Strike Parley is Rejected; Flint Workers Hold Meeting,” it describes violence on the union side, and that there is trouble in Detroit. There is minor criticism of General Motors by the Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins. She believes that General Motors is failing in its public duty, and that the legality of the sit-down strike had not been determined yet. However, Alfred P. Sloan is quoted as saying, “We sincerely regret to have to say that we must decline to negotiate further with the union while its representatives continue to hold our plants unlawfully.”¹⁹² In, “Lippmann Holds Leaders in G.M. Dispute Using War Psychology,” both sides blame each other. General Motors for the union occupying the plants, and the union for GM’s commitment to speak to The Flint Alliance. “No one who has talked with the leaders on both sides can have any doubt, I think that they are in the grip of a war psychology; what seems to them most important now is not only concrete, negotiable question, but the defeat of the opposing power.”¹⁹³ Under the sub header, “An Industrial War,” the author states:

That is why this is not an ordinary strike. It is a little industrial war, and here as in all wars, the belligerents seek to enlarge the war and the neutrals to isolate it...

¹⁹⁰ “Sit-Downers’ Feminine Relatives Organize ‘Rolling Pin Brigade.’” *The Flint Journal*, January 25, 1937, 14

¹⁹¹ “Sit-Downers’ Feminine Relatives Organize ‘Rolling Pin Brigade,’” 14

¹⁹² “Strike Parley is Rejected; Flint Workers Hold Meeting.” *The Flint Journal*, January 26, 1937, 1

¹⁹³ “Lippmann Holds Leaders in G.M. Dispute Using War Psychology.” *The Flint Journal*, January 26, 1937, 2

Mr. Lewis' logic is the logic of men who are at war. They want the law only insofar as the law helps their cause. Yet it would be morally blind not to recognize that over a long period of time, in which there was ample evidence of the rise of John L. Lewis, the management has been more preoccupied with measures to resist and defeat him when he attacked them than with removing the grievances on which his power is being built. That was shown at the outset of the strike when the central management still took the position that it would not discuss the basic labor policies of the corporation with its employees.¹⁹⁴

When one reads further into the article, there is a slight negative connotation about the company, on top of the negative connotation of the UAW and Strike. The author argues that a corporation that big is bound to have labor disputes because no company in the world has ever had experience employing that many people.

On page fourteen of January 26, there were two articles. The first one, "G.M. Workers Here Get \$2,316,200 As Return From Investment-Savings," establishes that payments to employees are to help tide them over during the present unemployment emergency. It also affirms that "General Motors also referred to the current shutdowns as an emergency situation for workers."¹⁹⁵ Of course, this has a positive connotation towards the company. Also, on page fourteen there is an article, "3833 Relief Cases," which quickly touches on the increased need for government aid. It talks about how the day prior had the largest number of cases in one day since the start of the strike.¹⁹⁶ Finally, there is a quick advertisement for men, explaining they are looking to hire and are willing to train, with the plus that it was steady work without the risk of a strike.¹⁹⁷

On Wednesday, January 27, the headline was, "Sloan Blames Stay-in Strikers for Deadlock." Underneath it was the sub header, "Says Plants Held For Ransom; Urges Workers to Have No Fear in Outlining Five Points for Sunday," though, on this day, the strike also had to

¹⁹⁴ "Lippmann Holds Leaders in G.M. Dispute Using War Psychology." *The Flint Journal*, January 26, 1937, 2

¹⁹⁵ "G.M. Workers Here Get \$2,316,200 As Return From Investment-Savings." *The Flint Journal*, January 26, 1937, 14

¹⁹⁶ "3,833 Relief Cases." *The Flint Journal*, January 26, 1937, 14

¹⁹⁷ "Advertisement- 'Men'." *The Flint Journal*, January 26, 1937, 21

compete with the headlines of environmental disasters of flooding in the south. In the article, Sloan blames the breakdown of negotiations on the union, and the occupation of the plants by the strikers. “In a statement addressed jointly to the General Public and to loyal workers in General Motors plants, Sloan referred to the stay-in strikers as ‘these trespassers who have seized our plants and who have taken from you the privilege of working’... ‘We refuse to negotiate with a group that holds our plants for ransom without regard to law or justice, thus depriving over 100,000 of our peaceful and law-abiding employes of their inherent right to work.’”¹⁹⁸ The article presents five points from Sloan that are pro-company and anti-strike. Sloan declares, “General Motors will never let you down.”¹⁹⁹ Again, the point that a small minority were responsible for the strike is echoed. The second point is that “We shall demand that your rights and our rights be protected.”²⁰⁰ Points four and five of the article are, “We believe in giving every group an opportunity to be heard. There is nothing to justify our doing otherwise. You will not have to pay tribute for the privilege of working in General Motors plant.”²⁰¹

I wanted to pull a quote from page five of January 27, under the article, “State Senator Urges Governor Explain Why Court Isn’t Upheld.” Senator Felix H.H. Flynn was quoted as saying:

‘There has arisen a dispute between employes and the management of a great industry. With the merits or demerits of this controversy this body expresses no opinion. However, certain individuals have seen fit to possess by force and without recourse to usual legal procedure, certain property of large economic and financial value. The rightful owners of this property have sought to protect their rights through the legal channels of the courts of this state. A duly authorized court of this state...has issued an order demanding the return of said property to its rightful owners.’²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ “Sloan Blames Stay-in Strikers for Deadlock.” *The Flint Journal*, January 27, 1937, 1

¹⁹⁹ “Sloan Blames Stay-in Strikers for Deadlock.” 1

²⁰⁰ “Sloan Blames Stay-in Strikers for Deadlock.” 1

²⁰¹ “Sloan Blames Stay-in Strikers for Deadlock.” 1

²⁰² “State Senator Urges Governor Explain Why Court Isn’t Upheld.” *The Flint Journal*, January 27, 1937, 5

By saying that General Motors is a part of a great industry, it sells the idea that the strikers are ungrateful for the opportunity to work for the company. Then the senator talks about how the company is the rightful owner of the property. This is also an anti-strike and anti-union stance. The fact that he is a senator gives the statement some gravitas, meaning the readers would take it more seriously than the average person quoted.

In the article, “8,000 Flint Workers Demand Protection of Murphy in Returning to Jobs,” there was a major expression of back-to-work sentiment presented by the author. The article was about a meeting at the I.M.A. arena, which still exists in Flint to this day, just under a different name. The sub headline says, “Lewis Condemned at Record Assemblage at I.M.A. Auditorium,” in a meeting that, according to the article, went over capacity for the arena, and twenty-five hundred people were turned away. Resolutions passed at the meeting condemned Lewis and demanded he take his paid organizers out of Flint. They also criticized Lewis for blaming The Flint Alliance for the break in the agreement between his union and GM, and suggested Lewis refrain from insinuating he represents labor in the automobile industry. The article also pledges flood area aid, stating that the alliance will help those in need because of the environmental disasters which recently occurred in the country. The author declares that the problems in Flint were “created, not by an act of nature, but by the unholy machinations of despots and power-seeking men.”²⁰³ It goes onto to say, “Seven speakers assailed the motives and methods of strike leaders, declared men have the right to work, upheld the bargaining agencies now being used in the factories, asked there be no violence and criticized the governor, Lewis, and the C.I.O.”²⁰⁴ It also calls the rioting in Flint a disgrace. Finally, the author uses a retired Buick employee, Samuel Morgan, who called upon

²⁰³ “8,000 Flint Workers Demand Protection of Murphy in Returning to Jobs.” *The Flint Journal*, January 27, 1937, 22

²⁰⁴ “8,000 Flint Workers Demand Protection of Murphy in Returning to Jobs,” 22

strikers (the employees in the union) to get rid of the riffraff from out of town. In other words, he wants the strikers to not listen to the labor leaders of the UAW and make them leave so they can go back to work.

On January 28, there was only fourteen scans total, most of which was on page two. In the article for page one, “Governor Rebuffs Flint Alliance Delegation,” has a rejection of The Flint Alliance. The article explains that Governor Murphy does not want any violence but cannot guarantee the protection of any workers during the strike. It also explains that there has been no bloodshed since the arrival of National Guard. The governor is quoted in saying, ““The president, the secretary of labor, and the state government were working for peaceful conciliation and would continue to do so... The effects of force might be nationwide. There must be no inflammatory action at this time. We first must exhaust every avenue of peace...”²⁰⁵ Finally, Sanford A Rasbach, of Buick, was quoted as saying, “Men on strike are sincere whether they represent a majority or minority. The Flint Alliance entered the controversy, unfortunately.”

The next important article for my research can be found on page two, and is titled, “Veiled Defense of Sit-Downers By Perkins is Called Amazing.” In it the author, David Lawrence, writes about why he feels Labor Secretary Frances Perkins is wrong in any attempt to stick up for the strikers. Lawrence says, “Through conferences with the press, official and unofficial disapproval now has been voiced on some phases of the pronouncements of both sides in the motor strike controversy, but, in the course of such comments, an amazing piece of information by the secretary of labor namely, a veiled defense of sit-down strikes.”²⁰⁶ Perkins is not willing to comment on the legality of the sit-down strike as it had not been determined in the court at that point in time.

²⁰⁵ “Governor Rebuffs Flint Alliance Delegation.” *The Flint Journal*, January 28, 1937, 1

²⁰⁶ “Veiled Defense of Sit-Downers By Perkins is Called Amazing.” *The Flint Journal*, January 28, 1937, 2

“But the truth is the sit-down strike is the paramount question at issue. It transcends all others. Either the plants have been seized by the sit-down strikers belong to the stockholders of General Motors, or they belong to the strikers. Such a question is not one of legality or illegality in a civil sense, but trespass, seizure and extortion within the meaning of criminal law.”²⁰⁷

Again, the point that General Motors owns the property and should not have to attend any conference until they have it back was made. “If, in other words, it is proper for a group of employes to take possession of the properties, it is also, by the same logic, proper for them to utilize those properties and begin production themselves, which is after all, the same kind of confiscation that occurred in Italy and led to the strong-arm tactics of the Fascist dictator, who took control of both factories and workers alike.”²⁰⁸ General Motors should have made it clear that there would be no negotiations until their property has been vacated. The article goes onto to say:

If the mayors or sheriffs or governors refused to give the properties back to the owners by evicting all persons who are unlawfully holding any portion of them, then entirely different situation confronts not only the automobile companies but all other property owners in America, and the end of property rights may be foreseen... There appears among well-in-formed lawyers a universal belief that a sit-down strike is not only illegal from the viewpoint of state law, but, when coupled with a conspiracy physically to prevent the flow of goods into interstate commerce, it is also a violation of federal law.²⁰⁹

This is a stark criticism of the local government, on top of the strikers themselves. The question of personal property, and how it connects to the eventual decline of democracy, is a powerful condemnation of the strike. Connecting the two to fascism is a compelling negative connotation of both the UAW and the strike itself.

²⁰⁷. “Veiled Defense of Sit-Downers By Perkins is Called Amazing.” *The Flint Journal*, January 28, 1937, 2

²⁰⁸ “Veiled Defense of Sit-Downers By Perkins is Called Amazing.” 2

²⁰⁹. “Veiled Defense of Sit-Downers By Perkins is Called Amazing.” 2

Two quick articles to touch on for this day were both on page fourteen. The first article, “Crash Ends Organizers’ wild Escape From Anti-Strikers,” describes how labor organizers had to flee Saginaw in a hurry because they were being threatened with violence and chased because of the opposition. “Fleeing from enraged automobile workers in Bay city and Saginaw who have been forced into idleness as a result of union activities for the United Automobile workers of America are in Hurley hospital today as the climax to a wild ride from Saginaw and an automobile crash at North Saginaw street and Foss avenue late Wednesday night...They ran into belligerent anti-strike crowds in both cities.”²¹⁰ The description of enraged workers wanting to go back to work so they resort to violence says a great deal. The argument of forced idleness is also used again.

The second article, “Union Relief Favors Denied,” talks about how government aid must be given in the order in which it is requested. The point of the article is that union leaders wanted to get placed at the front of the line, in other words, given preferential treatment. The answer to why that cannot be the case is given. The article states, ““We have decided it would be unfair to all who are applying for relief. You must understand that with five and six hundred applying a day, it is necessary for us to maintain a smooth-running organization to give proper service.’ Everyone will have to wait his turn and follow our regular procedure. We also want to request your organization not to discuss the problems of clients in this building. We have found that this causes unrest, discontent and confusion.” Seemingly, a reader who sees this would be angry if they believed their need for assistance was being ignored in order to give special treatment to the strikers, who were the reason why the reader needed the assistance in the first place. This of course is just a hypothetical example.

²¹⁰ “Crash Ends Organizers’ wild Escape From Anti-Strikers.” *The Flint Journal*, January 28, 1937, 16

On January 29, the strike had to share the front-page news with the natural disasters affecting the south. Both, of course, were negative news stories, but ones which would catch the eye of the readers. Thousands of people were out of work due to the strike, and on the other hand, thousands of people were homeless as floods created millions of dollars in damage. On page one, the headline was, "G.M. Seeks Showdown on Stay-In Strikes." Just underneath that was the sub-header, "G.M. Asks Showdown By Seeking Injunction Against Flint Strikers." This story goes over the legal battle between the strikers and the company. The petition was filed by General Motors to Circuit Judge Gadola, attempting to get the strikers out of the plant. "The petition declares the stay-in-strikers are no longer in the employ of the company in any capacity whatsoever and that they are maliciously trespassing upon the property of the company in defiance of law and order."²¹¹ It was filed with the judge because he had no ties to the company. "The original injunction was attacked on the grounds that Circuit Judge Black owned General Motors stock."²¹² In the petition, the company claims they do not know which employees are a part of the strike, and which ones are not. The company also declares:

The stay-in strikers are holding up to production amounting to \$45,000,000 annually in finished products and considerable of this business now is going to other firms... That the strikers are willfully, maliciously and continuously trespassing upon the property of the company in defiance of law and order... That the strikers are depriving the majority of workers of their right to work and their pay as well as depriving the company from using its own property. That the strikers are threatening to resist with force and violence any attempt by the company to obtain the use of its property and that it is feared that any attempt to eject the trespassers will result in riots, bloodshed, and further breaches of the peace.²¹³

The argument is made that the property of the company must be maintained, and it is deteriorating because they cannot use or maintain it. That there is also a possibility of the strikers being

²¹¹ "G.M. Seeks Showdown on Stay-In Strikes." *The Flint Journal*, January 29, 1937, 1

²¹² "G.M. Seeks Showdown on Stay-In Strikes," 1

²¹³ "G.M. Seeks Showdown on Stay-In Strikes," 1

malicious and destroying their property on purpose. The notion of the organizers being outsiders is also a prominent argument once again. The company argues that the rioting on January 11 was all caused by the strikers. Next, the injunction also makes the argument that General Motors does not want picketing on company premises, or any action which impedes their ability to conduct their business. Finally, the claim that there is a connection to the strikers and an establishment of socialist order is additionally made: “If we are to have a dictator, we prefer the known to the unknown. Capable business leadership gave us our present standards. A mess of pottage of socialism, communism, and collectivism can do no better, but rather, looking at Europe, can mean ruin.”²¹⁴

The bulk of the remaining articles for that day can be found on page twenty. In fact, there were seven different articles which comprised the whole page except for a few minor advertisements. The first article of merit, was “Alliance Renews Protection Drive.” Of course, this is another article on the positive nature of The Flint Alliance. In the article, “Sit-In Turning Progress Back,” the author David Lawrence, mentioned earlier, teases out the idea that democracy is being replaced by anarchy. Lawrence asserts in his anti-strike and anti-union article that:

For when employes who want to keep on working see a sit-down striker trying to tie up their plant, they will not deal with him as a person entitled to protection under the law, but as one who is himself a trespasser. Ordinarily workmen have looked to the police and public authority to protect them against a minority who tried to picket them by violence, and the courts have issued injunctions against those who have been guilty of the use of physical force instead of peaceful persuasion...The outcry in a recent mass meeting of loyal workers, who were asked by one of the speakers whether they were ready to fight for their jobs, was a significant chorus in the affirmative.²¹⁵

The article’s title, combined with the language of loyal workers needing to fight to get back to work, shows a lot about the aim of the writer.

²¹⁴. “G.M. Seeks Showdown on Stay-In Strikes.” *The Flint Journal*, January 29, 1937, 1

²¹⁵. “Sit-In Turning Progress Back.” *The Flint Journal*, January 29, 1937,20

The final day of week five, once again, saw the front-page headline of the strike shared with that of the floods effecting other parts of the country. With the headline, “Deadlock Continues in G.M. Strike,” the author says, “the month-old General Motors strike situation presented the darkest picture on the industrial horizon today.”²¹⁶ The article goes over how the negotiations are going. Sloan notified Perkins by phone that he would not agree to their proposals, and he would not attend any further meetings. On the other hand, Perkins blamed Sloan for the stalling of negotiations, and said he ran out on her. The article says, “The entire situation is being blocked on the same single issue which has prevented negotiations for settlement since the begging of the deadlock- that of illegal possession of the company’s property by stay-in strikers.”²¹⁷ It goes onto to say that the governor is still hopeful for a resolution. He believes there can still be a settlement, and says General Motors has the right to go to the courts. Finally, the governor thinks that a conference between the two parties is also still an option for settlement.

For January 30, there was a surge of articles on page eight. Out of the twenty-one total scans for January 30, twelve of them were from page eight. The first article, “General Motors Workers Quit Sit-Down at Governor’s Office Over Weekend,” for page eight, explains that there were twenty-five General Motors workers representing a delegation of ten thousand of Chevrolet gear and axle plant in Detroit. Those twenty-five men were asking the governor if he will “protect the workers,” as in get them back to work as soon as possible. They issued a statement before they left, and the capitol was locked up for the night. They wanted a definite answer as to when they will be back to work, and the governor would not be there over the weekend, so they went home. Another delegation, led by Albert Johnson, also reached the capitol claiming to represent sixty-five thousand non-striking workmen from around the U.S. A member of the delegation was quoted

²¹⁶ “Deadlock Continues in G.M. Strike.” *The Flint Journal*, January 30, 1937, 1

²¹⁷. “Deadlock Continues in G.M. Strike,” 1

in saying, “give us a chance to vote on the strike question. That would prove everyone that the anti-strikers are in the great majority.”²¹⁸ Another worker is quoted in saying, “We want to work and we resent union men from other plants who are working coming over and picketing the plants where we employed. It is unfair.”²¹⁹ All the sentiments by the workers who want the strike to end were, of course, anti-strike and had a negative connotation towards the labor movement’s sit-down tactic.

Next to the article was the picture shown below. It gives more context to the story discussed in the previous paragraph. It also adds to the negative connotation against the strike and strikers.



The next major article for page eight was, “‘Public Forum’ Meeting Called ‘to Clarify Issues Of Strike’ Hears Speeches by Outside Sympathizers.” In it the article talks about the small attendance, inferring a lack of enthusiasm or caring for the cause of the strike. “All speeches being

²¹⁸ “General Motors Workers Quit Sit-Down at Governor’s Office Over Weekend.” *The Flint Journal*, January 30, 1937, 8

²¹⁹ “General Motors Workers Quit Sit-Down at Governor’s Office Over Weekend,” 8

delivered by out-of-towners strike sympathizers who came to explain the situation in Flint for Flint residents.”²²⁰ It lists cities of organizers such as Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Toledo, but also denotes that none from other side were allowed to speak in opposition to the strike. The reporter even asked about who could speak for the other side, and the response was no one. The article talks about how there was a denial of requests to have a vote by organizers (the outsiders). It was also reported that strike sympathizers booed anyone attempting to ask critical questions or refute the speakers. The article describes a “Citizens Committee,” which sent out a letter to residents giving them the information on the meeting. Essentially, a flyer for advertising, which seemingly did not work well. The letter gives the reason why the committee needs to be formed, and the importance of it is explained in a letter as well. “A public opinion needs a discussion of facts, and judgements and conclusions based on these discussions. These meetings will be factual in nature and not an emotional appeal to deep-seated prejudices.”²²¹

The article continues to talk about how the meeting was aimed at professionals because professional people and merchants have a lot at stake too in the strike. A portion of the article is a statement by the Flint Federation of Teachers, which is affiliated with the Flint Federation of Labor, supporting the strikers: “Peaceful organization is legal right in this country, a right guaranteed in the Constitution, Labor unions are organizations formed for collective protection of the interests of the workers in a particular craft or industry.”²²² In a section given the subheading, “Against Local Bargaining,” the article talks about how, in order for collective bargaining to work, the whole sector of an industry or craft must be organized: “Only thus can labor organizations hope to be able to represent interests of their memberships. It is absurd to speak of labor

²²⁰ “Public Forum’ Meeting Called ‘to Clarify Issues Of Strike’ Hears Speeches by Outside Sympathizers.” *The Flint Journal*, January 30, 1937, 8

²²¹ “Public Forum’ Meeting Called ‘to Clarify Issues Of Strike’ Hears Speeches by Outside Sympathizers,” 8

²²² “Public Forum’ Meeting Called ‘to Clarify Issues Of Strike’ Hears Speeches by Outside Sympathizers,” 8

organizations dealing with individual plant managers when the company owning plants in many cities and states can move key machinery at will from one city to another and resume operations. For this reason, collective bargaining, or the right of labor unions to send their representatives to discuss problems of hours, wages, and working conditions, especially the speed-up, together with representatives of the industry, is the most important issue involved in General Motors strike.”²²³

In the next subsection of the article, “Claim Large Membership,” the author quotes a statement from the Flint Federation of Labor. “Contrary to the belief fostered in the majority of Flint newspapers, the United Auto Workers union is neither a new nor a small organization in Flint, particularly in the plants affected by the strike. They are the majority in the striking plants, and thousands of new members have since joined. An additional factor in obscuring the basic issues and the responsibility for the present strike in the minds of Flint residents is The Flint Alliance.”²²⁴ This is where the criticism of The Flint Alliance begins. “The Flint Federation of Teachers feels that the issues at stake are too important, the scope of the present labor too broad to be dismissed by time honored prejudices or unthinking opposition. It is necessary for every honest and open-minded citizen to acquaint himself thoroughly with all facts on both sides.”²²⁵ I thought this article was of particular importance because it shows how one piece of writing can fit into the various categories I was placing articles into. It was both positive and negative connotation towards both the strike and the UAW or the striker.

One article which was simpler to categorize was, “Civic Federation Views Compare Strike to Pre-Fascism in Italy.” Still on page eight, the article says, “An appeal to public officials, wage earners and to ‘men and women in every section of the United States’ to demand that ‘the proper

²²³ “Public Forum’ Meeting Called ‘to Clarify Issues Of Strike’ Hears Speeches by Outside Sympathizers,” 8

²²⁴ “Public Forum’ Meeting Called ‘to Clarify Issues Of Strike’ Hears Speeches by Outside Sympathizers,” 8

²²⁵ “Public Forum’ Meeting Called ‘to Clarify Issues Of Strike’ Hears Speeches by Outside Sympathizers,” 8

authorities' use their lawful power to put an end to 'sit-down' strikes has been issued by the executive council of the National Civic Federation, [in New York]." I was unfamiliar with this organization, so I had to look it up. According to The New York Public Library Archives and Manuscripts:

The National Civic Federation (NCF) was a New York-based conservative think-tank and reform alliance with strong ties to the Republican Party. It was founded in 1900 by the journalist, editor, and economist Ralph Easley (1867-1939) and others. During the period 1900-1920, the years which saw NCF's influence peak, the organization attempted to counteract socialist electoral successes and emergent labor militancy by joining capital and trade-unionism in a patriotic effort to end industrial strife. The ultimate aim was to bolster public confidence in the free enterprise system by initiating moderate social and industrial welfare programs, such as protective legislation for workers, and advocating restrained government involvement in business affairs.²²⁶

The article says the NCF compared the Fascist dictatorship in Italy to the U.S. "The 'sit-down' strikes in the automobile industry affect the vital interests of every citizen – employer, wage earner and property owner. A 'sit-down' strike is unlawful seizure by employes of the physical possession of the plant..."²²⁷ In the continuation of the theme of fascist tendencies the organization is accusing the UAW of the author talks about why the situation of the strike is the same as in Italy during the 'March on Rome'. In the march, laborers seized factories, sabotaged them as well as used violence to get their way. The article also talks more about property rights and contains an appeal to the general public and public officials to help end the strike. "We, therefore, appeal to public officials in every state, county and municipality in which 'sit-down' strikes are now taking place to use their lawful power to guard every constitutional right of the citizens within their jurisdiction."²²⁸

²²⁶ National Civic Federation Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. <https://archives.nypl.org/mss/2101>

²²⁷ "Civic Federation Views Compare Strike to Pre-Fascism in Italy." *The Flint Journal*, January 30, 1937, 8

²²⁸ "Civic Federation Views Compare Strike to Pre-Fascism in Italy," 8

Clearly, with the organization leaning conservative, and the connection between property rights as well as the UAW and fascism, the article is negative towards the strike and the UAW.

The last article to touch on for this day, and the end of the week is, “British Laborite Discusses Strike.” I think it is important to close out discussion of this chapter on this article because it was one which was pro-strike and union. The British Laborite mentioned in the articles title is Ellen Wilkinson. She states, ““The strike is the laboring man’s tremendous revenge on mass production methods...If you win this fight, you will go back to work recognized as men and not cogs in a machine.””²²⁹The article also expressed the idea that, “the question of sole collective bargaining and the recognition of the United Automobile Workers of America was more important than any wage increase.” Wilkinson also said labor strikes in other nations are common, and that the Sit-Down method is so modern, manufacturers do not know how to combat it just yet. Finally, she believes, “This world-wide labor movement and the question of collective bargaining is the most important in the whole issue.”²³⁰ Meaning the strike method, the possession of company property, and the tactics of the company, are not as important as the ability to collective bargain by the UAW.

²²⁹ “British Laborite Discusses Strike.” *The Flint Journal*, January 30, 1937, 15

²³⁰ “British Laborite Discusses Strike,” 15

Chapter 9: Week Six- More Violence in Flint, The Fight Continues

Sunday, January 31 was the last day of the month, but the first day of the new week. Week six, overall, had the most scans over any other week. In total, I found two hundred and two different articles and pictures with my key words to scan. Out of those two hundred and two scans, there were thirty-four scans for that day. However, seventeen of those can be found on page six, and one could argue that they could either be counted as seventeen separate small articles or could be counted as only one large one. This is because the article called, “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor,” could potentially be broken up as each letter to the editor, and they had different connotations. That is why I decided to count each one separately, rather than have it be one large article. One page one, there were three articles I scanned for their connection to the material. The main article worth spending some time on was, “Murphy seeks Strike Parley; Sloan Answers Miss Perkins.” It was explained by the author that, Governor Murphy had to do something to assure peace because if not, there will be grave consequences. The author also believes that Labor Secretary Perkins is failing in her attempt to get the parties together. Sloan is quoted once again saying he wants the strikers out of the plant. It was explained that, in the event General Motors wins its case in court, then the law enforcement in Flint will be mandated to evict the strikers.

Giving blame and stating the seriousness of the situation the article says, “It is with the gravity of the situation in mind that Gov. Murphy is working today, hoping that he can bring about a resumption of conferences which he had started successfully in his office in Lansing on Jan. 15, but which were broken off when John L. Lewis refused to allow the stay-in strikers to evacuate the plants here.”²³¹ There was also a belief that Perkins hurt Governor Murphy’s progress, because

²³¹. “Murphy seeks Strike Parley; Sloan Answers Miss Perkins.” *The Flint Journal*, January 31, 1937, 1

he had to step aside for her efforts. The article finds other things to further criticize Secretary Perkins on. According to Murphy, both sides have the right to pursue the matter in court. Sloan gives a statement as to why he rebuts Perkins, and the article also makes the claim that eighty-three percent of General Motors workers wished to go back to work. Finally, on behalf of Homer Martin, “The union declared that ‘if General Motors would bargain collectively or would indicate its good faith that it will bargain collectively, the strike would end in 24 hours.’”²³²

The rest of my commentary for the day will concentrate on page six, with the published letters to the editor. The article itself, as explained earlier, is broken up into sections from each author who wrote to the journal. The article itself takes up the entire page, minus a few advertisements. The first letter, “Madame Quotes Scripture,” used the term comrade Lewis, and saw the sit-downers as trespassers. It connects the idea that people deprived of their paycheck might also be considered deprived of their property. The next letter, “15 years with Corporation”, is a pro-company and anti-strike letter which simply has the idea that one should not bite the hand that feeds. The following letter is one worth spending some time on, as it was the opposite of the previous two discussed. Labelled, “Urges Women Aid Strikers,” it calls the paper a “G.M. controlled sheet.”²³³ Written by a Mrs. Albert Miller, she takes a clear stance of pro-union and pro-strike. Referring to the organizers being chased out of Saginaw, she says that it was a “Dastardly and cowardly act of the General Motors Strike-breakers wrecking a taxi... Those men were going peaceably about their own business when they were attacked.”²³⁴ Mrs. Miller believes that people who are routing for GM are going against their own kind. She also thinks it would be better for all workingmen and businessmen to get behind the strikers, as it would lead to a quick settlement. She

²³² “Murphy seeks Strike Parley; Sloan Answers Miss Perkins.” *The Flint Journal*, January 31, 1937, 1

²³³. “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Urges Women Aid Strikers.” *The Flint Journal*, January 31, 1937, 6

²³⁴ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Urges Women Aid Strikers,” 6

asks a series of questions, which lead to the authors feelings on the matter, such as: “Why shouldn’t the strikers be able to defend themselves? Why don’t all your working men stick together? And why would you want to turn against your own kind?”²³⁵ She asserts that General Motors does not care about the people of Flint or their workers, and that they are simply a means to create wealth. “The only way the laboring class can ever get anywhere is by banding together and fighting for their rights, and to do that we must have leaders and organizers and are we going to stand by calmly and let them murder our leaders?”²³⁶ She also uses an example of the company discriminating against a union man by firing him. Finally, she emphasizes, “Thank God, our government is with us, or labor’s plight would indeed be a sad one. Come on, you women of labor, let’s get behind our men and help them fight/this battle and help them win.”²³⁷ This letter is a distinct battle cry amongst a much larger negative connotation backdrop within the rest of the letters sent to the editor for print. There is one similar letter worthy to touch on. Not as long, it does give praise to Governor Murphy for his efforts toward solving the strike. In, “One We Can All Trust,” the author simply declares, “To me, General Motors sounds like crybabies, as this look at us the big shots, always had our way; now laboring men, trying to have a say, and they are just so many of them sore republicans and would do anything to upset and mess up our state and hurt Frank Murphy.”²³⁸ With that being said, that makes one letter with a positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker, and one letter with a negative connotation about the General Motors Corporation. This is in comparison to the five letters with positive connotation in favor of the General Motors

²³⁵ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Urges Women Aid Strikers.” *The Flint Journal*, January 31, 1937, 6

²³⁶. “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Urges Women Aid Strikers,” 6

²³⁷ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Urges Women Aid Strikers,” 6

²³⁸ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: One We All Can Trust,” 6

Corporation, and the twelve letters with a negative connotation towards the strike. Of course, there are some which fall under both or more than one category as well.

Falling mildly on the side of labor, the letter, “Suggests Representative Plan,” believes that the government to step in and handle the situation. The author also says that labor difficulties have reached national crisis level. Representatives of GM employees must bargain with GM corporate as the best practice of collective bargaining. It would be impractical for every employee to separately represent themselves and bargain with GM executives. He suggests a functionality that is still like what the UAW has to this day, where democratically elected assemblies represent GM employees “as their exclusive agent in all matters of collective bargaining with their employer.”²³⁹ The author differs by saying all should enjoy equal voting rights regardless of union membership or non-affiliation. The author also believes that the organization should be incorporated under federal law.²⁴⁰

The next letter, written by Roy W. Bradley, is similar in nature to the previous letter as it also discusses government involvement. However, it is much less kind to the UAW leadership and the government’s role in the strike. It starts out by saying don’t judge the strikers too harshly: “So instead of judging these strikers, who apparently have no mind of their own, turn first to Mr. Roosevelt then to his tool Mr. Lewis for your answer.”²⁴¹ He uses the analogy of beautiful girl who got everything she wanted by using her looks and did not care about the method in which she gained the things she coveted. However, her beauty faded, and as such, the price she paid was too high as people saw through her. This analogy was used to illustrate the idea that the strikers have lofty goals, but their methods are costly and are not worth the price they will pay.

²³⁹ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Suggests Representative Plan,” 6.

²⁴⁰ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Suggests Representative Plan,” 6

²⁴¹ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Blames Political Leadership,” 6 January

The author gets bitter, and believes Roosevelt and Lewis were working together. That Roosevelt coached Lewis, who then called for the sit-down strike. “National industry is at a standstill, all to gain more power for Democracy, and you and I are supposed to like it?”²⁴² He said he wrote his letter, not the journal, nor the company, and ends his statement with don’t believe him just come ask. He has nothing else to do but be at home because of the present conditions. One can easily see how the bitterness projected in this letter has a negative connotation towards the strike, and the UAW.

Another letter, wrote by Carl Topham, has the simple title, “Wants to Go Back to Work.” With that title it is not difficult to see where the author’s head is at. He believes employees are being denied the right to work, and that businesses should be afforded the same right to property as a person. He asserts that the UAW is accused of destroying property and threatening lives, which of course is immoral. He also insists everything he got in the last three years of employment was due to General Motors.²⁴³ Another short letter also lays blame on the critical labor struggle on John Lewis. In the letter, “No Faith in John Lewis,” the author thinks people should trust General Motors more than in Roosevelt. The author clearly dislikes Roosevelt’s policies and says Lewis cannot help either. The author compares the situation to living in Russia, which of course is not a positive.²⁴⁴ In, “Urges Men to Think,” author R. Wellington Robinson states that he is not a General Motors employee, associate, or customer. However, he believes Lewis has not done anything for them (the strikers) and is only looking out for his own interests. He asserts that employees are just a capable of choosing their own hours and wages as organizers like Lewis. He

²⁴² “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Blames Political Leadership,” 6

²⁴³ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Wants to Go Back to Work,” 6

²⁴⁴ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: No Faith in John Lewis,” 6

claims you will “work and pay union dues into his union so that he and others may live in the lap of luxury.”²⁴⁵ This of course is a direct criticism of the UAW and its leadership.

In “Chevrolet Man’s Opinion,” the author talks about how he has twelve years working for Chevrolet, and that he asked to work for General Motors not the other way round. He believes that conditions in all the plants have been getting better recently, and that work councils are available to solve employee concerns. He talks about the positives for working at General Motors which are the loan program, Christmas bonus, and such. He also mentions biting the hand that feeds. “If the labor unions are so strong and their ranks so great, why do they have to solicit food for their sit-down strikers?”²⁴⁶ Finally, he believes that Lewis is an agitator and public nuisance, while at the same time, he gives praise to the General Motors executives. In the final letter presented, “Assails Lewis’ Tactics,” the author contends Lewis contributed \$500,000 to the Democratic National Committee. Because of this, the author believes that Lewis is now “demanding his pound of flesh”, meaning he is asking for favors in return for his contributions.²⁴⁷ In his letter, the author thinks Lewis has demanded as his right “the privilege of exploiting the American workingman, particularly the workingman in the automobile industry where wages are the highest and working conditions the best in the world.”²⁴⁸ The author continues to assert, the majority of the thirty-five thousand men just want to be left alone in peace to work. In his final condemnation of the strike, the author talks about the National Guard being deployed in Flint. “The national guard has been ordered into Flint. It is under orders to sit in its barracks while the strikers are illegal possession of

²⁴⁵ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Urges Men to Think,” 6

²⁴⁶ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Chevrolet Man’s Opinion,” 6.

²⁴⁷ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Assails Lewis’ Tactics,” 6

²⁴⁸ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Assails Lewis’ Tactics,” 6

various plants of the General Motors corporation. These strikers hold these plants in defiance of local legal law enforcement officers.”²⁴⁹

For January 31, the next two major pages worth examining are seventeen and twenty-three. For page seventeen, the article, “Flint’s Two Fisher Body Plants Enter Second Month of Strike Idleness,” is the most important one to consider. This is because it talks about how Buick expects to resume partial operations on Monday (the next day from when it was published), and that those plants are key units of General Motors. “There are no strikes in the Buick and Chevrolet plants, but for the last two weeks neither has been able to produce automobiles because their supply of bodies was cut off”²⁵⁰ The article confirms that thirty-eight thousand of Flint’s GM workers were idle, and that once Buick resumes Monday that number will diminish. “Buick Executives have announced they will call in 2,000 of their 15,000 employees Monday and will have 6,000 at work by the end of the week... Aside from the effects the strike has had on automobile production here, occupancy of the plants has become the chief obstacle in the way of peace negotiations between General Motors and the United Automobile Workers.”²⁵¹ Both those concepts are key themes throughout my research, as they exhibit the idea that General Motors wants to keep their employees working, but it’s the strike which is prevent this from happening. “Alfred P. Sloan, jr., president of the corporation, has served notice he will not negotiate with union leaders as long as men remain in the plants. Union leaders on the other hand, maintain they will not withdraw the men until the strike is settled.” Under the subheading of, “Strikers Await Orders,” the author claims the numbers for the strikers is between two hundred and five hundred, but maybe as high as six hundred. This

²⁴⁹ “Readers of The Journal Express Opinion on Strike in Letters to Editor: Assails Lewis’ Tactics,” 6 6

²⁵⁰ “Flint’s Two Fisher Body Plants Enter Second Month of Strike Idleness.” *The Flint Journal*, January 31, 1937, 17

²⁵¹ “Flint’s Two Fisher Body Plants Enter Second Month of Strike Idleness,” 17

number, of course, is a far cry from the thirty-eight thousand who are out of work because of the strike.

The author goes further into how he feels, stating that both sides are waging campaigns to get the public opinion on their side, meanwhile, the feelings in Flint were becoming more intense. “The great majority of the workers want to go back to work and are being forced into idleness by a handful of strikers... The occupation of the plants is illegal. The union leaders claim they are backed by most of the workers and that charges of General Motors and the Alliance are intended to incite violence against union men.”²⁵² This of course is a shot at union leadership. The article goes onto talk about the legal action which will take place the following day. “Legal steps will be taken Monday to oust the stay-in strikers when General Motors asks Circuit Judge Gadola to grant an injunction compelling them to leave the plants.”²⁵³ The last injunction was ignored by the strikers, and the sheriff pointed out he was not yet given the authority to evict them. The author also takes the time to mention the riot and the chase in terms of violence caused by the strike, and the fact that twenty-three hundred National Guardsmen have been in Flint for eighteen days. “State police, city police and sheriff’s office also have kept constant watch for indications of trouble.”²⁵⁴ Of course, the trouble is inferred to be caused by the strikers. Finally, the author feels the need to comment on how “Business in Flint has been seriously affected by the strike, which has reduced the daily payroll of the city by more than \$300,000.”²⁵⁵ Any reader who reads those numbers could clearly see why the author was against the strike.

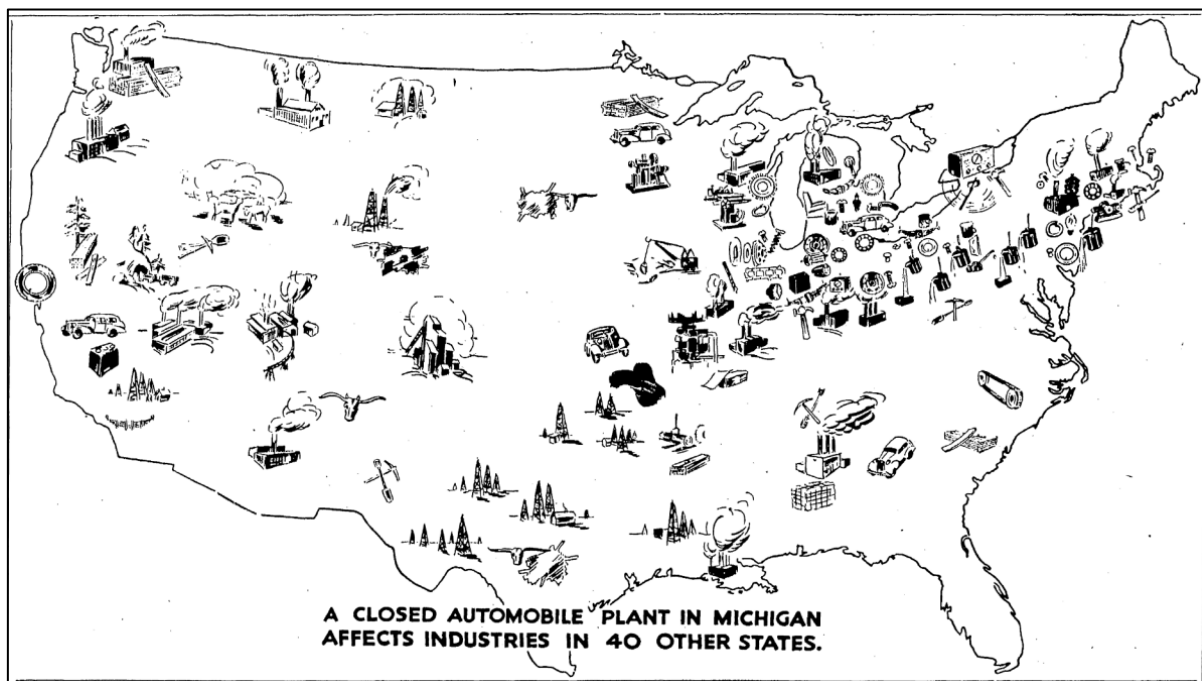
²⁵² “Flint’s Two Fisher Body Plants Enter Second Month of Strike Idleness,” 17

²⁵³ “Flint’s Two Fisher Body Plants Enter Second Month of Strike Idleness,” 17

²⁵⁴ “Flint’s Two Fisher Body Plants Enter Second Month of Strike Idleness,” 17

²⁵⁵ “Flint’s Two Fisher Body Plants Enter Second Month of Strike Idleness,” 17

On page twenty-three, “Auto Strike Hit Recovery,” connects to the idea of how the nation is now suffering because of the strike. The article claims, “The depressing effect of the automobile strikes is being felt today in scores of industries throughout the country that supply parts and materials to the auto manufacturers... As the strike is prolonged more and more unemployed and closed plants in the supplier industries are contributing to the spreading economic paralysis.”²⁵⁶ It also makes the point, that the automobile industry is a keystone industry in America. It is the biggest consumer of steel, rubber, glass, and other metals. “Virtually every state in the country has an industry that contributes something to the manufacture of automobiles... The auto industry creates employment for more than \$5,000,000 persons directly or indirectly, comprising 12 percent of the total gainfully employed population.”²⁵⁷ It also makes the point that auto manufacturers are Michigan’s biggest taxpayers, and that it had given out bonuses to its employees. In its subheading, “Depressing Effects Reach Nearly Every State,” the article connects to a picture of the United States, shown below:



²⁵⁶ “Auto Strike Hit Recovery.” *The Flint Journal*, January 31, 1937 23

²⁵⁷ “Auto Strike Hit Recovery,” 23

On February 1, the strike was now on its thirty-fourth day. As talked about earlier, General Motors would be back in court attempting to legally stop the strikers from occupying its plants. The main article for page one Home Edition was, “Strike Action Shifts to Circuit Court as G.M. Seeks Writ Against Stay-Ins.” This day would also be a little different because of the extra edition printed later in the day. Under the main headline was two different subheadings. The first was, “Union Heads Threaten To Call New Sit-Down At Chevrolet Factory,” which, with the use of term threaten, makes the union side seem responsible for inciting violence. Under that, the second subheading said, “Injunction Hearing Gets Under Way in Judge Gadola’s Court Before a Capacity Crowd; New Photographer Jailed for Contempt.” The article leads out by saying that both sides were to be heard by the court at 2 pm. In the lawsuit, Homer Martin was named, and the court asked him to show cause for why a mandatory injunction should not be issued, ordering them to evacuate the plants and to cease picketing. The union, however, asked the court not to rule as they were seeking a delay to the injunction. In the company’s argument, “The petition reveals that the stay-in strikers are no longer employes of the company, and charges they are ‘willfully and maliciously trespassing upon the company’s property in defiance of law and order.’”²⁵⁸ The article says the union wanted time to answer the injunction, however, the union had not yet answered the injunction issued on January 2. The move to postpone was denied by the judge, and the attorneys were given twenty minutes to prepare. Negatively portraying the labor organizers, the article says the UAW leaders scoffed at the writs, believing that injunctions are just slips of paper.

Then the article mentions the fact that “The stay-in groups have armed themselves with blackjacks and clubs and are prepared to man fire hose in each plant.”²⁵⁹ Giving the strikers more

²⁵⁸ “Strike Action Shifts to Circuit Court as G.M. Seeks Writ Against Stay-Ins.” *The Flint Journal*, February 1, 1937, 1

²⁵⁹ “Strike Action Shifts to Circuit Court as G.M. Seeks Writ Against Stay-Ins,” 1

of a reputation for being violent. In an effort to make the case for the union, “Union officials charge that several men were discharged at Chevrolet plant last week after it re-opened on a part-time basis.”²⁶⁰ The union claims it was because they were wearing union badges. However, Arnold Lenz, plant manager, cited reasons for each one of the firings. Finally, a statement is issued by Toledo organizer by the name of Travis, “The union is making every effort to preserve the peaceful conditions that have hitherto prevailed- except for the unprovoked assault made by the Flint police Jan. 11- but if General Motors is planning to defy President Roosevelt and American public opinion by employing force and violence against peaceful sit-down strikers, the corporation and no one else must shoulder the consequences.”²⁶¹ Although clearly anti-company, I must refer back to my idea that most pro-union or anti-company statements were almost entirely made by UAW labor organizers or officials.

Other interesting page one stories for this day can be found in the Extra edition, printed later. In big bold letters, on page one of the Extra edition, the main headline read, “Riots At Chevrolet As Strikers Attack.” According to the article, the Rioting began around 3:30 p.m. as the two shifts were changing. “The rioting was the result of an attempt by strikers to prevent men from going to work in the plants. The non-strikers resented the efforts to prevent them from working and engaged in battle with striking groups, many of whom appeared armed with clubs.”²⁶² Further describing the incident, the riot broke out in plant No. 9 first, and within a few minutes the scene both inside and outside the plant was of wild disorder. “According to men who were at work inside Plant No. 9, a group of 15 or more workers started trouble by trying to prevent the 450 men on second shift from going to work...Armed with clubs, which apparently had been brought to the

²⁶⁰ “Strike Action Shifts to Circuit Court as G.M. Seeks Writ Against Stay-Ins.” 1

²⁶¹ “Strike Action Shifts to Circuit Court as G.M. Seeks Writ Against Stay-Ins,” 1

²⁶² “Riots At Chevrolet As Strikers Attack.” *The Flint Journal*, February 1, 1937, 1-Extra

scenes by strike sympathizers before trouble began, a group attacked the factory police. Several non-strikers were beaten with clubs in their attempt to rescue the police.”²⁶³ That really sets up the strikers to be the aggressors and makes the non-strikers seem completely innocent. It goes onto say that women had a part in the battle, with a group of twenty or more women using long clubs to smash the glass out.²⁶⁴ It was said that strikers outside of the plant were urged to go back to the union headquarters. The good thing was that officers of the union were called to the fight and were able to restore order without swinging a club. “The mob on the outside then began to leave the scene as the speaker in the sound truck urged them to go to the Pengelly building where they would make their plans to ‘close every General Motors plant in the United States.’”²⁶⁵ In the unrest, the Sheriff appealed to the governor for aid. It was said that the National Guard was awaiting orders. The governor wanted to hear from the state police before giving any, even though Sheriff Wolcott called the governor in a plea for help. Likewise, there was ongoing issues because of the riot, such as traffic jams for blocks. “After the police had dispersed the rioters, many onlookers lingered to see what might happen, unaware of trouble elsewhere in the plants.”²⁶⁶ Around three hundred strikers were in possession of Plant No.4 by around 5:45 pm. “A mob of men was observed crossing the bridge in the Chevrolet plant No. 4 toward the powerhouse, where the police were concentrating.”²⁶⁷ The events depicted show the strikers being the aggressors, but they also show historically how another plant was overtaken by sit-downers. Which in retrospect was a successful move for the UAW.

²⁶³ “Riots At Chevrolet As Strikers Attack,” 1-Extra

²⁶⁴ “Riots At Chevrolet As Strikers Attack,” 1-Extra

²⁶⁵ “Riots At Chevrolet As Strikers Attack,” 1-Extra

²⁶⁶ “Riots At Chevrolet As Strikers Attack,” 1-Extra

²⁶⁷ “Riots At Chevrolet As Strikers Attack,” 1-Extra

I found the article on page eleven, also interesting in terms of my research theme. The article, “Flint Pastor Calls Auto Strike Moscow Inspired; Other Speakers Voice Varying Views on Situation,” is another example of how the strikers and UAW is depicted as un-American, or even worse, connects the group to an otherwise enemy of the U.S., communists. Written about multiple speakers, including John L. Lewis, Homer Martin, Mrs. Gifford Pinchet, George E. Boysen, other clergymen, and Father Coughlin, the headline concentrates on Father Coughlin over all the other speakers. Father Coughlin, who spoke Sunday about the strike, says, “Communism is sweeping through the automobile industry and threatening to challenge all America.”²⁶⁸ He believes the rights to private property being challenged by the sit-down strike. “When will the owners of mass production industries recognize that the only method of saving their private property is the paying of living, annual wages? “I will take issue with them (the strikers) for following false leaders, for striving to attain false objectives, for supporting unsound demands, such as equal voice with the owners in managing the affairs of the factory.”²⁶⁹

I will give credit some credit to the author for covering the speeches of Homer Martin and John L. Lewis, but they are not given much emphasis considering the extent of the article as a whole. Lewis suggests they settle the strike honorably and honestly, and that Pierre DuPont and J.P. Morgan could end the strike, but they’d rather use their resources against the workers. Homer Martin is only quoted in talking about how, because of the strikes, General Motor’s manufacturing is almost at a standstill. The coverage of Mrs. Gifford Pinchet speech was given more prominence than the previous two figures mentioned. She states, “As a stockholder in General Motors I am in complete disagreement with the labor policy of the corporation. I think it is bad ethics, bad morals

²⁶⁸ “Flint Pastor Calls Auto Strike Moscow Inspired; Other Speakers Voice Varying Views on Situation.” *The Flint Journal*, February 1, 1937, 11-Extra

²⁶⁹ “Flint Pastor Calls Auto Strike Moscow Inspired; Other Speakers Voice Varying Views on Situation,” 11-Extra

and distinctly bad business, General Motors introduced the sit-down in industry when it defied the government under NRA...The Flint Alliance is nothing but a vigilante front for General Motors. The Flint Alliance would have the country believe it represents workers who want to return to their jobs. What nonsense! They all want to return to their jobs- but not to a General Motors sweatshop.”²⁷⁰ However, considering what she said, I think it did a better job at defending the strike than both Lewis and Martin. She went on to say, “Labor has its biggest chance for victory in this strike. A union victory will make America a better place to live in.”²⁷¹ It says volumes that the headline concentrated on the negative connotation of the strike over those that it quoted in defense the sit-downers. Of course, George E. Boysen is also given some ink in the article. His stance is predictable; that the non-striking workers are tired of being kept out of work and will demonstrate in Lansing on Wednesday to prove this sentiment. Before ending the article, the author makes the connection between the strike and communism coming to America. It also quotes a former mine union member, the Reverend Mr. Coleman, saying that John L. Lewis, by causing a three-year strike, was responsible for a lot of suffering.

On February 2, because of the news of the court’s decision and the violence which occurred, this day’s news paper was jam packed with articles and pictures to scan. In total, I had forty-seven things which I accounted for on this day alone. The main headline on page one gives the outcome of the court injunction. The court ruled against the union, as the article titled “Court Orders Evacuation of Plants Within 24 Hours; Bans All Pickets,” tells readers the company won their lawsuit. “The injunction also restrains the strikers from picketing and declares that the reading of the court’s order by the sheriff to the men in all plants shall constitute sufficient notice for all

²⁷⁰ “Flint Pastor Calls Auto Strike Moscow Inspired; Other Speakers Voice Varying Views on Situation,” 11-Extra

²⁷¹ “Flint Pastor Calls Auto Strike Moscow Inspired; Other Speakers Voice Varying Views on Situation,” 11-Extra

parties concerned in the case.”²⁷² The subheading, “Chevrolet Plant Outbreak Brings New Troops Here,” also tells how Flint received more troops because of the strikers. After the ruling was disseminated, rioting broke out simultaneously in three Chevrolet plants. The strikers had no intention of leaving without a fight, or simply listening to the court’s verdict. The article lets the reader know that “National guardsmen restored peace after taking control of the Chevrolet and Fisher Body No. 2 factory area... Disorders caused by group of strikers trying to prevent others from going to work...United Automobile Workers sound car and accompanying guard car confiscated, weapons seized and six men jailed as military prisoners by national guardsmen...”²⁷³ Based off of the accounts of this story, clearly the violence and disarray were caused by the strikers. M.E. Coyle, President of Chevrolet was quoted in saying, “Monday’s rioting was ‘maliciously and obviously planned by a minority faction without any consideration for the best interests of the people of Flint.’”²⁷⁴ More information on details for the National Guard is discussed, and because of the continued hostility sources say Roosevelt may step in at any moment. “After several hours of rioting, with police and sheriff’s officers again outnumbered by the strikers, Gov. Frank Murphy heeded the appeals of Sheriff Thomas Wolcott and Mayor Harold Bradshaw and ordered the national guard to take control and restore order.”²⁷⁵ The entire article does not allow for any positive connotation for the strikers. It simply places the blame for any violence solely on the shoulders of the sit-downers.

On page twelve, “Lippmann Pictures Lawless Spirit Behind Both Sides in Auto Strike,” there is an example of affection towards the company. The author, Walter Lippmann says, “Here, for example, is the General Motors corporation, one of the great manufacturing concerns of the

²⁷² “Court orders Evacuation of Plants Within 24 Hours; Bans All Pickets.” *The Flint Journal*, February 2, 1937, 1

²⁷³ “Court orders Evacuation of Plants Within 24 Hours; Bans All Pickets,” 1

²⁷⁴ “Court orders Evacuation of Plants Within 24 Hours; Bans All Pickets,” 1

²⁷⁵ “Court orders Evacuation of Plants Within 24 Hours; Bans All Pickets,” 1

world, a marvel of technical progress, managed by industrialists and engineers of the very highest education and competence. It is moreover, an economically enlightened company which has paid good wages and has sold a better product at a decreasing price.”²⁷⁶ Lippmann, continues his praise of the company by talking about the “responsible managers” of General Motors. He also follows his pro-company stance with a criticism of Lewis: “The only way he [Lewis] can think to achieve his ends is to seize property that does not belong to him, hold it for ransom, and to seek to enforce his will by using illegal force of a small minority of the workers.”²⁷⁷ Finally, he ends his article with a blunt criticism of all unions, most assuredly thinking about the UAW in his stance. “But what precedes and accompanies almost all strikes is even more repulsive to the spirit of the law. There is, on the side of unions, the terrorism, physical and social against non-unionists, supplemented in many cases by downright gangsterism and racketeering.”²⁷⁸ The description of unions, clearly denotes what the author feels unions are responsible for.

One of the reasons there were so many scans for this day was the addition of a page one and page two as extra pages. Those two extra pages amounted to fifteen total scans. As such, I believe it vital to touch on some of the articles presented in those pages. On extra page one, the story, “Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized,” is accompanied by large pictures, which at the end of this paragraph will be shown. The article begins by saying, “Striking members of the United Automobile Workers of America today hold possession of the three General Motors plants in Flint as the direct result of rioting which broke out simultaneously in three plants of the Chevrolet Motor company here Monday afternoon.”²⁷⁹ The article talks about the rioting and bloodshed three weeks earlier, which was later named the Battle of the Running Bulls. It also mentions how part time was

²⁷⁶ “Lippmann Pictures Lawless Spirit Behind Both Sides in Auto Strike.” *The Flint Journal*, February 2, 1937, 12

²⁷⁷ “Lippmann Pictures Lawless Spirit Behind Both Sides in Auto Strike,” 12

²⁷⁸ Lippmann Pictures Lawless Spirit Behind Both Sides in Auto Strike,” 12

²⁷⁹ “Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized.” *The Flint Journal*, February 2, 1937, 1-Extra

made available by the company to get as many men working as possible, which of course is seen as a good gesture by the company. The idea expressed is that outsiders caused the trouble. That they started fighting which occurred between the shifts as non-strikers were attempting to enter the plant. "Included in this group [the strikers who were clashing with the workers] were more than a score of women, members of the auxiliary of the United Automobile Workers of America, who two weeks ago formed the 'Emergency Brigade' with announced purpose of taking part in any rioting which might occur."²⁸⁰

Shortened to EB, it was reported that the women carried two-inch clubs. "Under instructions from a union organizer in a loud-speaker car, the women went into action with their clubs and smashed scores of windows in the plant while fighting was going on inside."²⁸¹ The article makes no mention that tear gas was being used, or that the reason why the windows were being smashed because of the tear gas. "Employes who were at work inside the plant when the trouble broke out declared that the disorder was started by union men who started a parade around the aisles and began to boo the non-strikers when they refused to quit work...Realizing the situation, the non-strikers went into action and threw several of the strikers out of the plant."²⁸² Clearly, this is meant to be an anti-strike point. It should be noted that there had to have been some workers in the plant who were just there for the paycheck, meaning they were not necessarily anti-strike, but they did not want to participate in the strike for whatever reason. As such, the article says, "A tour of the plant under military guidance, revealed some 275 men at work at machines while around them national guardsmen paced about, slept on tables and benches, their guns stacked in the aisles...Workers went about quietly while the fighting was taking place."²⁸³ Additionally,

²⁸⁰ "Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized," *The Flint Journal*, February 2, 1937, 1-Extra

²⁸¹ "Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized," 1-Extra

²⁸² "Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized," 1-Extra

²⁸³ "Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized," 1-Extra

the article talks about the vast number of weapons which were used in the conflict; for example, gas grenades that were thrown. The description of the aftermath of the destruction is also pertinent to the views of the author. “The plant was cold. So much cold air was coming through the broken windows... Reiteration of working men being booed for simply being on the job by a minority of strikers.”²⁸⁴ Finally, there was more talk about loyal workers just trying to do their job, while working against the strikers. “There was only a group of 25 to 30 workers causing the trouble for 450 men...Armed with clubs, which apparently had begun brought...”²⁸⁵ When you add all the commentary on the strikers versus those attempting to work, it shows the author believes the strikers were at fault for the violence. At no point in this article, does the author beg the question whether or not the group of workers could have also instituted some violence towards the strikers.

The picture below, from the same page, has two captions. The first one for the picture on the left is, “Rioters in Action With Clubs.” The second picture which shows the National Guard, has the caption, “National Guard Takes Charge.” Combine with the other stories, and the article talked about in the previous paragraph, the whole page is essentially anti-strike or striker. Not much can be seen in the way of positive connotation towards the UAW either. On the other hand, one can find some positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation in those stories.

²⁸⁴ “Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized.” February 2, 1937, 1-Extra

²⁸⁵ “Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized.” February 2, 1937, 1-Extra

EXTRA **The Flint Journal** **EXTRA**

Fifty-Fourth Year Phone 2-1131 Flint, Mich., Tuesday, February 2, 1937 ★ Twenty-Two Pages Price Three Cents

PEACE IS RESTORED AS TROOPS CONTROL CHEVROLET, FISHER 2

Rioters in Action With Clubs—Here is an action picture taken during the disorders at Chevrolet plant No. 8 on West Kearsney street Monday afternoon. Both men and women can be seen smashing scores of windows along the sidewalk, all of them armed with clubs about 20 inches long. The women taking part were the members of the "Emergency Brigade" of the United Automobile Workers of America. A newsreel camera can be seen grinding away a historic record of the attack on the Chevrolet plant, which was timed to take place simultaneously with disorders inside the plant when the shift changed at 3:30 p. m. (Journal Photo).

National Guard Takes Charge—This was the scene in the Chevrolet plant district early this morning as the 126th Infantry, Michigan national guard, took control of the riot situation and restored order. This machine gun unit was on duty at Chevrolet and Clewood avenues, with full war-time equipment. In addition to the machine guns, they were equipped with .45 calibre automatics. (Journal Photo).

Both page one and two of the extra edition use the Flint Sit-Down as the sole means of filling space for its stories. On page two, there is a quote from one of the employees which I felt was worth considering. The article, "Police and Sheriff Force Quell Street Disturbance," is actually a continuation from a headline on page one; the article originally talked about in the previous page, "Motor Assembly Plant Is Seized," which is why I believed it of note as well. The article says, "The workers, most of whom came in while the fighting was still in progress inside the plant, went quietly and peacefully about their work, turning out gears and motor parts as though nothing extraordinary had happened." This goes to my earlier point that the author makes no mention of the fighting possibly being caused by the other side. It also quotes one worker, who was asked what he plans on doing when his shift is over. He claims that he will stay right on the job, "unless the company orders us home. We are going to protect our jobs. We have just as much right to stay

here and defend our jobs if the company wants us to, as the sit-downers must keep men from work.”²⁸⁶ Meaning, he planned on not moving so he could, in his mind, defend his spot on the line, and maintain his job status as a worker, not as a striker.

For Wednesday, February 3, the scan count was thirty-one total which, in comparison to the day prior, was a lot less. However, thirty-one scans could be in the middle not on the low end for a daily total. The front-page headline was also a bit brighter, as it looked like the parties were willing to get back to the bargaining table. Called, “Knudsen and Lewis Meet to Discuss Strikes At invitation of Governor,” the article begins with saying the governor gave both parties a couple of options. The conference was set to resume later that day. There was a back and forth take on the two parties getting together on behest of the government, with Roosevelt compelling the two parties to meet “[as a] last desperate effort to avert further violence and bloodshed in Flint.”²⁸⁷ It is also noted that “For weeks, General Motors has expressed willingness to negotiate with the union as soon as the sit-down strikers evacuate the Flint plants.”²⁸⁸ In covering the strikers, the article says they are continuing to defy the court order. “Informed of Sheriff Wolcott of the court order calling upon them to vacate the buildings, the stay in strikers later issued a public defiance of the court order by informing Gov. Murphy that ‘we have decided to stay in the plant’ and informing him that they would they obey court injunction.”²⁸⁹ Of course, even though the strikers would later be vindicated in their actions, this perpetuates the reputation of the strikers as law breakers. The article even says, “With the expresses determination of the strikers not to evacuate the plants, bloodshed is feared inevitable if an attempt is made to evict them. Union leaders, led

²⁸⁶ “Police and Sheriff Force Quell Street Disturbance.” *The Flint Journal*, February 2, 1937, 2-Extra

²⁸⁷ The Flint Journal. “Knudsen and Lewis Meet to Discuss Strikes At invitation of Governor.” *The Flint Journal*, February 3, 1937, 1

²⁸⁸ The Flint Journal. “Knudsen and Lewis Meet to Discuss Strikes At invitation of Governor,” 1

²⁸⁹ The Flint Journal. “Knudsen and Lewis Meet to Discuss Strikes At invitation of Governor,” 1

by John Lewis and Homer Martin, can prevent such action by ordering the strikers to leave the plants peacefully in response to the court's mandate."²⁹⁰ By examining this quote, one can see how the reader would place any further blame on the union and the strikers, without allowing for any blame to be shared by the company. The article goes into some details on the placement of the National Guard and the need to have armed men at the plants to prevent such violence from occurring again. "Artillery and cavalry are being held in reserve for use if needed and the city has taken on this aspect of martial law, even though it had not been officially declared."²⁹¹ In the final commentary on the court orders, which were given out earlier that day, the article quotes Robert Travis of Toledo, head of union organizers in Flint. He does not say he will order the strikers to leave the plants, but he does say, "we will not fight the government."²⁹² Travis goes onto to say, "As for the injunction, the union must, of course, await developments. Responsibility for what ensues when a party with unclean and seeks equity relief is not always easy to fix."²⁹³

On page two, I believe the article, "Texts of Telegrams by Strikers Appealing to Governor for Aid," was one worth examining. Among eleven scans for that page, this one takes on the personal accounts of people inside of the plant struggling to make sure the governor will protect their rights to strike. Angry, since in their view, the strike has gone on because the company would not meet their demands, the author of the article picks specific telegrams to show the point of the striker. In one collective message, the Fisher No. 1 stay-in strikers state, "It is only because of the coercion, intimidation, and dastardly acts on the part of the General Motors corporation, including excitement to violence, discriminatory discharge of union men, hiring of armed thugs and the use of company police that have led us to take extraordinary measures for self-protection of the

²⁹⁰ "Knudsen and Lewis Meet to Discuss Strikes At invitation of Governor," 1

²⁹¹ "Knudsen and Lewis Meet to Discuss Strikes At invitation of Governor," 1

²⁹² "Knudsen and Lewis Meet to Discuss Strikes At invitation of Governor," 1

²⁹³ "Knudsen and Lewis Meet to Discuss Strikes At invitation of Governor," 1

carrying on of the stay-in strike. We are advised that it is intended to have us ejected by guns and force. This will mean that the blood of workers will be shed.”²⁹⁴ One can easily see this quote as a great example of negative connotation towards the corporation. In the same article, the stay-in strikers of Fisher No. 2 plant say, “General Motors have violated the laws and shown its contempt for the President of the United States, as well as yourself...The police of the city of Flint belong to General Motors. The sheriff of Genesee County belongs to General Motors. The judges of Genesee County belong to General Motors.”²⁹⁵ This article is important because it takes the view of the sit-down striker. This is not from a UAW leader, but from people inside the plants. I think it is also key because it talks about my view on *The Flint Journal*, in the fact that much of the preverbal deck was stacked against the strikers. As it is indicated, General Motors owned much of Flint, or in other words controlled most of everything which was working against the strikers.

Going back to an article which criticizes the strike, “A.F.L. Chief Condemns Strike; Urges Sit-Downers Quit C.I.O.” is interesting because it is a larger union organization disparaging another union. To summarize the article the author declares that, “Sharply condemning use of the sit-down strike as a weapon of labor warfare, a leading director of the American Federation of Labor, in a double swing at the Committee for Industrial Organization, also virtually called upon striking automobile workers to quit John Lewis and the C.I.O.” John P. Frey, president of the metal trades department of the A.F.L., is the most outspoken as he wants to maintain his membership in General Motors plants. He called the C.I.O. a “‘Militant minority’ trying to ‘destroy self-government’ and ‘democracy’ in labor union movement.”²⁹⁶ The article goes into the history of the sit-down strike, and how it was an imported tactic from Italy. According to Frey, “True trade

²⁹⁴ “Texts of Telegrams by Strikers Appealing to Governor for Aid.” *The Flint Journal*, February 3, 1937, 2

²⁹⁵ “Texts of Telegrams by Strikers Appealing to Governor for Aid,” 2

²⁹⁶ “A.F.L. Chief Condemns Strike; Urges Sit-Downers Quit C.I.O.” *The Flint Journal*, February 3, 1937, 11

unionists will strenuously and determinedly defend democratic principles and methods in the trade union movement today, as their forefathers did when they built up the present movement which has proved its ability to hold its own in the face of governmental opposition....”²⁹⁷ The article also uses the notion of militant minorities to prove that democracy is at stake, and that the sit-down strike in Flint is a serious issue for all trade unionists.

As we get closer to the end of the strike, the news articles become less doom and gloom and as a result, seem more positive as the strike is seemingly almost over. For example, on February 4, the main headline was, “Hope Rising For Settlement of Auto Strikes Through Parleys at Detroit.” It is clear, *The Flint Journal*, regardless of how it leans, knows that the strike’s settlement, no matter the outcome, is important to its readers. The article examines why there has not been an agreement made by the two parties. It restates the point that the UAW being the sole bargaining agent for General Motors employees is the key sticking point between the two parties. It does however also say, “Both sides have advanced beyond their deadlock on union recognition and have started discussion of a comprehensive plan calling for resumption of work in all General Motors plants...Under this plan, production lines crippled for five weeks by the strike, would resume operation.”²⁹⁸ The article also touches on the progress which has been made, according to Governor Murphy. It also describes the positions of Lewis, Knudsen, and Murphy which, as a result, still informs the reader of the sticking points.

On page two of February 4, the article, “Visiting Newspaper Writer Describes Tensity Here As Rumors Fly Following Passing of Writ Deadline,” intrigued me. I felt it necessary to comment on it because it talks more about the negative effects of the strike on the city of Flint. The article, written by Herbert Brean, starts out by commenting how all the rumors regarding the strike are

²⁹⁷ “A.F.L. Chief Condemns Strike; Urges Sit-Downers Quit C.I.O.”¹¹

²⁹⁸ “Hope Rising For Settlement of Auto Strikes Through Parleys at Detroit.” *The Flint Journal*, February 4, 1937, 1

likely going to lead to violence and bloodshed. He says the city is “strike-torn”, and that with the mere rumor that strikers might be attacked, a large demonstration occurred to stop it. The writer continues to talk about how tense the situation felt, and how police and the National Guard were prepared to react. Placed inside its own box in the middle of the story is a paragraph about the story and author. I think it was the most prominent paragraph of the story and was worthy of quoting:

What happens to an otherwise busy and peaceful community when it is taken over by an invading force of several thousand men and women from other cities who shout open defiance to court orders and take fiancé to court orders and take complete control of an entire section of the city, destroying property and intimidating its citizens, is told here visiting newspaper writer, Herbert Brean, a staff correspondent of International News Service. Mr. Brean’s story gives some idea of the fear that gripped Flint Wednesday afternoon and all through the night as a result of the demonstrations at Fisher Body No. 1 plant through the city’s streets later.²⁹⁹

It is evident where the themes of the coverage of the Flint Sit-Down appear in this quote. The idea of outside forces being a negative influence on the prosperous and quiet city, as well as how the citizens of Flint are being intimidated by the strikers, are both negative connotations one can perceive.

The next major article for the day can be found on page eleven. In, “House Applauds Denunciation of Sit-Down, But Rejects Hoffman Resolution,” there was a discussion on how the Flint Sit-down is viewed in the federal government. In a subheading, called, “New York Member Calls Strike ‘Most American Thing in America;’ Sees Serious Trouble if ‘Malignant Group Fastens Self on Body Politic’,” tells the reader the connotation for the whole story. The main opposition to the strike, in terms of the federal government, is brought forth by republicans. “After applauding a declaration against sit-down strikers, the house today by a voice tabled a resolution

²⁹⁹ “Visiting Newspaper Writer Describes Tensity Here As Rumors Fly Following Passing of Writ Deadline.” *The Flint Journal*, February 4, 1937, 2

calling upon Secretary of Labor Perkins for detailed information concerning the General Motors strike in Michigan. The resolution, introduced by Rep. Clare E. Hoffman, Michigan Republican, called upon the labor secretary to state her attitude on this type of labor struggle, as well as the number of men out of work and similar information.”³⁰⁰ The article goes onto comment, “There are 18 members of the labor committee for the United States House of Representatives, and there was not one member of which who endorsed a sit-down strike anywhere or at any time in the U.S. This fact was dually noted by the reaction of a full-on applause when the Chairman of the committee, William P. Connery, made that statement. Connery reiterated by answering the question on the sit-down strike, by saying, ‘We do not believe any man has the right to go on the property of another and say I’m going to stay here and not work.’”³⁰¹ The idea of personal property is once again prominent in the argument against the strike.

Sticking with the theme of getting a republican’s view on the strike, the author quotes representative Reed, a New York Republican, whose first name was not mentioned. However, he is quoted in denouncing the “sit-down strikers as un-American. He praised development of the city of Flint, from a small town to a city, declaring that the people had shown a remarkable community spirit and representatives of cities in other parts of the country had gone to Flint to study its community development.”³⁰² Reed continued the themes presented repeatedly with his assault on the character of the strikers. The term un-American is quoted a second time in this article, and he also adds the notion of outside agitators causing trouble and damaging property. Another damaging quote Reed asserts, “That city was contended and happy until a short time ago. Remember that the

³⁰⁰ “House Applauds Denunciation of Sit-Down, But Rejects Hoffman Resolution.” *The Flint Journal*, February 4, 1937, 11

³⁰¹ “House Applauds Denunciation of Sit-Down, But Rejects Hoffman Resolution;” 11

³⁰² “House Applauds Denunciation of Sit-Down, But Rejects Hoffman Resolution,” 11

plants there have paid the highest average wage in the world.”³⁰³ In one final negative comment, Reed emphasizes that by illegally taking over the property, the strikers are also preventing thousands of others from working.

In the final section of the article, “No Investigation Duties,” the resolution was only discussed and not given a table vote. It is noted by the author that the Senate civil liberties committee had been investigating General Motors for weeks at that point, however, Connery did not see that as enough. It was Connery’s belief that it was not the duty of the labor committee to investigate the sit-down strike. While on the other hand, Hoffman thought information of the strikers and action to prohibit the strike was a necessary function of the committee. I could not grade this article as having a negative connotation for the company. This is because of the simple fact that the article only mentions the point of an investigation into General Motors, but it does not specify why it was needed. In other words, the company is not given any negative publicity, even though it is under a congressional investigation. It was also giving praise to the company because of the wages it provided its employees, and in context, with everything, is all but giving credit for the growth of the City of Flint.

One final article to look at for this day can be found on page sixteen. The title alone, “Day and Night of Terror Ends When No Effort Is Made to Rout Men in Plants,” stands out to anyone reading it. The article begins by stating, “After a day and night of terror during which control of the city Flint passed out of the hands of law enforcement agencies and into the grip of organized bands of hoodlums, most of them from outside the city and state, the city today assumed some assemblance of order but awaited further trouble with bated breath. Law and order was discarded as thousands of men and women from outside cities, mostly Toledo and Detroit, poured into Flint,

³⁰³ “House Applauds Denunciation of Sit-Down, But Rejects Hoffman Resolution,” 11

and took control, under leadership and direction of organizers for the United Auto Workers of America.”³⁰⁴ Against the law, protesters carrying weapons defied the circuit courts’ orders to not picket and to vacate General Motors property. This of course must be labeled as a negative connotation towards the strike and strikers.

The article continues by saying, “It was a scene of great disorder and found armed hoodlums taking charge of the traffic and intimidating, threatening, and even beating those who dared question their authority in the public highways. Even the chief of police, head of the city’s law enforcement, was chased from a scene by armed hoodlums.” In my research I did not find many examples of the term hoodlums being used, however, it can only be viewed as another example of a negative connotation. In the description of the events, it was said that the residents of the city were pleading for help, but the police were powerless to help them. The sheriff and city manager appealed to the National Guard for help restoring order, but their pleas fell on deaf ears. The UAW was given complete credit for causing all of the trouble. It was also blamed for using, “‘Hundreds of dollars’ worth of expensive chromium trunk hinges were thrown out and grabbed by the mob.”³⁰⁵ Towards the end of the article, the author mentions how some non-union Fisher employees could not recognize those in the crowd. Meaning, the crowd was mostly comprised of outsiders. One slight positive in the article was the coverage of the two slogans visible on the protestor’s signs. They were, “‘We Stand By Our Heroes in the Plants’ and ‘Shorter Hours Mean Happier Homes.’”³⁰⁶

On Friday, February 5 the main headline, in big, bolded lettering, was, “Judge Signs Writ Calling For All Strikers Arrest.” What can sometimes be confusing is the headline is not

³⁰⁴ “Day and Night of Terror Ends When No Effort Is Made to Rout Men in Plants.” *The Flint Journal*, February 4, 1937,16

³⁰⁵ “Day and Night of Terror Ends When No Effort Is Made to Rout Men in Plants;” 16

³⁰⁶ “Day and Night of Terror Ends When No Effort Is Made to Rout Men in Plants,” 16

necessarily attached to a particular story. In this case, the headline underneath that for the story, “Sheriff Appeals To Governor For National Guards,” is where much of the details are discussed for the top story. The article reveals that “Court orders for the arrest of every stay-in striker in the two Fisher Body plants here, all pickets on the outside of the two buildings and all officers and organizers of the United Automobile Workers of America are in the hands of Sheriff Thomas Wolcott for service this afternoon.”³⁰⁷ It was noted that, as a response to that news, the Sheriff could swear in as many deputies as he needs to. “After being certified by the county clerk, the court order was turned over to the sheriff for action. Realizing the impossibility of attempting to evict the stay-in strikers forcibly with his own small force of officers, Sheriff Wolcott sent a formal telegraphic request to Gov. Murphy asking for the use of the National Guard.”³⁰⁸ Under the subheading, “Men Ordered Arrested,” it listed all of the international officers who were also ordered to be arrested. In other news, but in the same story, the city decided to ban the sale of all liquors. There is also a quick description of how the “Federal Department of Justice [sent] investigators to inquire into the possession of machine guns by the stay-in strikers.”³⁰⁹ Finally, the author also reported that, Republicans cheered at the fact that the writ had been passed to evict the strikers.

Although a short story, “Strike Sends Boy To Detention Home” on page twelve, is an impactful one. It is clearly anti-strike in nature, even if it is only reporting the facts of the matter. It talks about how a boy must be taken from his family because of the strike. The grandfather is a striker, and grandmother spends her time near the plant. However, there is no explanation on why he is with his grandparents instead of his parents. The story reveals, “Deprived of proper care at

³⁰⁷ “Sheriff Appeals To Governor For National Guards.” *The Flint Journal*, February 5, 1937, 1

³⁰⁸ “Sheriff Appeals To Governor For National Guards,” 1

³⁰⁹ “Sheriff Appeals To Governor For National Guards,” 1

home because of a sit-down strike, a 7-year-old boy is in the detention home today. Police took the child out of a north side dwelling Thursday night after getting a report he was being left alone most of the time.”³¹⁰ That is the end of the story, but it does make most people reading the story sad that a kid is essentially left without care because of the strike. It makes the strikers seem irresponsible.

On page twenty, there are ten scans which I linked to the strike in some way. The first of the two major stories is titled, “Prohibition Returns to Genesee County for Strike Duration.” In it, the story describes the strike emergency occurring in the city, which is why there is a need for a prohibition. The article relays the fact that, “365 businesses in Flint affected alone, 648 in the county, [and the] sale of all liquors, wine and beer [are] barred by [the] action.”³¹¹ If I were a resident or business owner who was affected by the order, I know I would not be happy. Especially since “The action was taken as a result of drunkenness in the vicinity of Fisher Body No. 1 plant. With scores of beer gardens and a liquor dispensary in the vicinity, disorder has been the rule rather than the exception since the strike situation developed.” It was requested by Sheriff Wolcott after “the riotous disturbances at Fisher No. 1 Wednesday afternoon and night.” The only upside to the matter was the fact that there was a huge influx of business to places which sold alcohol just before the official announcement. The order was made “to protect the peace, safety, health and well-being of the citizens of the county of Genesee and the state of Michigan and shall remain in effective until further order of this commission.”³¹² Even so, I cannot imagine the citizens of Flint or Genesee County were even remotely happy about losing their right to have a drink.

³¹⁰ “Strike Sends Boy To Detention Home.” *The Flint Journal*, February 5, 1937, 12

³¹¹ “Prohibition Returns to Genesee County for Strike Duration.” *The Flint Journal*, February 5, 1937, 20

³¹² “Prohibition Returns to Genesee County for Strike Duration.” *The Flint Journal*, February 5, 1937, 20

Written by David Lawrence, the second major article for page twenty is, “Constitutional Government In U.S. Tested by Strike.” As a subheading, the article also says, “Lawrence Says Employers Face New Labor Situation When Workers With National and State Political Help Can Tie Up Property They Do Not Own.” We can see what the article’s main contention by reading both the headline and subheading. The author begins the article with a criticism of Lewis: “It is known that at no time was the matter of evacuation of the plants by the sit-down strikers of real consequence as an issue itself, but merely as a trading point, Mr. Lewis was ready to order evacuation if he could get concession in return. The last thing he wanted was a court injunction that would tell the country that sit-down strikers were unlawfully occupying the plants.”³¹³ The UAW is painted as fearing the injunction by the courts, therefore, it pleaded with the labor secretary to get involved to help their cause. General Motors executives would not speak with John Lewis but did meet with Miss Perkins. Regarding the court injunction, “Every possible effort was made to get General Motors folks to withhold their proceedings. John Lewis wanted to be able to tell the sit-down strikers that they had won a great victory.” This is meant as an insult to Lewis. However, who wouldn’t want to give good news, or obtain a victory in a struggle between two competing parties. The President was asked to intervene by the union, but General Motors still decided to move on with legal proceedings.

General Motors did not see Perkin’s request as important as one from the President himself, so the President decided to let the governor of Michigan know he also wanted the two parties to meet. At this point, the union had seemingly won a moral victory. According to the article, General Motors was caught in the Lewis “maneuver”. The court order said the sit-down strike was illegal but did not explicitly order their eviction from the plants. “In other words, the Wednesday

³¹³ “Constitutional Government In U.S. Tested by Strike.” *The Flint Journal*, February 5, 1937, 20

conference was finally got under way without actual evacuation. This means that, when the sit-down strikers leave, they will appear to do so in obedience to their own chieftains, Homer Martin or John Lewis, and not in obedience to any court order or demands from General Motors executives.”³¹⁴ The article goes on to say, “To this extent, every hour that the sit-down strikers disobey the order of the court and no eviction order is insisted upon by the company, the strikers achieve a moral victory among their followers. Nothing helps the publicity and membership drives of labor unions as much as to turn up their noses at ‘injunctions,’ which for years have been the bane of their existence.”³¹⁵ Now back in Lansing, Governor Murphy is doing what he can to prevent bloodshed and rioting. In regards to General Motors stance, the author believes “From a tactical standpoint, it is to General Motors’ advantage to see the sit-down strikers evicted, because this will strengthen their own position with employes who are loyal and who would not understand any concessions to Lewis union as anything but intimidation.”³¹⁶ This is true since, on any level of measure, the biggest weapon the sit-downers have is their possession of the plants; in other words, they have control of the means of production. If they were to give up that leverage, then the strikers stance would be significantly lessened.

The article goes into how Lewis’ views the progress the strikers have made. In his reasoning, General Motors is trying hard not to surrender, but any victory made by Lewis and the UAW no matter how small, can still be used as a rallying call for more people to join. This is because he has already done more to organize than the A.F. of L. “When it is all over, the story of how John Lewis made a big corporation withhold an eviction order or how he forced them to make this or that concession will all be duly enlarged upon the membership organizers as a reason for

³¹⁴ “Constitutional Government In U.S. Tested by Strike.” *The Flint Journal*, February 5, 1937, 20

³¹⁵. “Constitutional Government In U.S. Tested by Strike,” 20

³¹⁶. “Constitutional Government In U.S. Tested by Strike,” 20

hesitant workers to join the Lewis union.”³¹⁷ In that quote, the author is explaining how big of an impact the Flint Sit-Down Strike could potentially have. In the authors ending statement, he brings his point back to the headline, as well as gets back into the reoccurring issue of personal property.

He states:

So General Motors executives, hemmed in by pressure from the president, and by the governor of Michigan, both of whom probably feel they must take into account the political factors, have been trying to keep from making any concessions that would be construed as surrender. For employers on every side are watching the General Motors strike as the real test of constitutional government in America. If it means that hereafter forcible seizure of property is to be condoned or to be tangled up in dilatory legal proceedings while workers, with the political support of national and state governments, continue to tie up and occupy property they do not own, then employers generally are faced with an entirely new situation in labor warfare that cannot but mean a long and painful period of disturbances until universal membership in trade unions becomes compulsory, along with government supervision of such labor unions.³¹⁸

This is a strong defense of General Motors in their fight against the union. If the corporation makes any concessions, it is because they had to because of outside influences, not because of the strength or legality of the strike itself.

Before moving onto the next day, I felt it pertinent to touch on one pro-union story from page twenty. It was not a long article, but it was worth examining. The article, “72-Year-Old Great Grandmother Joins Pickets at Fisher No. 1,” talks about how she is happy to join with the strikers in their efforts against the company. The opinionated, Mrs. Rebecca Goddard, is said to hate anti-unionists. She just wanted to get away from those who are anti-strike, in her neighborhood in Clio. She calls those that don’t believe in the union, “sit-down grouches” in other words the naysayers. She describes her large family and tells the author that she had been in a strike 52 years ago. That

³¹⁷ “Constitutional Government In U.S. Tested by Strike,” 20

³¹⁸ “Constitutional Government In U.S. Tested by Strike,” 20

strike was done by the loggers, who only wanted to work shorter hours. She says they won that strike and will win this one too.³¹⁹

The last day of the week, Saturday, February 6 had only fifteen total scans. The only article pertaining to the strike on page one was, "Strike Conference Still Deadlocked And Plan For Eviction Being Delayed." In the reporting, the UAW suggests, as a way of compromising, giving them sole rights to the twenty plants on strike at that time. However, General Motors says they don't have the majority in all those plants, so it does not see agreeing to that provision. Governor Murphy, in his attempts to seek compromise, wanted General Motors to give their maximum and the union to give their minimum number of plants, which would be recognized as being represented by the UAW, to see where the compromise could be made. "With the conferences continuing in Detroit, the situation in Flint was quiet today. No action toward eviction of the stay-in strikers is planned by sheriff Wolcott until he has definite word from Governor Murphy, he declared this afternoon." It was noted that the President is keeping close tabs on the situation. It was also said that the governor still had high hopes, but it seems as though they were not making any progress. The article ends with the authors view on how the current situation was going. "Sharp words were exchanged when the union leaders charged General Motors with planning the court action deliberately to bait Lewis into breaking off negotiations.... With the governor refusing to permit action of any kind in Flint, the situation today remained one of watchful waiting."³²⁰ This is also key, had the governor allowed the troops to forcibly remove the strikers, the end of the strike could have been much different. This goes back to the idea that having a labor friendly governor helped

³¹⁹ "72-Year-Old Great Grandmother Joins Pickets at Fisher No. 1." *The Flint Journal*, February 5, 1937, 20

³²⁰ "Strike Conference Still Deadlocked And Plan For Eviction Being Delayed." *The Flint Journal*, February 6, 1937, 1

the strike, and the state government was able to help the sit-downers simply by being an arbitrator and not rushing to the defense of the company's property.

There were five stories connected to the strike on page seven. The most important of which was, "Enforcement of Labor Law First Requires Consistent U.S. Policy." This is because it connects to sentiments discussed earlier, on how the strike is getting help from a government which is not willing to enforce its own laws. "At any rate, if a settlement is reached, it will come about because two obstinate men have given in on the appeal of the President, and not because the law, which supposedly governed the situation, actually functioned."³²¹ According to the author, the Wagner Act did not work, and it was supposed to be the solution to this exact issue. "The government did not want to take the responsibility of condoning or condemning the sit-down strike. It acted only when courts solved that ticklish problem for it."³²² This shows a sentiment of frustration towards the government for not putting an immediate end to the strike.

This next story is particularly interesting as it connects the institution, I am writing this thesis for, [the University of Michigan], to the subject matter I am writing about. The article I am speaking about is, "Workers Imperil Just Rights With Sit-Down Strikes, U.-M. Historian Says." The subheading of the article is, "Feels Plight Critical One: Educator Fears Results of Government's Tolerance for Property Seizure." Professor Albert Hyma, of the University of Michigan, stated, "If the workers of the United States want to lose their just rights they can do so most quickly and most effectively by engaging in sit-down strikes."³²³ He continues to say, "There never was a time when the American working man had such favorable opportunities to obtain bargaining rights from his employer as now...and it would be a shame to see him lose these

³²¹. "Enforcement of Labor Law First Requires Consistent U.S. Policy." *The Flint Journal*, February 6, 1937, 7

³²². "Enforcement of Labor Law First Requires Consistent U.S. Policy," 7

³²³ "Workers Imperil Just Rights With Sit-Down Strikes, U.-M. Historian Says." *The Flint Journal*, February 6, 1937, 8

opportunities because certain agitators have encouraged him to violate the laws of our national and state governments. Let history be his guide.”³²⁴ As a historian he makes the comparison to the rise of Mussolini and fascism. He is coming from a place of authority because of his educational background, and his experiences, which is important for the reader. The author, R. Ray Baker, emphasizes his source by saying, “Also, Prof. Hyma warns, government officials should realize that cannot condone the violation of law protecting personal property. When, in this country, the secretary of labor declares that she does not know whether sit-down strikes are legal or not, civil war, political chaos and the loss of all political rights of the people are certain to follow, unless persons placed in such responsible positions rectify at once the harm they have inflicted through their ignorance of European history.”³²⁵ Going back to the story, “Bitter Labor Battle Looms as A.F.L. Orders Craft Unions back to Work,” which was on page five of the January 10 edition of *The Flint Journal*; we know that John P. Frey is not a fan of the sit-down strike, and Professor Hyma agrees with that interpretation. We know this because Hyma, outright says so. Professor Hyma then goes into his personal life experiences. He says, “In February, 1921, I was in Florence, and there I saw the inevitable results of the sit-down strikes, when machine guns mowed down mobs in the streets and men murdered each other in cold blood. One day it seemed to me as if one whole section of the city was in flames.” This type of description of devastation is a powerful image for the reader, and anyone reading it would not want to experience such destruction in their own city.

The article is key to understanding the main themes of the local media’s portrayal of the sit-down strike. The unlawfulness of it, the fact that it is led by radical minded people. The idea

³²⁴ “Workers Imperil Just Rights With Sit-Down Strikes, U.-M. Historian Says.” *The Flint Journal*, February 6, 1937, 8

³²⁵ “Workers Imperil Just Rights With Sit-Down Strikes, U.-M. Historian Says,” 8

that it could lead to more extremism, loss of life, and property damage. The idea that it would lead to fascism in America. All scary and harmful concepts if the sit-down strike is allowed to move on, and even worse, be successful. The future of America was at stake, and one would hope evil does not prevail. We know now that looking back, the strikers were morally right, and fascism did not come to America, or at least not as a direct cause of the strike. Professor Hyma viewed the situation as “critical and unless potential sit-down strikers realize how they may be defeating their own objectives, trouble on a large scale may be brewing. ‘He fears the movement will not end with peace in the General Motors plants, because radical-minded exploit situations elsewhere to satisfy their ambition for dictatorial power.’”³²⁶

³²⁶ “Workers Imperil Just Rights With Sit-Down Strikes, U.-M. Historian Says,” 8

Chapter 10: Week Seven- The End Is Near

It was the last week of the strike. Tensions were still high as negotiations were ongoing between the UAW and General Motors. The first story on Sunday, February 7 was, “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.” The headline explains what the major sticking point between the two parties throughout most of the negotiations has been. The sub-caption for the article also explains more about the situation, “Parley Is Deadlocked Over Union’s Demand; Situation Is Quiet Here.” Finally, still in bold, the final header reads, “Sheriff Plans No Action on Eviction; Federal Investigator Here.” When one examines all three captions together, it gives a detailed description of the story at hand. Accordingly, the reader knows that the situation in Flint is quiet, even though in Detroit the negotiations are continuing forward. What is slightly misleading, is how the sheriff does not have plans to evict the strikers because he does not have permission to do so. Even though the court has ruled in General Motors’ favor, the Governor still has not given him permission to forcibly remove anyone because Governor Murphy does not want the talks in Detroit to breakdown. The governor also was steadfast in his resolution to avoid further violence. The author clearly talks about how the sheriff was being treated over the strike, “Key figure in the latest strike developments, the sheriff was bitterly criticized by irate anti-strikers for delaying action. He received numerous telephone calls during the day from persons who demanded immediate eviction of the strikers.”³²⁷ The final portion of the article also talks about the strikers resolve: “The stay-in strikers, who have declared they are ready to die defending their positions, remained barricaded in the plants.” Depending on how one wants to interpret this quote, it could be potentially positive or negative. Typically, those who are willing to die for their convictions are

³²⁷. “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.” *The Flint Journal*, February 7, 1937, 1

viewed as courageous. However, if one views the cause as immoral or unjust, then it could be seen as foolish.

On page nine, we again see letters to the editor. Within the article, “Readers of The Journal Discuss Strike Situation in Letters to the Editor,” there was 10 different letters written to *The Flint Journal*, with each one having a different connotation or view on the strike. The first one, “Would Aid Flood Suffers,” is defiantly against the strike. Written by a Mr. John A. Spooner, he believes that Roosevelt should ban the strike, and that people should go back to work and be happy with their pay too. He thinks the strike is negatively impacting the U.S., and Americans have a duty to help those in need due to the flooding. It was a short two paragraph piece, but it was blunt and to the point.³²⁸ The next letter, written by Edmund Richards, of Grand Blanc, was just over four times as long, with close to nine paragraphs. The letter, titled “Defends John L. Lewis,” is easily seen as a pro-union and sit-down strike stance while, at the same time, it was not necessarily against General Motors. I can say this because he never officially says something negative about the company. In his letter, he defends the union by giving positive examples of what unions have accomplished such as: the eight-hour workday, protection of the workers (cannot be fired without reasonable cause), better mining laws in many states— meaning health and safety wins— and better overall working conditions. He says, with all those positives in mind, being a union member is well worth the price of membership. He argues against an anti-union statement which was, most likely, according to him, made by a lazy or incompetent worker. His proof of this is that the anti-union workers check is low because it is based on pieces of work. Meaning, it is low because he did not produce product. Finally, in his praise of John Lewis, Richards says that Lewis is a patriot.

³²⁸ “Readers of The Journal Discuss Strike Situation in Letters to the Editor: Would Aid Flood Suffers.” *The Flint Journal*, February 7, 1937, 9

He also claims that Lewis, “probably saved the United States a billion dollar coal bill, and kept the mines running, and supplied the government with all the coal they needed.”³²⁹

On the opposite side of connotation, is the letter, “Answers Mrs. Pinchot,” The letter is avidly pro-company and anti-union. Mrs. Pinchot is the wife of Gifford Pinchot, who served as Pennsylvania’s governor. Mrs. Pinchot characterized the conditions of working at General Motors as being a sweatshop, and in the view of the author, Floyd B. Palmer, she is overwhelmingly mistaken. Mr. Palmer seems to think that people don’t need higher wages, they need a lower cost of living. He believes, “All we ever do is pass the buck on to the employer with a demand of higher wages.”³³⁰ What he is talking about is essentially a concern of all middle- and lower-class citizens. This is because even if an employer is willing to pay higher wages, the cost of living goes up to compensate; essentially the author is talking about inflation. He further asks, “What power has a union leader got other than political pressure or coercion?” By implying coercion, the writer is criticizing union leadership.

Another pro-company letter is authored by Vernon S. Pierce, titled, “Where Is the Law?” He starts out by speaking on the good business practices of General Motors. “In the present situation has anyone stopped to consider that G.M. has paid every workingman his wages on time and in full amount agreed upon.” Although, I cannot say for sure whether paying someone late was illegal back then, any business must pay their employees on time and for the hours they have worked. I know in this day in age, a business that does not is in violation of labor laws—otherwise known as wage theft. He then goes onto talk about how General Motors has come back since the depression and has offered its customers a valuable product. “Do people realize that the automobile

³²⁹ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.:Defends John L. Lewis.” *The Flint Journal*, February 7, 1937, 9

³³⁰ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Answers Mrs. Pinchot,” 9

industry has been the backbone of recovery and deserves unqualified protection of the law.”³³¹ In this aspect, the author is not wrong. Additionally, Mr. Pierce accuses union members at their meetings of not being able to speak proper English, meaning they were un-American. He believes that politicians and government officials are bound by promises to labor unions, therefore, citizens must rise up and demand laws be enacted to protect against strikes which negatively impact everyone. “The present situation is not a dispute of wages or working conditions because the corporations have bettered these conditions and stand ready to improve them further. It is merely a revolutionary demonstration to endeavor to gain control of the automobile corporations and industry, in which the union has openly threatened to also call on strike, buses, taxicabs, mine workers, and workers of every public service.”³³² The implication of which is either fascism or dictatorship led by union leaders. “How long will the public sit back and allow a political machine to pay back party debts while the man who wants to work, starves.” This is another great example of how non-strikers viewed the strike, that they cannot work because the strikers themselves are preventing them from doing so. The fact that he believes a lack of work leads a man to starve, is thoroughly telling in why he wants the strike to end.

Along the same lines of the previous paragraph is the letter called, “Deplores Loss of Work.” Author Eli Bearup starts out by echoing the sentiment of the previous letter, making a doom and gloom statement about the possibility of starving to death: “If this strike goes on, the people who are not starved to death will be taxed to death. Are there any working conditions that will satisfy a man who doesn’t want to work? Are there any working conditions that will satisfy a man who is drunk five days a week?”³³³ My assumption is that is an insult against the auto worker,

³³¹ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Where Is the Law?” 99

³³² “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Where Is the Law?” 9

³³³ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Deplores Loss of Work,” 9

meaning they are noting but drunks. Again, we see the notion that the strike is causing people to go broke while they are waiting to return to work. He asserts, “The law should not allow strikes that make innocent suffer for the guilty.” The idea here is that the guilty ones are the ones on strike. He also makes a leap of faith in his assertion that the extra time the workers have since their hours were lowered is a bad thing; it allows the workers to have more time to do projects around their own house, which in turn is taking away jobs from other hard-working people. He uses the example of instead of going to a repair shop for their car, they fix it themselves, and instead of hiring a carpenter, they do it themselves. In essence, the workers having more time on their hands because their daily hours of work were reduced, will result in others losing work themselves. An auto worker would take their extra time and fix whatever project is on their plate rather than hire someone else to do it.

Harry H. Smith, who is the President of Fisher Body Volunteers, wrote a quick letter on his take of the situation. I feel as though his letter, “Explains Volunteers,” is better to quote rather than to quickly summarize the arguments. His letter reads as follows:

I wish to emphasize to my fellow workman that Fisher Body Volunteers has but one purpose, and that is to get men back to their jobs by lawful and orderly methods. The sit-down strikers who are in illegal possession of the plants claim they are protecting their jobs by remaining in the plant. Surely then, by the same token, we who are in the majority are entitled to some job protection also. The time has come when we must insist upon the protection of our rights. From the time this organization was formed we have preached law and order. But, we need work and we need it badly...

Again, we circle back to the argument that they are there illegally, and that it is a minority of workers who are on strike.

Mr. Fred J. Perkins, a 58-year-old male, also wanted to express his situations in his letter, “Assails Sit-Down Strikes.” He starts his letter by explaining his religious views, and the belief

that, “The love of money is the roost of all evil, so says God’s word.”³³⁴ He believes that in his life the country has never been in such an turmoil and connects it to people wanting a higher wage. “All of this turmoil is being brought on by two prominent men of U.A.W.A organization, who are, in my estimation, Russian Reds or Communists. They are ordering their gang to occupy buildings that do not belong to them gain their victory, which is against the laws of this country.”³³⁵ By calling the leaders communists he discredits them and makes them seem un-American. He believes, laborers should be happy with their rate of pay, and General Motors has been the lifeline for Flint. Additionally, he believes the strikers are mistreating the leaders of the city by calling them rats but thinks the strikers themselves are lower than rats. “A rat will work; if he can’t find a whole ear of corn, he will take a nubbin.”³³⁶ That was his logic as to why a striker was lower than a rat.

The final letter to the editor, “Assails All Unions,” also demonstrates most of the negative feelings towards the strike. Author Grover C. Matson starts his letter by asserting, “The unions must seize commerce, they are not able to form their own industry. The union must trespass upon American rights. Just as criminals coerce people, unions coerce business. They do not recognize industrious efforts of ambitious young men of our country.”³³⁷ This of course is a harsh criticism of all unions, not just the UAW. His criticism goes further, “The unions have high-jacked business during the last three years, with terrorism and intimidation. Industry has been retarded by dissension created among workers by union terrorist, causing loss of labor and idle machinery.”³³⁸ The term high-jack and terrorists evokes strong feelings by any readers who agree with the author.

³³⁴ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Assails Sit-Down Strikes,” 9

³³⁵ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Assails Sit-Down Strikes,” 9

³³⁶ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Assails Sit-Down Strikes,” 9

³³⁷ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Assails All Unions,” 9

³³⁸ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Assails All Unions,” 9

“Flint has no place for unions of any kind, since business has been good, induced by good working conditions in our factories. When factories are producing, everyone is happy and every business happy, but the unions are unhappy. They cannot collect money except when they create dissension among workers... Unions deprive people of work, and any chance of security regarding jobs. Unions create fear, dissension, loss of work through strikes, which no one raise in pay could overcome.”³³⁹ This notion of how business has been good, and that unions are only hindering companies, is a falsity which has been perpetuated since unions have begun to organize in the United States. His argument against unions costing jobs and job security is whole-heartedly misplaced. However, one can argue that depending on the size of the raise and the timeline for a strike, he does have a valid criticism of raises not being able to make up the loss of wages from a strike. He closes out his letter out by giving illustrations of what he considers to be union terrorism.

An example of union terrorism is that of San Francisco, a few years ago. The city was prosperous, and unions began spreading propaganda and terrorism about among business. Eventually, San Francisco was left destitute. Business left the city, moving to distant towns and out of state. Leaving behind a vast poverty stricken people. Homes became valueless, and worthless, for there was no work for people, because of unions having forced factories out of town...³⁴⁰

Whether or not the author knows it, clearly his characterization of San Francisco is a hyperbole. The example of how unions did or did not affect the city of San Francisco is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, historically unions have a positive impact on the surrounding areas in which they organize. They bring up the wages of individuals who are organized at a particular business, thereby allowing those in union jobs to spend more money in the community in which they live.

The next day, the headlines were still not positive in terms of settling the strike. The first page of February 8, had the headline, “Governor’s Strike Conferences Near Collapse Entering

³³⁹ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Assails All Unions,” 9

³⁴⁰ “All Workers’ Right To Bargain Is Being Insisted Upon By G.M.: Assails All Unions,” 9

Upon Second Week.” Again, the main issue at hand was the unions demand to be the sole bargaining unit of the General Motors plants which were on strike. The company’s stance was clearly defined in the article. “General Motors is standing firm on its insistence that workers in its plant shall have the right to choose their own representation for collective bargaining rights in any plant.”³⁴¹ Continuing with an anti-UAW sentiment, the article allows for the A.F. of L. to be heard. “Backing up this standby General Motors is the American Federation of Labor, William Green, president of the labor federation, cast his weight against Lewis urging Gov. Murphy to see that the rights of A.F. of L. members are protected in the strike negotiations.”³⁴² Then the article talks about the efforts of Governor Murphy, and his resolve to help the strike come to an end. “Murphy worked desperately Sunday in an effort to bring the two factions together and effect a truce in the labor warfare which has ended paychecks for more than 200,000 men and women.”³⁴³ Most of the information given about the UAW in this article is negative. For example: “Lewis claims the U.A.W. has a majority of G.M. production workers, although not a majority in every plant. This is denied by General Motors, who have stated 83 per cent of the affected workers have signed back-to-work petitions, or indicated their opposition to the union through similar means... Further court action is expected hourly. It is expected that an injunction will be asked against the stay-in strikers who captured Chevrolet No. 4 plant last Monday during the rioting.”³⁴⁴ Again we see in this quote the themes of minority workers are the ones insisting on the strike, and that rioting occurred, which is blamed on the strikers. Homer Martin declared, “the stay-in strikers are not an issue in this situation but that ‘it is a question of whether General Motors was going to recognize

³⁴¹. “Governor’s Strike Conferences Near Collapse Entering Upon Second Week.” *The Flint Journal*, February 8, 1937, 1

³⁴² “Governor’s Strike Conferences Near Collapse Entering Upon Second Week,” 1

³⁴³ “Governor’s Strike Conferences Near Collapse Entering Upon Second Week,” 1

³⁴⁴. “Governor’s Strike Conferences Near Collapse Entering Upon Second Week,” 1

the right of workers to organize.”³⁴⁵ This was the only indication of any type of positive connotation towards the strikers.

Also, on page one was the small article pictured below. There are a few important points in the strike developments story I would like to highlight. First, the request to reject the UAW’s demand for exclusive bargaining right. Second, the description of Flint’s situation becoming more tense. Next, the reporting that the union’s meeting was orderly. Finally, the description of the influenza cases in plant No. 4.³⁴⁶

Today's Strike Developments

Conference resumes in Detroit with complete collapse expected at any moment.

William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, wires Gov. Murphy urging that John L. Lewis' demand for exclusive bargaining rights be rejected.

Situation in Flint grows more tense. National guardsmen ready to move quickly from nine areas in the city if trouble breaks out.

City Manager Barringer to present a report of the organization of special reserve corps of police at tonight's city commission meeting.

Union holds orderly meeting in front of Fisher No. 1 plant Sunday afternoon and holds a second session Sunday night in Pengelly building.

At least 40 reported stricken with influenza in Chevrolet plant No 4. General Motors blamed for this by union. A typographical error in The Sunday Journal said plant No. 9 was affected, instead of No. 4.

Homer Martin opens speaking tour. In Cleveland speech he declares the stay-in strikers are not an issue in the situation.

³⁴⁵ “Governor’s Strike Conferences Near Collapse Entering Upon Second Week,” 1

³⁴⁶ “Today’s Strike Developments.” *The Flint Journal*, February 8, 1937, 1

For February 8, there was a cluster of stories on page eight of *The Flint Journal*. Out of the twenty-seven total scans for that day, eleven of them came from page eight. One of those stories, “Automotive Daily News Blames Murphy Machinations for Continued Strike,” is a report on what another news source was saying about the strike. The trade newspaper of the industry, called Automotive Daily News, is criticizing Murphy and his handling of the strike. Quoting the paper it says, “As the 41st day dawns on the General Motors strike it must be obvious to all except blandly [plainly] optimistic Gov. Murphy that firm enforcement of the law, rather than lily-livered lip service to men who have openly resorted to open banditry, would insure the earliest settlement with the least friction.”³⁴⁷ It also says, “In its criticism of Gov. Murphy’s stand in the negotiations, the publication declared that ‘Through the Murphy machinations, General Motors has been deprived of all legal redress.’”³⁴⁸ The sentiment of the newspaper is nothing new, the belief that the government cares more about the strikers than it does about company property appears frequently. Governor Murphy attempting to solve the strike without the forceful ejection of the strikers earned him a lot of criticism. “With these facts in mind [the idea that seizing of property for ransom is nothing more than brigandry] it is difficult to understand the attitude of Gov. Murphy, who has through failure to use the powers of his office and by flouting the orders of the courts of the state, appeared to be trying to shot-gun peace talks between General Motors leaders and Lewis. His refusal to move against Lewis’ cohorts by enforcing legal writs can be interpreted in no other way.”³⁴⁹ The article continues to criticize the governor in various ways. It even goes so far as to imply that because of his handling of the situation, there will be a consideration for impeachment. Finally, the article makes the declaration that the UAW is defying constitutional authority.

³⁴⁷ “Automotive Daily News Blames Murphy Machinations for Continued Strike.” *The Flint Journal*, February 8, 1937, 8

³⁴⁸ “Automotive Daily News Blames Murphy Machinations for Continued Strike,” 8

³⁴⁹ “Automotive Daily News Blames Murphy Machinations for Continued Strike,” 8

The next essential story from page eight was “Text of Daniel A. Reed’s Speech Before Congress Giving Flint Conditions Before and After Strike.” Representative Reed, from New York, believes the strike is, “the most un-American thing that has ever occurred in Flint.” His also thinks that “a group of outside disturbers went there to rule or ruin, and that as a result the city is now an armed camp.” The article continues to break down his speech and quotes, everything he said when speaking to the House of Representatives. He talks about the type of people in Flint, and briefly gives history of Flint going back to carriages. Additionally, Representative Reed speaks about the Flint’s community spirit, “The citizens of the town met frequently. They met in church and in [the] factory and everywhere [else] to see what they could do to build up a beautiful, happy, and contented community.”³⁵⁰ He addresses the workman of Flint by talking about the positive stories he knows about the city. He gives the positive examples of the community helping the local Boy Scout troop, and the story of the community building schools: “Co-operation has made Flint a model city. Model workmen’s homes have been built...Everything was perfect contentment in the city of Flint and the citizens were proud of their city.”³⁵¹ The end of the article circles back to the representative’s argument that the strike is un-American. He claims that the strike is a disturbance of peace. He refers to the damage caused during the various times strikers and police clashed. “Windows were smashed, property destroyed, people injured, and men willing to work prevented from doing so...I repeat the sit-down strike is un-American and violates every principle of personal liberty.”³⁵² Again, this coming from a U.S. representative would carry some weight to the reader.

³⁵⁰ “Text of Daniel A. Reed’s Speech Before Congress Giving Flint Conditions Before and After Strike.” *The Flint Journal*, February 8, 1937, 8

³⁵¹ “Text of Daniel A. Reed’s Speech Before Congress Giving Flint Conditions Before and After Strike,” 8

³⁵² “Text of Daniel A. Reed’s Speech Before Congress Giving Flint Conditions Before and After Strike,” 8

With only one more scan than the previous day, February 9, had a total of twenty-eight scans. A pattern starts to arise when one looks at, *The Flint Journal*, day by day for a particular topic. I noticed that stories about the Flint Sit-Down strike tend to be clustered together on a single page, meaning, for any given day, most of the stories can be found on only a few pages. For this day, pages two, eleven, and fourteen had twenty-two of the twenty-eight scans. On page one, the headline article was, “Will Resume Strike Parley Tonight; Still Deadlocked Over Recognition.” At this point, neither party knew how close they were to finding enough common ground to end the strike. However, the sub-header read, “No Agreement Reached on Anything an Official Statement Reveals; Flint Remains Quiet With Mayor Bradshaw a Virtual Dictator.” At this point, John Lewis believed his stance would only strengthen over time. General Motors wanted to call for a secret ballot initiative to prove if the union had most of the workers willing to join the union, however, the UAW refused to agree to those terms. The company continued to argue against the union being the sole bargaining unit for its workers. “General Motors cannot subscribe to such coercion and agree to deliver its workers into such bondage.”³⁵³ Governor Murphy remained optimistic in a potential agreement while, at the same time, back in Flint, Sheriff Wolcott was awaiting orders to remove the strikers. Due to the tense conditions and the need to control the situation in the city, the mayor took a stronger role in governing the city. According to the author, “Mayor Harold Bradshaw becomes virtual dictator of Flint as city commission declares state of emergency exists.”

The article adds to the narrative of the negative impacts of the strike. It comments that a “Total payroll loss for General Motors employes to date with 40 of 67 domestic plants closed, placed at \$22,000,000.” The fact that the national guardsmen remain in Flint and are standing by

³⁵³ “Will Resume Strike Parley Tonight; Still Deadlocked Over Recognition.” *The Flint Journal*, February 9, 1937, 1

in the case of an emergency. The author comments that the paramount issue, which is still the cause of deadlock, is the UAW's insistence on being the sole collective bargaining power for the twenty plants. The notion that if General Motors agreed to let the UAW be the sole bargaining unit for its workers, meant that GM was agreeing to put its people into bondage, is repeated. Union said they would let operations resume if General Motors would recognize it as sole bargaining unit at all twenty plants. General Motors responded to that with the statement, "Out of all the conferences and discussions which have taken place, the fundamental issue again asserts itself-is the power of the union to prevail based as it on violence, disregard of law and order and contempt of our courts, or are the legitimate rights of 125,000 workers to be considered, thus reasserting the forces of law, order, justice, reason, and civilization?"³⁵⁴ In response, Lewis says there is no guarantee of a fair vote, and that they must be the only representatives in those shops. He also said that employees could return to work while they negotiated, if the UAW were recognized. The union also demanded that "no discrimination shall be made or prejudices excised by either of contracting parties against any worker because of his former affiliation with, or activities in any group or association of employes."³⁵⁵ The final update for the story, "Stay-in strikers remained in possession of three plants and from Detroit came word that the governor may make a decision of evicting the strikers after tonight's conference."³⁵⁶

On page two, the "Protest of Stay-In Strikers Against Conditions at No. 4," story gives the strikers the opportunity to give the conditions they are having to deal with. Governor Murphy is sent a protest by strikers in plant No. 4. Their grievances start out with the fact that the troops do not allow for movement, as in trips home. They also complain about the fact that "The heat is

³⁵⁴ "Will Resume Strike Parley Tonight; Still Deadlocked Over Recognition." *The Flint Journal*, February 9, 1937, 1

³⁵⁵ "Will Resume Strike Parley Tonight; Still Deadlocked Over Recognition," 1

³⁵⁶ "Will Resume Strike Parley Tonight; Still Deadlocked Over Recognition," 1

being turned off arbitrarily on and off, usually off.”³⁵⁷ This is an important idea to understand because it was the cause of the influenza outbreak in the plant. Electricity is needed to operate the blower system to circulate heat through the plant, and it kept getting shut off. The strikers also wanted to be able to have friends and relatives visit, but gate access was being restricted. The water should have been tested and treated, if necessary, to prevent sickness, and it was not. Union organizer Powers Hapgood described the conditions: “It is almost impossible to believe it, but General Motors has already done so many stupid and inhuman things that it may be deliberately provoking and causing conditions which hopes it will lead to an epidemic in Flint. Proper health conditions in plants held by its employes are largely under General Motors control. It can have health there or sickness, as it pleases.”³⁵⁸ This was a minor negative towards the company, but if the reader already has their mind made up that the strikers are in illegal possession of General Motors property, then it might fall on deaf ears. Finally, there is the proclamation that General Motors is responsible for the violence which previously occurred. “Whereas the Flint Vigilantes an organization composed in part of thugs and General Motors stools, is known to be organized for the expressed purpose of creating riots and bloodshed, among peaceful American citizens, while the national guard units are here and are capable of keeping peace and order.”³⁵⁹ The implication is that the strikers were the peaceful citizens.

Most of the other stories from this day were not as important as those presented thus far. There was one picture I thought was nice because it showed how normal citizens could get involved and help with the strike effort. Shown below, it is one of the rare examples where being called a strike sympathizer was not used in a derogatory form. Contrary to the previous story,

³⁵⁷ “Protest of Stay-In Strikers Against Conditions at No. 4.” *The Flint Journal*, February 9, 1937, 2

³⁵⁸ “Protest of Stay-In Strikers Against Conditions at No. 4.” *The Flint Journal*, February 9, 1937, 2

³⁵⁹ “Protest of Stay-In Strikers Against Conditions at No. 4,” 2

“Workers Imperil Just Rights With Sit-Down Strikes, U.-M. Historian Says,” we have the younger generation of University of Michigan students and graduates, using their intelligence to support the cause rather than tear it down.³⁶⁰



After the past few days of gloomy headlines, which make the strike situation seem hopeless, February 10 has some good news. Page one starts out with the headline, “Strike Peace Hopes Rising.” As the only story on page one, I felt it worthwhile to comment on. The story talks

³⁶⁰ “Quit Classes to Aid Strikers.” *The Flint Journal*, February 9, 1937, 11

about how they are armed civilian guards placed at various places throughout Flint. The article itself is contradictory in fashion. The headline seems hopeful, and at the begging it talks about Flint being quiet for the time being, however, it then goes into some detail of destruction that happened recently. For example: “Two gasoline stations wrecked. Man wearing membership button and carrying membership card of Automobile Workers of America jailed. Operations of both stations had refused further contributions to union.”³⁶¹ Then it gives a statement from the mayor. “Mayor Bradshaw named city dictator, resigns post with Buick Motor company, declaring: “I can be of more effective service if there is no misunderstanding.”³⁶² The article is written less like a story and more like a list of newsworthy comments or events. Next, it quotes the president of the Illinois district for the United Mine Workers, Ray Edmundson, who made a speech in Flint the night prior. In the speech, he declares, ““there will be a strike in the steel industry that will shake the capitalistic structure of the nation.”³⁶³ I believe this only connects to the Flint Sit-Down Strike as it too could be viewed from the lens as an event which had a large impact on the capitalistic structure of the United States. This can be seen as it connects to the articles next point, “Trade journal says 40 percent of motor industry’s potential production lost with General Motors virtually idle.” After all that the article finally starts to bring a more positive spin on what it was reporting, “Reliably reported that definite progress has been made toward a settlement.”³⁶⁴ It mentions that Murphy was still hopeful an agreement can be made soon, and that negotiations were progressing. It also talks about how the National Guard has plans should talks break down, meaning there is Military action planned if things go awry. Finally, the article comments on how

³⁶¹ “Strike Peace Hopes Rising.” *The Flint Journal*, February 10, 1937, 1

³⁶². “Strike Peace Hopes Rising,” 1

³⁶³ “Strike Peace Hopes Rising,” 1

³⁶⁴ “Strike Peace Hopes Rising,” 1

Lewis is suffering from a severe cold, and that the President is reported to be neutral in the situation.

The next article of merit, from February 10, is on page seven. Titled, “Much Credit Is Due In Flint Emergency,” it starts out by explaining Flint is now in a state of emergency, and that at the same time the city commission was making that decision, they also commended the police department. In a scathing commentary on the situation, the author considers, “That no lives have been lost during the troubles of the last several weeks has been due most of all to the restraint exercised by the police, the sheriffs force and those thousands of workers burning with resentment because they have been deprived of livelihood.”³⁶⁵ The imagery of someone burning with resentment and being deprived of their livelihood is a fierce criticism of the strike. The article then goes into the reoccurring theme of outsiders causing trouble for the residents of Flint. “Greatest provocation has been the lawlessness of hundreds and even thousands of outsiders who have been here from time to time in support of the strike movement. This community, its peace and well-being have apparently meant nothing to those invaders.”³⁶⁶ The same sentiment is echoed once again in this next quote, while also adding the idea of the strikers being in the minority. “Flint is getting unfavorable attention because it has been chosen as the site for a major combat which is far from being a local affair. Only a few Flint people are participating in this strike although the entire community is suffering from it.”³⁶⁷ Finally, the article mentions the occupation of Flint by the National Guard. “Among the other innocent victims of these difficulties are the men of the national guard who have left their homes and their work many at considerable financial sacrifice

³⁶⁵ “Much Credit Is Due In Flint Emergency.” *The Flint Journal*, February 10, 1937, 7

³⁶⁶ “Much Credit Is Due In Flint Emergency,” 7

³⁶⁷ “Much Credit Is Due In Flint Emergency,” 7

as well, to be ready for any emergency here.”³⁶⁸ When one takes all these comments and brings them together in one article, it is clearly against the strike and strikers, as well as against the UAW.

I’d like to also point out a cartoon from page seven. It has a negative perspective on the strike as well. The illustrator clearly believes that the leaders of the two parties should have mediated their differences before allowing their differences to breakdown and cause the sit-downs strike.



“Two Gas Stations on Dupont Street Damaged by Vandals,” on page fourteen, is the last important article for February 10. The reason is that it connects the damage done to the gas stations to men associated with the UAW. This is a more in-depth article, on the events mentioned earlier in the page one article, “Strike Peace Hopes Rising.” According to the story, windows were shattered and other damage to the station was caused by a twenty-three-year-old

³⁶⁸. “Much Credit Is Due In Flint Emergency,” 7

factory worker. The suspect was intoxicated, and he was wearing a union button and carrying his union card. The article talks about how the owner of one of the gas stations vandalized is also an employee of Chevrolet. He was affected by more than the damage to his gas station as his plant closed after the riot on February 1. The other gas station owner says he was asked to donate to the cause [the strike], but he refused because he could not afford to. This leads the reader to believe the assailant was not only out of control because he was drunk, but also doing it as a retaliation against the gas station owners. It also makes it seem as though all UAW members are that irresponsible.³⁶⁹ Connected to the story is this picture:



³⁶⁹ “Two Gas Stations on Dupont Street Damaged by Vandals.” *The Flint Journal*, February 10, 1937, 14

As one might imagine the final day of the strike was full of news regarding the settlement. In fact, the front page had three different prints, each one with slightly different headlines and updates on the strike. Of course, two of the front pages was entirely about the strike, and the other one was by my estimation over fifty percent. Just to illustrate, I will show the top headline in the three pictures below.

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| EXTRA | The Flint Journal | EXTRA |
| <small>Fifty-Fourth Year</small> | <small>Phone 2-1131</small> | <small>Flint, Mich., Thursday, February 11, 1937</small> |
| | ★ | <small>Twenty-Two Pages</small> |
| To Announce Terms at 11 a. m. Today | | |
| STRIKE SETTLED | | |
| Quick Resumption of Work Assured | | |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| <small>Weather Partly Cloudy (Tonight) Warmer on Friday</small> | The Flint Journal | <small>2 P. M. Edition</small> |
| <small>Fifty-Fourth Year</small> | <small>Phone 2-1131</small> | <small>Flint, Mich., Thursday, February 11, 1937</small> |
| | ★ ★ ★ | <small>Twenty-Eight Pages</small> |
| G. M. INCREASES WAGES | | |
| <i>Announced Before Signing Peace Pact</i> | | |
| STRIKERS MUST VOTE ON PLAN | | |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Weather Partly Cloudy Tonight Warmer on Friday | The Flint Journal | Home Edition |
| Fifty-Fourth Year | Phone 2-1131 | Flint, Mich., Thursday, February 11, 1937 |
| | ★ ★ ★ ★ | Twenty-Eight Pages |
| G. M. INCREASES WAGES | | |
| <i>Announced Before Signing Peace Pact</i> | | |
| EVACUATION SET FOR TONIGHT | | |

The article, “G.M. Workers Given 5 Cents an Hour Boost,” appears on page one of both the home edition and 2 p.m. edition of the journal. Sloan is given the opportunity by the paper to make the announcement of pay raise, meaning credit is given to the company. “Amounting to \$25,000,000 the increase in all plants in the United States now operation and in all plants not now in operation at such time as they may be reopened.”³⁷⁰ It also talks about giving the night shift premium pay. “In addition to the increase announced by Mr. Sloan, it was learned that there also will be a premium of five per cent additional for night work.”³⁷¹ Because of the raise, General Motors is given praise for the positive effects it will have on the company’s workforce. “The wage increase and nightwork premium will affect nearly 40,000 Flint men and women employed in General Motors plants here and will mean more than \$4,000,000 to the annual payrolls in the city.”³⁷² In Sloan’s statement, “In view of the corporations expressed policy of maintaining at all times the highest justifiable wage scale, and in harmony with other increases wages five cents per hour in all plants in the United States in operation, as of Feb. 15 1937, and all plants not now in operation at such time as they may be reopened.” There was no mention or credit given to the union in this article.

³⁷⁰ “G.M. Workers Given 5 Cents an Hour Boost.” *The Flint Journal*, February 11, 1937, 1

³⁷¹ “G.M. Workers Given 5 Cents an Hour Boost,” 1

³⁷² “G.M. Workers Given 5 Cents an Hour Boost,” 1

In the same sense, the home edition and 2 p.m. edition of the journal's page one of both had the articles: "Terms of Settlement," "U.A.W.A. Will Represent Its Members Only," "List of Plants Affected," "G.M. Letter to Gov. Murphy," and "Union Demands of Jan. 4." The terms of settlement is a simple list which has all eight things both parties agreed to. Those demands will be briefly discussed in my next chapter. In, "List of Plants Affected," not much other information is given other than what the title says the article is covering. The article, "Union Demands of Jan. 4" was a simple reprint of what they were asking back then. I would like to pull out one quote from the company from the article, "G.M. Letter to Gov. Murphy": "This understanding we assume on condition that the union refrain from coercion and intimidation inside and outside of the shop in its efforts to increase its membership."³⁷³ The company could not resist the temptation to attack the union. Again, we see the theme that the only way the union could organize is by using coercion and intimidation.

The most worthwhile article from the ones listed was, "U.A.W.A. Will Represent Its Members Only." Just underneath that headline was the sub-header, "Collective Bargaining Set to Begin Next Tuesday, February 16." The article attacks the strike for the economic damage it caused. "The most costly strike in history of the automotive industry ended at 11:46 a.m. today when General Motors and the United Automobile Workers of America signed an agreement which brings a peaceful conclusion to 42 days of dispute and disorder."³⁷⁴ It also talks about the terms of settlement. "The union agrees to call off the present strike and evacuate all plants as soon as possible. The company agrees to resume operations in all plants as quickly as the arrangements

³⁷³ "G.M. Letter to Gov. Murphy." *The Flint Journal*, February 11, 1937, 1

³⁷⁴ "U.A.W.A. Will Represent Its Members Only." *The Flint Journal*, February 11, 1937, 1

can be made.”³⁷⁵ Finally, it goes into to a report out on the rest of the two parties agreed, talks about how the ceremony was short, and it depicts how they signed the agreement.

On page seven, there was more interesting takes on the end of the strike. The article, “Peace Called Industry Tonic,” talked about how strike cost the businesses of America untold billions. It also forecast that relief rolls will be dropping, and the General Motors car shortage will soon seize. The article says that there are three things which will happen now, “1- A new cycle of wage increases for workers. 2- A trade boom. If there is continued industrial peace. 3- New Struggles but not necessarily new strikes between the C.I.O. and industry. Barring new strikes, peace in the General Motors dispute was expected to provide a tonic to trade.”³⁷⁶ In regard to the relief rolls dropping, it claims, “Resumption of General Motors factories which proposed between 40 and 45 per cent off of all automobiles made, was expected to put millions of dollars in payrolls back in circulation. Relief rolls, which had been increasing during the strike, are expected to drop now.”³⁷⁷ It mentions, how the strike also cost the stockholders on the company money. The article makes another disparaging remark about the strike. It says, “Loss of wages because of the strike, is \$100,000 per day or \$44,000,000 over the course of the strike.”³⁷⁸ Finally, the article goes more in-depth with the economic devastation faced by the city of Flint, needless to say the article emphasizes that the strike had a negative impact on Flint overall.

Page seven also has an article titled, “Here Is the Complete Chronology of Developments in U.A.W.A. Strike in G.M. Plants.” I only mention that because it takes almost three-quarters of the page. If I could add it to my paper as a picture I would, but unfortunately it would be illegible. It is a nice story for a quick view of almost a daily account of all the important events of the strike.

³⁷⁵ “U.A.W.A. Will Represent Its Members Only,” 1

³⁷⁶ “Peace Called Industry Tonic.” *The Flint Journal*, February 11, 1937, 7

³⁷⁷ “Peace Called Industry Tonic.” *The Flint Journal*, February 11, 1937, 7

³⁷⁸ “Peace Called Industry Tonic,” 7

A shorter article, but along the same lines is also published on page fifteen. Since that particular article was more concise and easier to fit into my thesis, I choose that one instead. Both articles are important not only for their summary of events, but also for the context of all the articles I have discussed thus far. The article is pictured below:³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ "First strike Action started in Atlanta Plant on Nov. 18." *The Flint Journal*, February 11, 1937, 15

First Strike Action Started In Atlanta Plant on Nov. 18

These were important dates and events in the costly dispute between the United Automobile Workers of America and the General Motors corporation:

Nov. 18—First "sit-down" strike called by U. A. W. A. in Fisher Body plant at Atlanta, Ga., followed a week later by strikes at Kansas City.

Dec. 21—Homer Martin, union president, asked General Motors to confer on collective bargaining.

Dec. 22—William S. Knudsen, corporation's executive vice-president, told Martin grievances should be taken up with individual plant managers.

Dec. 31—As "sit-down" strikes increase, Knudsen called the strikers "trespassers" and advised them to leave plants.

Jan. 2—Circuit Judge Edward D. Black issued broad injunction against strikers, ordering them to leave, but action is not pursued when men disregard service of writ by Sheriff Wolcott.

Jan. 3—Union "strategy board" formed at Flint conference and empowered to call strikes in all General Motors plants.

Jan. 7—Governor Frank Murphy joined efforts to conciliate strike as plant shutdowns increased.

Jan. 11—Rioting occurs at Fisher No. 2 plant here with 27 persons injured.

Jan. 12—Gov. Murphy ordered 2,300 national guardsmen to Flint and asked General Motors and union leaders to confer with him at Lansing.

Jan. 15—Truce pending 15-day period allotted to negotiations reached in 17-hour conference at

Lansing; provided for evacuation of plants.

Jan. 17—Evacuation halted at Flint, union charging General Motors broke faith which is denied by corporation.

Jan. 18—Conferees met but dispersed after five minutes and all negotiations abandoned; Gov. Murphy went to Washington.

Jan. 20—Conferences at Washington between Secretary of Labor Perkins and Gov. Murphy and opposing leaders in strike opened, but abandoned after three days without notable progress.

Jan. 25—General Motors disclosed plan to give at least part-time work to 95,000 of 135,000 idle wage earners.

Jan. 30—Gov. Murphy made new effort to bring disputants together as first month of "sit-down" at Flint ended.

Feb. 1—Dozen persons injured in trouble in Chevrolet plants 9, 6 and 4, strikers remaining in possession of plant 4.

Feb. 2—Judge Paul V. Gadola at Flint issued new injunction, giving strikers 24 hours to leave under \$15,000,000 penalty; picketing barred.

Feb. 3—New conference of General Motors and union representatives opened in Detroit; evacuation deadline passed at Flint with strikers holding positions.

Feb. 5—Sheriff Wolcott given eviction order but no action taken against "stay-in" strikers with Detroit conference continuing.

Feb. 6—Gov. Murphy announced parley deadlocked over union demand for recognition as sole bargaining agency in 20 plants.

On page eight, “Miss Perkins Is Satisfied,” talks about the relief the labor secretary was able to get once the strike had been settled. “Peace in the strike which has crippled the great automotive industry for weeks came as a distinct surprise to federal officials here, and none welcomed it more than Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins.”³⁸⁰ There is a positive connotation behind the idea that the automotive industry is great, even though the article does not specifically say why the industry is great. The article calls it an automotive dispute, but also says that a fair and honorable agreement was made. It also talks about how William Green was displeased with the settlement because he and the A.F. of L. lose control of their people in the General Motors plants. Meaning his membership has just declined, and he lost his argument to not allow the UAW exclusive bargaining rights. The article wants to give credit for the ending of the strike to the governor. “Gov. Murphy is to be congratulated for his wise, fair, impartial, patient, and untiring effort in handling a most difficult situation, and the representatives of General Motors and the United Automobile Workers in the conferences are to be praised for their give-and take spirit and for their sober sense of fairness and respect to those they represented and to the general public.”³⁸¹ The author expresses how all parties can at least breathe a sigh of relief now that the biggest sticking point has been settled. “The conferences which brought an end to the disastrous auto strike also brought success from worry to President Roosevelt...the agreement reached in Detroit meant an end to all danger of violence.... That there will be further dickering over specific terms, none doubted. At the same time, officials were thankful that a break has come in the labor deadlock and felt that the trouble was over.”³⁸²

³⁸⁰ “Miss Perkins Is Satisfied.” *The Flint Journal*, February 11, 1937, 8

³⁸¹ “Miss Perkins Is Satisfied,” 8

³⁸² “Miss Perkins Is Satisfied,” 8

And so, ends the best of the coverage from *The Flint Journal*, up to the day the strike ended. Of course, that is not the end of the coverage for the Flint Sit-Down Strike. The following day, February 12, still had eleven scans. Of those scans four were pictures depicting events for the conclusion of the strike, like the signing of the agreement. The headline for page one was, General Motors Rushes Preparations To Return 40,000 Men to Work Here.” On page thirteen, there was a full-page advertisement which told the employees when to report back to work. Only one article was worth a quick examination for its connotation. The article, “Thousands See Demonstration After G.M. Plants Desertion,”³⁸³ was published on page twenty-six. I choose to comment on it because of one noteworthy quote: “Climaxing six weeks of disorder and terrorism, marked by two outbreaks of rioting during which more than 50 persons were injured, striking members of the United Automobile Workers of America walked out of three plants late Thursday.” Even after the strike ended, the author still gives the participants a negative connotation. It also talks about how the strike was paralyzing to the city and its people. It also felt the need to comment on the bad behavior of the strikers leaving the plants. “Night sticks, fashioned on company lathes from stocks of wood parts for cars were displayed, the men pulling them from beneath their overcoats where they had them concealed. They were taking them home for souvenirs.” The only redeeming factor to the article was the spot it gave Homer Martin. He is quoted as saying, “The evacuation marked the beginning of an era of better wages and better working conditions for workers.” He also said, “the labor movement promises to give ‘every worker a decent, annual living wage.’”³⁸⁴

As the strike continued, both sides were anxious to see resolution, but it wasn’t until Chevy plant number four was captured that GM had no choice but try and negotiate. Previous talks had failed, but with the newly acquired plant four, strikers began to finally gain the leverage needed to

³⁸³ “Thousands See Demonstration After G.M. Plants Desertion.” *The Flint Journal*, February 12, 1937, 26

³⁸⁴ “Thousands See Demonstration After G.M. Plants Desertion,” 26

end the siege. The union officials were able to capture plant by setting up a diversion in plant nine. Union officials let it leak out that the next part of the sit-down strike would occur there. While GM forces were gathering there to stop this from occurring, plant four was being taken over by sit-downers. A battle raged inside plant four as machinery turned off by employees and unionists was turned back on by the supervisors. At some point during the disagreement the unionists finally got the advantage. At that point, they rounded up all the supervisors and, in a final blow by the unionists, kicked all those against their cause out of the facility. Upon getting the upper hand, they told those who wanted to end their strike instead, “‘We’ll let you know when to come back.’”³⁸⁵

After the shutdown of plant four, seventeen more plants followed. This meant that nearly fourteen thousand people were out of work in ten Chevrolet plants alone.³⁸⁶ GM had to give in to at least some of UAW’s demands.

With tens of thousands of workers in Flint surrounding the plants and refusing to surrender, with the heat and light at Chevy 4 turned off on February 9 and 10, nearly 5,000 sit-downers prepared to ‘fight to the death,’ on February 11, the 44th day of the sit-down, General Motors gave up. It signed a contract with the UAW recognizing the union as the sole bargaining agent in the 20 struck plants, and for all its members in the other plants, and agreed not to deal with any other group for at least six months.³⁸⁷

The strike was over, and the UAW could claim victory after a long battle. It would have seemed that the deck was stacked in GM’s favor, but with a strong resolve and high aspirations, the strikers were able to claim success. The use of the media by General Motors was a good tactic, but not a successful one. It was because of the diligence of the Sit-Downers that made the strike a successful one. Despite the usage of the media to turn the public against the strikers, and the policies of the police and the local government, the strikers made their statement known by not giving up. History

³⁸⁵ Fine, *Sit-Down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937*, 266-275.

³⁸⁶ Hinshaw and Le Blanc, “Backward Attitude Towards Women,” 169.

³⁸⁷ Fine. “A recollection of the Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1936” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (1965): 114

was made by a bunch of organized men and women, beating the largest corporation in the world. Winning made the slogan, “Solidarity forever, For the union makes us strong,”³⁸⁸ all the sweeter to the victors.

³⁸⁸ “Solidarity Forever” <<http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/soc/lyrics.html>>

Chapter 11: What Was Won: Analysis of the First contract

The first contract between the UAW and GM was ratified on February 11, 1937. Every year on this day, the UAW commemorates this occasion by having a white shirt day. This day is used to reflect on the circumstances for the founding of the UAW as well as the strength and the sacrifices the strikers of the Flint-Sit Down Strike endured. The first contract pictured below had only eight tenants to its resolution. However, the impact of the contract cannot be overstated.

ON FEBRUARY 11, 1937, WE WON . . . We had a Union . . . Our Union, the UAW-CIO! And we won **recognition** as a Union from the General Motors Corporation. We also won **representation rights** for our Union members. The UAW-CIO was our bargaining agent—for members of the Union only. The first Contract covered just one page—but it made history!


The First UAW-GM Agreement

February 11, 1937

Agreement entered into on this 11th day of February, 1937, between the General Motors Corporation (hereinafter referred to as the Corporation) and the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America (hereinafter referred to as the Union).

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 The Corporation hereby recognizes the Union as the Collective Bargaining agency for those employees of the Corporation who are members of the Union. The Corporation recognizes and will not interfere with the right of its employees to be members of the Union. There shall be no discrimination, interference, restraint or coercion by the Corporation or any of its agents against any employe because of membership in the Union.</p> <p>1 The Corporation and the Union agree to commence collective bargaining negotiations on February 16th with regard to the issues specified in the letter of January 4th, 1937, from the Union to the Corporation, for the purpose of entering into a collective bargaining agreement, or agreements, covering such issues, looking to a final and complete settlement of all matters in dispute.</p> <p>1 The Union agrees to forthwith terminate the present strike against the Corporation, and to evacuate all plants now occupied by strikers.</p> <p>1 The Corporation agrees that all of its plants, which are on strike, or otherwise idle shall resume operations as rapidly as possible.</p> <p>1 It is understood that all employes now on strike or otherwise idle will return to their usual work when called and that no discrimination shall be made or prejudices exercised by the Corpor-</p> | <p>ation against any employe because of his former affiliation with, or activities in, the Union or the present strike.</p> <p>1 The Union agrees that pending the negotiations referred to in Paragraph Two, there shall be no strikes called or any other interruption to or interference with production, by the Union or its members.</p> <p>1 During the existence of the collective bargaining agreement contemplated pursuant to Paragraph Two, all opportunities to achieve a satisfactory settlement of any grievance or enforcement of any demands by negotiations shall be exhausted before there shall be any strikes or other interruption to or interference with production by the Union or its members. There shall be no attempts to intimidate or coerce any employes by the Union and there shall not be any solicitation or signing up of members by the Union on the premises of the Company. This is not to preclude individual discussion.</p> <p>1 After the evacuation of its plants and the termination of the strike the Corporation agrees to consent to the entry of orders, dismissing the injunction proceedings which have been started by the Corporation against the Union, or any of its members, or officers or any of its locals, including those pending in Flint, Michigan and Cleveland, Ohio, and subject to the approval of the Court to discontinue all contempt proceedings which it has instituted thereunder.</p> |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">/s/ William S. Knudsen /s/ J. T. Smith /s/ D. Brown</p> | <p>UNITED AUTOMOBILE WORKERS</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">/s/ Wyndham Mortimer, First Vice President /s/ Lee Pressman, General Counsel, CIO /s/ John L. Lewis, Chairman, CIO</p> |
|--|--|



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The first resolution gave the UAW the full claim to be the collective bargaining agent for union members, but more importantly, it states that the company will not intimidate union members in any way. The second resolution to the first contract sets the precedent to further negotiations between the union and the company. The negotiations to settle any lingering issues would begin on February 16. This resolution allows for the union to address any issues which were brought up in the letter to the company written on January 4. Those collective bargaining meetings were going to “complete settlement of all matters in dispute.” The next two resolutions are equally important for both the company and the union. They both ends all strikes, as well as agree to start operations as soon as possible. This was huge as now both sides agreed that it was time to get the employees back to work, earning a living. The fifth resolution was important to union members as it guaranteed that they could not be discriminated against for their affiliation to the union.

The next two resolutions (six and seven) go hand in hand with one another. The company got the union to agree to not strike while future negotiations were taking place, as well as the use of strikes being spelled out as the last possible option to solve any grievances between the union and the company. Likewise, the union and its members must agree not to interfere with production. The seventh resolution also states the union agreed not to use any type of intimidation or coercion to gain members. The final resolution to the first collective bargaining agreement between the UAW and GM says that the company will end all legal actions and injunctions again the union. With the passing of this collective bargaining agreement, the Flint Sit-Down Strike was over, and the employees would be able to return to work without any type of prejudices against them. Although the work between the two parties was not done. They would still need to continue to work together to get the next collective bargaining agreement, as agreed to in resolution two. The next agreement would need to address issues like pay, benefits, line speed up, etc.

This simple one-page contract changed labor history forever. It changed the course of American industrialism as well. The UAW would now be the sole voice in the collective bargaining for the workers of General Motors. Almost eighty-five years later, the agreement has grown to the size of a hefty novel. The main contract book is now over six hundred and eighty pages, and it also has multiple supplementary agreement books. Once the company recognized the union, it would set the precedent to have other auto industries organized as well. By organizing the auto industry, it set the standard for a living wage and good benefits. It has been argued, and I agree, that the formation of the UAW built the middle class here in America. By contending the company must pay the workers as well as give them raises on a regular basis, the UAW gave the workers the power to rise above poverty.

Chapter 12: Conclusion

When one analyzes the material, a pattern begins to form. Both parties are unwilling to meet based on their own interpretation of the situation. That the city was doing great before the UAW decided to take over General Motors property and forcefully stop production. That the Flint Alliance was the real voice of the people of Flint, and it is the better of the two organizations. The fact that the Flint Alliance was led by a former mayor, one which clearly has the best interests of Flint and its people on his agenda. The notion that it was outside agitators which was causing all the trouble in Flint, and there are the ones to blame for breaking the law. The law was on General Motors side and the injunction by Judge Black was indeed the morally right way to decide the case. All of which adds up to a whole narrative that the strike is negatively impacted the city of Flint, and General Motors is doing everything in its power to help the city. General Motors is in the right as it employed so many people within the city of Flint, and its surrounding area.

One thing I noticed when I was examining the articles for analysis, is that straight fact reporting it is much harder to pick out biases, as it should be in strictly news reporting media. By the time we have reached the point of the two parties meeting and discussing the issues, the articles remain closer to neutral. Anytime however, the article is concentrating on one or the other organization's perspective it is much easier to pick up on the connotation of the article. For instance, if General Motors has a large part of an article than it is obviously going to be pro company and anti-strike or anti-union overall.

Key terms also begin to shape the narrative given by The Flint Journal. These terms include rioters for the violence which occurred on January 11th, 1937, the night eloquently deemed "The Battle of Running Bulls" later. Another way to outright say it, was coverage of the "Battle of Running Bulls" often had the UAW leadership painted as criminals, as they were charged with

various crimes. Furthermore, the term “squatters” is used countless times to refer to the sit-down strikers. The use of the term “outsiders” and/or “agitators” also occurred quite a bit in reference to the organizers of the strike or leadership of the UAW. Sometimes the UAW leadership was even referred to as dictators. In terms of the number of individuals who were affected by the strike, the paper often used the phrase “thrown out of work”, meaning by force and not by their own choice. They would also say the UAW only represented a minority of the population. Meaning, just a small group of individuals was the cause of so many being out of work, and that they did not represent much of the population of Flint. All of which created the impression that they were the cause of all the negative events happening in Flint at the time. Likewise, the notion that the union was hindering the economic progress made since the Great Depression was a common theme used. Obviously, all of these terms have a negative connotation.

It was a small band of individuals, not most General Motors workers, who are holding the company hostage. Because of all this labor strife, the people of Flint are suffering, and The Flint Journal is just reporting on the facts. The strikers have made the city of Flint less safe and have caused physical and mental harm to its residents. The strikers do not care about the city, as they have openly defied its courts and its law enforcement. These facts point to an overall negative connotation of both the strike and the UAW, whereas the opposite must be true for the company. Furthermore, any real negative connotation about the company or its management almost always came from union leadership. Meaning, the paper itself would not criticize the company, but it would also not stop leaders of the strike, like John L. Lewis, from stating the case of the union.

Appendix One: Number of Scans Broken Down by Week

| Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 |
|--|--|---|
| Dec. 27 th thru Jan. 2 nd 1937 | Jan. 3 rd thru Jan. 9 th | Jan. 10 th thru 16 th |
| 32 Scans in that Week | 65 Scans in that week | 144 Scans in that week |
| Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 |
| Jan. 17 th thru Jan. 23 rd | Jan. 24 th thru Jan. 30 th | Jan. 31 st thru Feb. 6 th |
| 96 Scans in that week | 120 Scans in that week | 202 Scans in that week |
| Week 7 | Weeks 1-7 | |
| Feb. 7 th thru Feb. 13 th | Total Scans | |
| 168 Scans in that week | 827 | |

Appendix Two: The Flint Journal- Research Regarding the Articles Weeks One and Two

| | Week 1 | | Week 2 | |
|-----|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| | Total Number of Scans | 32 | Total Number of Scans | 65 |
| C-1 | Front Page Articles: | 2 | Front Page Articles: | 21 |
| C-2 | Full Page Advertisements: | 4 | Full Page Advertisements: | 1 |
| C-3 | Negative Connotation Towards the Strike: | 16 | Negative Connotation Towards the Strike: | 44 |
| C-4 | Negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 8 | Negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 27 |
| C-5 | Negative connotation of about the GM Corporation or Quote from an Executive: | 1 | Negative connotation of about the GM Corporation or Quote from an Executive: | 8 |
| C-6 | Positive connotation towards the strike: | 0 | Positive connotation towards the strike: | 9 |
| C-7 | Positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 1 | Positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 19 |
| C-8 | Positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation: | 26 | Positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation: | 30 |
| C-9 | Positive connotation in favor with a quote from an Executive: | 13 | Positive connotation in favor with a quote from an Executive: | 13 |

**Appendix Three: The Flint Journal- Research Regarding the
Articles Weeks Three and Four**

| | Week 3 | | Week 4 | |
|-----|---|------------|--|-----------|
| | Total Number of Scans | 144 | Total Number of Scans | 96 |
| C-1 | Front Page Articles: | 26 | Front Page Articles: | 15 |
| C-2 | Full Page Advertisements: | 0 | Full Page Advertisements: | 0 |
| C-3 | Negative Connotation Towards the Strike: | 130 | Negative Connotation Towards the Strike: | 71 |
| C-4 | Negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 75 | Negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 49 |
| C-5 | Negative connotation of about the GM Corporation or Quote from an Executive: | 12 | Negative connotation of about the GM Corporation or Quote from an Executive: | 13 |
| C-6 | Positive connotation towards the strike: | 15 | Positive connotation towards the strike: | 15 |
| C-7 | Positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 12 | Positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 13 |
| C-8 | Positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation: | 41 | Positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation: | 21 |
| C-9 | Positive connotation in favor with a quote from an Executive: | 12 | Positive connotation in favor with a quote from an Executive: | 11 |

**Appendix Four: The Flint Journal- Research Regarding the
Articles Weeks Five and Six**

| | Week 5 | | Week 6 | |
|-----|---|------------|--|------------|
| | Total Number of Scans | 120 | Total Number of Scans | 202 |
| C-1 | Front Page Articles: | 11 | Front Page Articles: | 28 |
| C-2 | Full Page Advertisements: | 0 | Full Page Advertisements: | 0 |
| C-3 | Negative Connotation Towards the Strike: | 97 | Negative Connotation Towards the Strike: | 166 |
| C-4 | Negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 45 | Negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 88 |
| C-5 | Negative connotation of about the GM Corporation or Quote from an Executive: | 14 | Negative connotation of about the GM Corporation or Quote from an Executive: | 19 |
| C-6 | Positive connotation towards the strike: | 7 | Positive connotation towards the strike: | 15 |
| C-7 | Positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 15 | Positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 27 |
| C-8 | Positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation: | 24 | Positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation: | 41 |
| C-9 | Positive connotation in favor with a quote from an Executive: | 11 | Positive connotation in favor with a quote from an Executive: | 15 |

**Appendix Five: The Flint Journal- Research Regarding the
Articles Week Seven and All the Weeks Combined**

| | Week 7 | | All Weeks Combined | |
|-----|--|------------|--|------------|
| | Total Number of Scans | 168 | Total Number of Scans | 827 |
| C-1 | Front Page Articles: | 22 | Front Page Articles: | 125 |
| C-2 | Full Page Advertisements: | 1 | Full Page Advertisements: | 6 |
| C-3 | Negative Connotation Towards the Strike: | 108 | Negative Connotation Towards the Strike: | 632 |
| C-4 | Negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 34 | Negative connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 326 |
| C-5 | Negative connotation of about the GM Corporation or Quote from an Executive: | 16 | Negative connotation of about the GM Corporation or Quote from an Executive: | 83 |
| C-6 | Positive connotation towards the strike: | 13 | Positive connotation towards the strike: | 74 |
| C-7 | Positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 32 | Positive connotation towards the UAW or the striker: | 119 |
| C-8 | Positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation: | 39 | Positive connotation in favor of the GM Corporation: | 222 |
| C-9 | Positive connotation in favor with a quote from an Executive: | 12 | Positive connotation in favor with a quote from an Executive: | 87 |

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