



Race against Liberalism: Black Workers and the UAW in Detroit (Working Class in American History)

David M. Lewis-Colman

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Race against Liberalism: Black Workers and the UAW in Detroit examines how black workers' activism in Detroit shaped the racial politics of the labor movement and the white working class. Tracing substantive, longstanding disagreements between liberals and black workers who embraced autonomous race-based action, David M. Lewis-Colman shows how black autoworkers placed themselves at the center of Detroit's working-class politics and sought to forge a kind of working-class unity that accommodated their interests as African Americans.

This chronicle of the black labor movement in Detroit begins with the independent caucuses in the 1940s and the Trade Union Leadership Council in the 1950s, in which black workers' workplace activism crossed over into civic unionism, challenging the racial structure of the city's neighborhoods, leisure spaces, politics, and schools. By the mid-1960s, a full-blown black power movement had emerged in Detroit, and in 1968 black workers organized nationalist Revolutionary Union Movements inside the auto plants, advocating a complete break from the labor establishment. By the 1970s, the tradition of independent race-based activism among Detroit's autoworkers continued to shape the politics of the city as Coleman Young became the city's first black mayor in 1973.

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