



# drum

VOL. 3 NO. DODGE REVOLUTIONARY UNION MOVEMENT

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**Hail James Johnson**

On Wednesday evening, July 15, James Johnson, Jr. responded to months of harassment and years of oppression and shot to death two (2) foremen and one (1) job setter at the Eldon Ave. Gear and Axle Plant. Dead were Hugh M. Jones 44, a black production foremen; Gary L. Hinz 32, a white production foremen; and Joseph Kowalski, a white job setter.

Bro. James Johnson was a conveyor loader in Dept. 78, the Brake Shoe Dept., and had been so employed for the past three (3) years. Eldon Ave. Gear and Axle Plant, the home of ELRUM, has some of the worst working conditions of any plant in existence. The plant is so unsafe that all of its 4,500 employees are risking their lives when they walk through the gates. In Dept 72, there is an inch and a half of oil covering the floor of the aisles. The oil comes up over the soles of the workers shoes. The entire ventilation system is inoperative. The jitney trucks have no brakes, lop sided tires, no horns and no lights. The aiseways are blocked by skid boxes, axles and scrap iron. Drill presses, cutters and grinders do not have safety guards. The management at Eldon is one of the most backward managements in town and totally nonresponsive to the just cries of black workers. The plant is the only gear and axle plant the Chrysler Corporation has and is key to continued production of the entire Corporation. Unlike assembly plants where lost production can be made up, overtime or lost time at Eldon means a slow down at assembly plants. Working conditions are so bad that black foremen have been employed for over 10 years in order to moderate racial conflict at the point of production.

All the hourly employees are represented by Local 961 of the U.A.W.—C.I.O. The union President is Elroy Richardson a former black Vice-President who rode the tide of black consciousness to the presidency in the spring of 1969. The local executive board consists of a group of loyal flunkies in the service of every quailm of the President. Local 961 is a backward local with none of the so-called reforms which some other locals have. It has no education department and no good and welfare fund and the union hall is locked more than open. Elroy Richardson is the only Local President out of over 3000 locals to attend the 22nd Annual Constitutional Convention as a Sergeant-of-Arms in Atlantic City in April of this year.

For over the last six (6) months, the already oppressive conditions worsened with the increase in layoffs and accompanying speed-ups of gear and axle production. The first open manifestation of these conditions took place on April 16, 1970, on the midnight shift in Dept. 73, when a white foreman named Ervin Ashlock threatened to bash Bro. John Scotts head in with a pinnion gear. Scott then informed his committeemen and the following procedure ended in the discharge of Bro. John Scott. Elroy Richardson the Union President sent his union Stewards into the shop and ordered the workers out on a wildcat strike. The strike lasted two (2) days and the President got cold feet and ordered the workers back to work. Two weeks later Chrysler Corporation responded by discharging fourteen (14) Union Representatives and once again the plant went on an unauthorized strike. This strike also lasted two (2) days and the workers were sent back to work without any Union representation.

No Union Stewards were reinstated until about mid May which means the workers were forced to toil without any representation what-so-ever. During this period the racist management at Eldon took extreme advantage of the situation by arbitrarily forcing workers to perform two (2) jobs attempting to provoke them to the breaking point. The workers had been beaten down and their spirits defeated by two (2) unsuccessful strikes. They had seen their Stewards discharged in mass and nothing was done about it and if the Chrysler Corporation was bold enough to discharge fourteen (14) union representatives, it was obvious

that individual workers jobs meant nothing. Hope was gone and each worker feared arbitrary discharge for disobeying foremen orders. It was this period of time that witnessed the death of two (2) black workers raising out of harassment from the Medical Department and unsafe working conditions at Eldon. Sister Mamie Williams died in the hospital after being forced back to work by a Chrysler Corporation doctor which was contrary to the orders of her private physicians who had ordered her to bed. Precisely two (2) weeks later Gary Thompson, a 22 year old Vietnam war veteran, was crushed to death under a two (2) ton skid box which fell off of his faulty jitney truck. On June 2, 1970, Gary Thompson was buried and both Local 961 and Chrysler Corporation responded merely by sending representatives to his funeral services. In the weeks since the 1st of June, the Eldon management has continued its wanton arbitrary discharges and suspensions while some of the discharged Stewards are still in the streets.

Needless to say, these are the precise and particular conditions under which Brother James Johnson had tolled under in his last six months at Eldon Ave. Gear and Axle Plant. The events around his personal existence as a black employee at Eldon is intricately inter-twined with the overall objective conditions mentioned above. James Johnson's dept. is Dept. 78 which is brake shoe dept. in which new conveyor belts were added in February. The new conveyor belt ran at such a rate that it threw brake shoes all over the floor adding extra work for James Johnson, the conveyor loader on afternoon shift. On the afternoon shift Dept. 78 is under Steward District 11 which is covered by Clarence Horton who ran unopposed in the last election for steward. Clarence Horton represents three (3) departments: 78 (brake shoe), 80 (brake assembly), and 83 (brake drum). Clarence Horton is a poor union steward who is not even very knowledgeable of union procedure, he is a very poor spokesman and a loyal supporter of Elroy Richardson the Union President. Clarence Horton was discharged along with thirteen (13) other stewards on May 1st, and was not reinstated until the 2nd week in June. For six (6) weeks James Johnson was employed at Eldon with no union representation. In the early part of May, James Johnson was involved in an automobile accident which resulted in the destruction of his automobile and him being placed under doctors care. The medical officials at Eldon Ave. ordered him back to work over and above the recommendation of his own private physicians. These were the same officials who ordered Mamie Williams back to work which lead to her death one week later. James had signed up for his vacation time for mid May. After being ordered back to work he left the plant on his two week vacation time which he had previously been granted. James returned to work in the first week in June and was discharged without reason and his vacation pay was denied. At the time of his 1st discharge his union steward was himself still discharged. His first discharge was so flagrant that management was forced to reinstate him two (2) days later on its own initiative. After his reinstatement James Johnson became the object of constant surveillance and harassment. All of the foremen in Dept. 78 are merely highschool graduates and very blatant and bold in the manner in which they exercise their authority. Management has set out consciously to attempt to provoke James in committing an act for which they could discharge him.

On Wednesday evening, July 15, James Johnson was taken off of his job as conveyor loader and replaced by a worker with two (2) weeks seniority. He was then placed on the brake oven job which consists of placing brake shoes in bake ovens which bakes the coating on the brake shoes. The entire operation is done in 120 degree heat. It was at this point that Bro. James Johnson spoke out in protest of being removed from his job. He was taken to labor relations office with his steward Clarence Horton and his General Foreman Jim Rhoades at which point he was suspended for insubordination and told by his steward to go along with their decisions. Management had reached its long awaited objective, they had provoked Bro. James to speak out against his treatment. James Johnson was then escorted out of the plant by plant protection guards. He returned shortly armed with a 30 caliber carbine in a desperate search for his

General Foreman Jim Rhoades. He supposedly asked all of his fellow workers to stand back for he was not going to hurt them. In route in pursuit of James Rhoades he encountered his foreman, Hugh Jones; a foreman in an adjacent dept., Gary Hinz; and a jobsetter who tried to disarm him. Johnson then supposedly threw his weapon down saying, "I'm satisfied", and walked back to the guard shack where he was apprehended by the Detroit Police Department.

Bro. James Johnson has moved the Black Workers struggle at the point of production to a new and higher level. As we have stated over and over the oppressive and inhumane working conditions inside of the auto industry coupled with the sellout and class-collaborationist unions have sparked open rebellions in basic industry. Often times in the past black workers have been driven to the point where they could stand no more and have lashed out viciously at their tormentors. In February of 1969, Bro. Rushie Forge was driven to the breaking point and lashed out stabbing a black Labor Relations Representative, William Young, at Dodge Main. Bro. Chuck Wooten reached his breaking point minutes after Rushie by stomping Dick Prallie, a white General Foreman, in Dept. 9110 at Dodge Main. In August of 1969, Bro. Sid Lewis was likewise driven to that point and lashed out at his foreman, Howard Lewis, in Dept. 9130 at Dodge Main. In July of 1969, Bro. Ike Jernigan, employed at Lockheed Aircraft in Los Angeles, California, lashed out and shot and killed his foreman, his Union President, and another Union official. In September of 1969, another black worker in Dept. 9150 at Dodge became outraged and locked his foremen in the trunk of a car on the assembly line. — Individual outrages at the point of production represent only one form in which the struggle of black workers have taken. There have been individual acts of sabotage against property and all forms of wildcat strikes and numerous caucuses have been formed all in response to the monstrous oppressive conditions that exist inside basic industry. As black workers rise up we have nothing to lose but our chains, we have nothing to lose but our jobs, our homes, our families and our future, our automobiles and our television sets. The owners and operators of the means of production owns our jobs, our homes, and our families. We have neither security nor hope for the future. They control our places of employment, the schools that our children attend, decide what our wages shall be, and what kind of society our children will live in. They tell us when, where and how long and how hard we shall work. They own everything of value. Brothers, they even think that they own us. The owners and operators of the means of production may cause one brother to lose his job, but they can't fire one thousand. They can take away one man's home, and one man's car; but they can't steal from one hundred thousand. They cannot repossess from one million. They can wreck one family, but they cannot wreck the unity of one million families. They can enslave thousands, but they cannot enslave the unity of millions. And they can defeat one armed enraged black worker, but they cannot defeat a million armed black workers or the unified mass of 20 million.

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers represents the highest form of struggle which the conscious insurgent movement of Black Labor has reached. Being guided by revolutionary principles and striving to unite all black workers we will certainly be victorious.

**BLACK WORKERS UNITE**

**SUPPORT BROTHER JAMES JOHNSON**

**WE WILL WIN!!!**

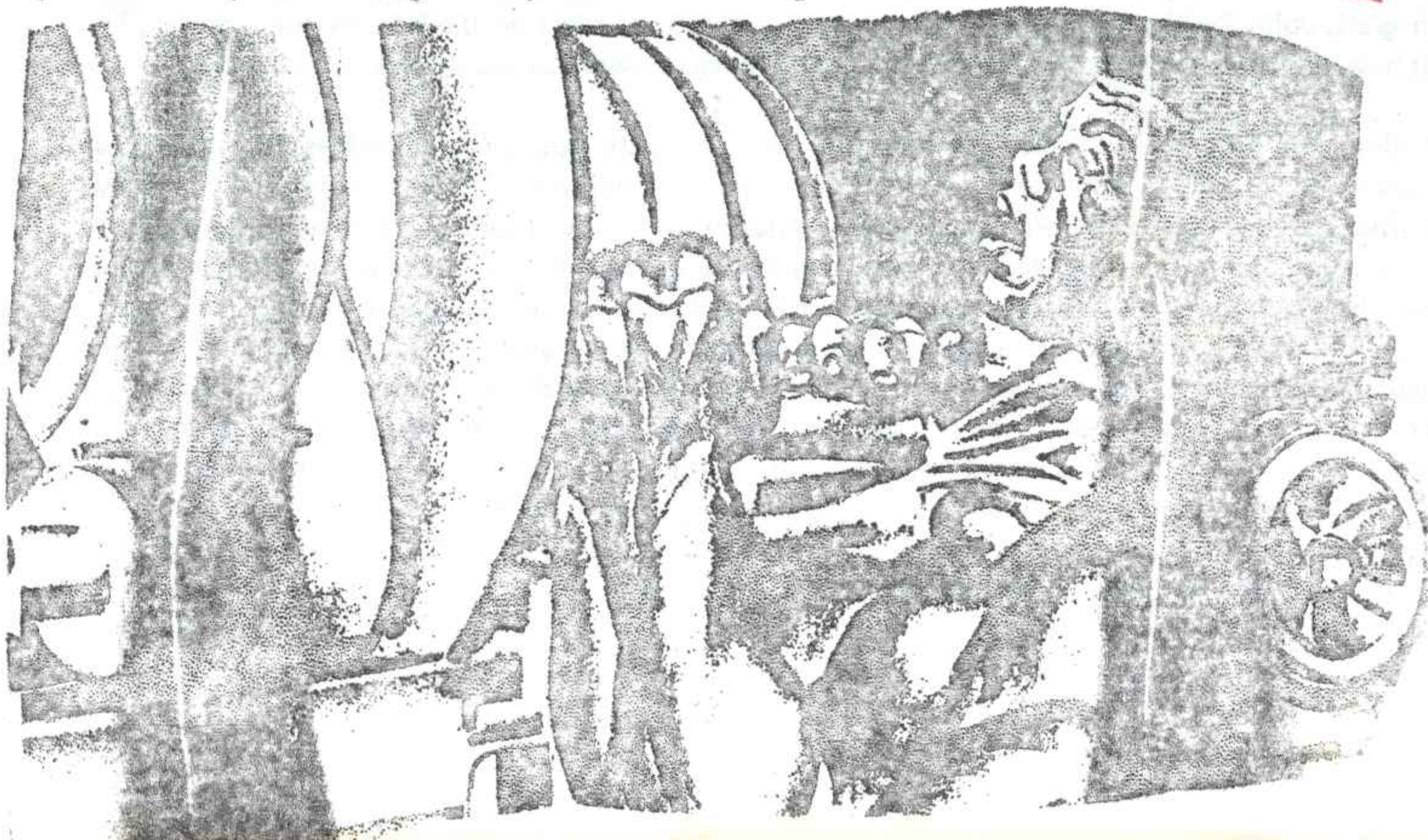


## PRODUCTION BEFORE SAFETY

On Friday at 1:45 a.m., July 17, there was an explosion in Dept 9110, the Body shop, *in the air conditioning section.* 10 workers were injured, 4 seriously. 6 were sent to Ford's hospital and 4 *were burned* so badly that they were sent directly to Ann Arbor to have special treatment.

Management and Union officials knew that the leak had started on the day shift on Thursday, *but* production kept rolling, the management at Dodge knew that the gas was leaking but the line which *was* leaking was the gas line which puts the gas in each air conditioning unit on the cars on the assembly line. *To* cut off the gas main would mean the stopping of the assembly line. The lives and safety of workers *became* a secondary consideration with production being at stake. Afternoon shift production stops at 3:00 *am* and management had decided to wait until then to repair the gas line. But between 1:00 a.m. and 1:45 *am* the explosion occurred. One maintenance man was in a lift basket on a truck near the leaking valve *where* the explosion occurred. He was knocked out of the lift cage and thrown to the floor his entire body *chard.* He walked around like a mummy in a state of shock. When Plant protection finally came *with a* stretcher the worker was burned so severely that they could not touch him. The stretcher was placed *behind him* and he was asked to lean back on it — it was only in this manner that they were able to get *him* on the stretcher.

Who was plant protection protecting? There were witnesses in the janitors Dept. who said that *a private* guard asked one of them for a broom handle, and jumped up to hit the emergency horn which was *blown* after the explosion. After the horn stopped blowing, he shook his head and walked away thinking that *the* emergency horn was stuck. As the Plant was exploding Plant Protection and management was moving *out* of the explosive area. No workers were evacuated until all of the cars had been removed from the *area*. Fumes from the explosion could still be smelt the next morning. Chrysler Corporation has once *again* ~~proven that it places nothing before production including workers lives.~~



Friday, prior to the holiday, July 4th, strange things developed in the Stock Dept. With the arrival of Boy Wonder, Gary Roland, the departments over-rated Superintendent a major crack down was announced. Upon arrival Boy Wonder made it clear that he would break-up the militancy in the department. But to his surprise, his ancient plantation tactics did not work, for the dept. did not have a strawboss which is badly needed to execute such out dated methods. So with the approval of Labor Relation heads and Union Officials, he moved to put his plan into operation. First by firing his white General Foreman and then replacing him with a black General Foreman. Next he built up the only black foreman in the dept. (3353) as being a top notch supervisor (attempt: pitting one black against another) Last he mustered all the needed information to insure Uncle John Smith's support on his racist acts and proceeded to exercise them. (J. Smith - union plant committee man).

On Friday, July 3rd, the stock dept. asked for 55 volunteers for Sunday, July 5. By noon only 45 persons had volunteered. Boy Wonder, feeling the opportunity of success, moved to place a notice on the boards that all personnel was ordered to show up. The workers became quite angry and began to protest. Racist Roland still believing he was HHIC (head honky in charge) ordered his foremen to inform the workers that if they didn't show he would take their holiday pay. The Union was called, Labor Relations was called, even Local No. 3 was called. The trap had been set and the conspirators laid in wait for Sunday morning.

Sunday, July 5th, out of a possible 150 workers, 28 workers failed to show. Among these workers were a few militant leaders. The punk kid just could not resist this opportunity. So he called a conspirators meeting early Sunday morning. After revealing to John Smith about his past history - numbers loan shark, and open graft, John Smith, Union Plant Committeeman agreed to sanction the Boy Wonders moves. To show you how eager they were among the twenty eight, 6 were on vacation and 4 were on sick leave.

Monday, July 6th, Roland signed the orders to hold up on the holiday pay. Wednesday, July 8th, a list was submitted to a black labor representative for signature of approval. The brother refused not really knowing what the hell was going on. As the trap tightened, the more chicken harded this prick Roland became. He moved for a meeting Wednesday evening trying desperately to cover-up or shift the blame. Uncle John Smith at this point was running scared. He knew someone would expose his under the table dealings. On Thursday, a final move was made, pay everybody but the known DRUM members force a walk out or shut down, blame the entire issue on trouble makers of DRUM. Being a open hater of DRUM and fearing his exposure of crimes against the people John Smith accepted the new racist plan with open arms. But to everyone's surprise during a closed door meeting on Thursday, a Black brother stormed out of the room and threatened the racist pig Roland and vowed to put a foot in his ass if he did not pay him in full on Friday. This was a brother who was legally excused. Roland damn near fainted. Sweat, tears and piss poured from him. After the meeting the Wonder Boy ran to the brother and begged for his forgiveness and swore to pay the brother out of his pocket if need be. On Friday, July 10th, no one received their holiday pay but all but three were promised to receive it before quitting time. John Smith still anticipating a DRUM strike assured the workers that he concurred with management.

DRUM realizing a trap and smelling a racist rat at the same time played the game to the tee. Going along with the strike rumors just to show the workers how racist management is and how un-union the union really is. After there was no strike that same afternoon Roland and Uncle John Smith disappeared realizing they had lied and could not pay the workers any way. DRUM says to you racists fools and Black lackeys you will pay all the workers and another racist plot like that and you will get what you bargained for.

**JOIN DRUM  
STAMP OUT – RACISM AND BLACK LACKEYS!**

**HUBER AVENUE FOUNDRY**

Well Brothers and Sisters, the on-slaught is on again at Huber Ave., as of Monday, July 5th, 1970, 1st shift, 9310, Joe Biezaak was again put on the day shift as General Foreman, and he's been everything that he was in the pass - no damn good racist cracker.

Biezaak made a foreman remove all of the boxes and milk crates that employees were sitting on while doing their every day slave thing. This particular sister Mattie Hampton had to stand and do her job on hard concrete floors while standing in one spot.

Stewards were called to the scene and the matter was taken upstairs. One hour later Miss Hampton was given the privilege of taking her seat and continuing work. Due chiefly to the alternate steward's courage to confront Joe Biezaak and tell him that if it was a white woman, he wouldn't make her stand. Biezaak told Paul that he had a 8:00 meeting with fat racist pig Oden, Plant Supt. Yes Brothers and Sisters these two (2) pigs are bold, vicious and try to use their weak psychology on the less fortunate brothers and sisters in Dept. 9310. Joe Biezaak has gone as far as telling all the black brothers that there will be no overtime as of next week. Since there is no 4 hour over time to help the brothers get over, there will be no Saturday or Sunday work. Also a little something else for Joe Biezaak, Joe because of your stopping progress or at least trying, you just made an ASS out of your self and the whole Chrysler Corporation. Yes, ass hole Joe Biezaak, you have just blew your whole shot, for a Foreman that is hated as much as you, it is a wonder you ain't dead. What are you trying to prove, knowing that DRUM is watching every move you and the others are making, we say to you Joe Biezaak, don't be a Bummer, Don't fuck with the DRUMMER. This is not a warning, but your last chance.

**SPECIAL BULLETIN**

**INNER CITY VOICE**

**THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARY BLACK WORKERS**

**DETROIT, MICHIGAN**

**FUND RAISING BENEFIT**

**U of D STUDENT UNION**

**FRIDAY, JULY 31, 1970 - 7:30 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.**

**ENTERTAINMENT**

**FIRST AFRICAN PRIMAL RHYTHM ARCHESTRA**

**NEW AFRICAN PLAYERS**

**ASHANTI DANCERS AND DRUMMERS**

**BOBBIE CUMMING PLAYERS**

**AND OTHERS**

**TICKETS ON SALE AT:  
BLACK STAR BOOKSTORE  
17859 Dequindre**

**VAUGHN'S BOOKSTORE  
12123 Dexter and 10721 Mack Ave.**

**WHITE'S RECORDS  
2218 Ferry Park**

**HIGHLAND PARK PEOPLE'S ACTION COMMITTEE  
12327 Third**

**AND UNICOM - 8815 Puritan**

**NAME \_\_\_\_\_**  
**ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_**  
**PHONE \_\_\_\_\_**  
**SEND TO DRUM. \_\_\_\_\_**      **SHIFT NO. \_\_\_\_\_**  
**DEPT. NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**179 CORTLAND**

**HIGHLAND PARK, MICHIGAN 48203**

**865-8184**

**TICKETS \$1.25 in advance - \$1.50 at the door**