

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 2 OF 16

FOLDER 32

APR & MAY 1970 WORK
STOPPAGES JORDAN SIMS
STATEMENT

THE MAY 1, 1970 INCIDENT***

On April 20 th, 1970, your Plt. Bgn. Comm. was in a Special Conference session with Corporate people (L. PERRY) & Bro. Homer Jolly of the UAW CHRY. DEPT. to try to work out the differences leading up to the April 16 WORK-STOPPAGES and what STEPS the Corporation should or WOULD take to mitigate or remedy our apparent SPLIT with Local Management, resolve all or most of the immediate problems relative to our WORK-STOPPAGE, clear up our inability to deal with or BARGAINING CONSTRUCTIVELY AND COLLECTIVELY with Local Management, and, investigate all areas of the WORK-STOPPAGES to see what DISCIPLINE would be meted out to those INVOLVED and to what DEGREE. Mr. Perry (Corp. Lab. Rel.) also stated that "since the Constitutional WAS in progress, it had officially opened that Mon., April 20th, 1970, the Company would conduct their investigation during the time the Local Union delegates & Bro. H. Jolly were in Atlantic City and that the Union had the Corporation's WORD THAT NOTHING would be done to ANYONE UNTIL ALL PARTIES INVOLVED HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS THE MATTER.. The Union agreed to this commitment (Bro. Jolly & the Bgn. Comm.) and the Conference was MUTUALLY ADJOURNED by all PARTIES concerned, until sometime after the Constitutional Convention was over, Management's investigation was completed, their facts & position was established, and all parties INVOLVED sat down and DISCUSSED THE MATTER.. THEY RENEGED ON THEIR COMMITMENT..

On May 1, 1970, some elements of only Local Management called for a special 4 th step Mtg. with the Plt. Bgn. Comm.. The Plt. Shp. Comm. was out of the plant at their REGULAR AREA-WIDE Comm. Mtg. over at Local # 3 (Dodge Main). At about 12 or 12:30 PM, Bro. D. Toomer, Vice Pres called and reached me (J.U. Sims, Comm. Chm.) at the Dodge Local. He told me to get the others on the Comm. & get back to the plant as fast as we could for a special mtg. with Mr. Virgil Anderson, (who, I might mention, had no official title or contractual bargaining capacity in our plant).. With this fact in mind, I questioned the soundness of Bro. Toomer's request and asked for further explanation. Bro. Toomer told me that that was all the information HE COULD give me and I would have to wait until we got there and get any FURTHER CLARIFICATION from the PRES. BECAUSE HE was telling me all that he knew and he was just following INSTRUCTIONS...

I returned to the Mtg. Hall of Lo. # 3 and attempted to comply with the request of MY PRES., SINCE Bro. Toomer had stated "IT WAS URGENT".. I couldn't locate Bro. s Farmer & Bates so only Bro. C. Thornton & myself returned to the plant conference room. Being angry and upset because we had to return to the plant because of some whim of Mr. Virgil Anderson, Bro. Thornton and myself immediately sought out Bro. Richardson and asked for some SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON WHY THIS MTG. WAS SOO CRITICAL AND NEEDED OUR PARTICULAR PRESENCE??? Bro. Richardson said that "HE DID NOT KNOW, HE HAD GOTTEN A CALL FROM MR. ANDERSON REQUESTING THE MEETING AND HE JUST FELT WE SHOULD BE THERE (the Alts. were in the plant). The LACK of some SPECIFIC REASON for having to be there; Bro. Thornton & I were QUITE IRRITATED.

A call came in for me at that time and it was Bro Jolly of the Chrys. Dept., UAW.. He told me at that time that the Local had gotten a call from V. Anderson and a meeting was to be set up to resolve the problem of DISCIPLINE in the April 16 th, 1970 WORK-STOPPAGES.. I told Bro. JOLLY that that was NOT what MY PRES. HAD TOLD ME and IF HE COULD GIVE ME some SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON WHAT WAS REALLY GOING ON, I would do what I could to KEEP anything RASH OR DRASTIC from HAPPENING IN THE PLANT THAT NIGHT. I reminded Bro. Jolly of the rules laid down by our Local Union Leadership & Membership in this area, FIRING ANYBODY... I went BACK to the conference room and sometime after 4 O'Clock, Mr. Anderson, Hafner, & Polsgrove entered and the meeting began. Bro. s Bucci, Ostrowski, Sparks, T. Moore, the 4 TOP OFFICERS, & Bro Thornton and myself, J.U. Sims.

The Proposal offered by Man. was TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE to the Union present and they REFUSED to give any further information or have any type of discussion on any subject until the Union AGREED TO ACCEPT WHAT EVER THEY HAD TO SAY, ANY PENALTY THEY GAVE OUT, AND BARGAIN ON IT AT SOME FUTURE DATE, "MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY TO BOTH PARTIES"??? The Pres. PROTESTED PASSIONATELY, THEN VIGOROUSLY, THEN ANGRILLY, BUT to NO AVAIL.. The Total Bgn. Comm. followed suit and got the SAME RESPONSE AS THE PRESIDENT, "these terms & conditions or NOTHING.. THEY, Management, were reminded of Mr. PERRY'S COMMITMENT that ALL PARTIES INVOLVED WOULD SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS THE MATTER BEFORE A N Y O N E WAS DISCIPLINED ?? They TOLD this Union that they didn't REMEMBER ANY SUCH COMMITMENT and that they were GOING TO HANDLE IT AND THE Union had no CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT THEIR CONDITIONS AND DISPOSITIONS IN THE MATTER... Hear Hear...

A LETTER OF CLARIFICATION & STATEMENT OF FACTS ON THE April 16 & May 1st
WORK-STOPPAGES AND THE IMPROPER AND UNNECESSARY DISCIPLINING OF 13 of our Local Union
Representatives & Trustee, Bro. J.C. Thomas.

On April 16th, the Plt. Bargn. Comm. met in the offices of the Labor Rel. Dept. for a 4th step (special conference) mtg. with Joe Hafner, Carl Polsgrove, & Co.. This mtg. had been previously with the Personnel Man. by our Rec. Sec. Bro. J.R. Franklin. We were to discuss the Current Plant Problems, Vio. of our Mem. of Understandings, Vio. of the Natl. Agreement, and the means & ways of RESOLVING these CRITICAL differences. After sitting around for hours, waiting for Mr. Hafner & Co. to recognize the fact that we were there to MEET as arranged & BARGAIN as is required, the Pres. & myself approached Mr. Hafner & Polsgrove and asked of the scheduled mtg. and had Carl's office door closed in our face!! They emerged later and told Bro. Richardson & myself that they had other things to do and would not have time to meet with US, BUT, IF we choose to, WE could meet with Virgil Anderson and he would listen to our problems. After giving the suggestion consideration, the Pres. & the bulk of the Comm. sat down in Carl's office and began to present our problems to Mr. Anderson. Bro C. Thornton (Comm.) was in the next office trying to reasonably RESOLVE THE ASHLOCK - SCOTT INCIDENT. He couldn't and he brought the matter in to the total Comm. for some assistance. The Scott-Ashlock case became the main issue from that point on. After much discussion, Mr. Anderson agreed with the recommendations of the Bargn. Comm. and left the room to carry the RESOLUTION up to Mr. Engelbrech's office. Hafner, Polsgrove, & other CONCERNED PARTIES of Management were up there. ----time passing---- That afternoon, Bro. Waller, Reg. # 1 REP to the Local, had arrived and was waiting with us. He and Bro. Richardson finally left the conference room in anger and irritation to try to find out what was keeping Mr. Anderson so long. The report brought back by the Pres. & Bro. Waller was that they had gone up to Mr. Engelbrech's office and had been told that the people they were looking for had LEFT THE PLANT.. The Pres. & Bro. Waller did not accept this from the secretary and told her that if she did not get those PEOPLE out there to talk to them, HE WOULD KICK THE DOOR IN HIMSELF and tell them!!! At this point, Mr. Murphy, Ast. Plt. Man., came out and informed the Pres. & Bro Waller that if they went back downstairs, the Management people would join them shortly and GIVE THEM THEIR DECISION ON THE Scott- Ashlock INCIDENT::THEY DID...

Sometime later, Mr. Anderson, Hafner, & Polsgrove came to the conference room door and Mr. Anderson said he had done the best he could but the answer from upstairs WAS NO!! At this point, Mr. Polsgrove clarified the statement of Mr. Anderson by adding that the "company was sick & tired of EMPLOYEES THREATENING & ATTACKING THEIR SUPERVISORS & THEY WERE NOT GOING TO TOLERATE IT. As far as they were concerned, ANY SUPERVISOR HAS THE RIGHT TO PROTECT HIMSELF, WITH WEAPONS OR ANYTHING ELSE IF, IN HIS JUDGEMENT, THE EMPLOYEE APPEARS TO THREATEN HIM IN ANY MANNER... It was this line of reasoning that upset the Bargn. Comm. and they tried to get Management to reconsider this ridiculous position and sit down and discuss the matter in a SANE, SENSIBLE, AND REASONABLE fashion; they refused, said there was nothing more to talk about, and started to leave the room. At this point, the Bargn. Comm. PUT MANAGEMENT "ON NOTICE" THAT THE Local Union could not and would not Live with a Company Policy of this Nature and if we couldn't sit down and attempt to REASONABLY RESOLVE THESE ISSUES, we would not allow our members to work under such arbitrary & unreasonable conditions; the plant would be SHUT-DOWN!! Management still REFUSED TO CONSIDER ANY ARGUMENT, CHANGE OF POSITION, OR DISCUSS THE MATTER ANY FURTHER, THEY LEFT THE ROOM AT THAT POINT. It was decided by the MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT THAT IN VIEW OF THEIR REFUSAL TO REASONABLY ON THE Scott Case & ALL of the OTHER SERIOUS PROBLEMS PRESSING AT THE TIME, OUR ONLY ALTERNATIVE WAS TO CLOSE THEM DOWN AND SHOCK THEM BACK TO REALITY. The Stwds. present & Bro Sims (Sparks & Moore, 2nd shift) & Ellerby carried these instructions to the other Stwds. on the floor and the PLANT WAS SHUT DOWN AS DIRECTED BY THE BARGN. COMM.. THE rest of the leadership were INFORMED OF THE ACTION TAKEN, (April 16), the next morn. and CONCURRED WITH THE ACTIONS TAKEN.. The April 16 th STRIKE WAS ON!!

Brothers & Sister, you know this to be the TRUTH. YES, I did my share and I am NOT ASHAMED OF IT TO THIS VERY DAY.. I am disappointed & DISMAYED AT the LACK of UNITY, SOLIDARITY, AND TRUTH that RAPIDLY FADED WHEN THE GOING GOT TOUGH AND SERIOUS. The people that PAID the highest & ONLY PRICE were those that WERE NOT THE ARCHITECTS of the PROGRAM, BUT those that ONLY DID AS THEY WERE ASKED TO DO & WERE TOLD DO BY THOSE IN OUR LEADERSHIP THAT THEY RESPECTED, TRUSTED, AND LOOKED UP TO FOR RESPONSIBLE & POSITIVE LEADERSHIP::THEY WERE BETRAYED BY THESE PEOPLE... And as can be readily seen by ANY & ALL who care to look & see (it's a matter of choice), I've been condemned & MADE a STRANGER and an ALIEN in MY OWN LOCAL BY THOSE THAT WOULD RATHER FORGET WHAT HAS HAPPENED & BURY ME AND THE PAST IN THEIR GOOD (clean) CONSCIENCES...!!

Clarification continued...

All possible and reasonable efforts being rapidly exhausted and not in the least way affecting the ARBITRARY and ridiculously STUBBORN position of Management, (our PLEAS to at least hold off any MAJOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION UNTIL AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING MONDAY) were NO GOOD...

With this LAST & FINAL PLEA THAT NO DISCIPLINE BE GIVEN UNTIL THE UNION COULD AT LEAST HAVE ALL OF THEIR PEOPLE THERE AND BE A LITTLE BETTER PREPARED TO DISCUSS SUCH A SERIOUS PROBLEM (the disciplining of many members of their leadership), the Union gave Management their POSITION; as stated in the many Special Leadership, Membership, & Special Exc. Brd. Mtgs., "IF ANY OF OUR LEADERSHIP OR MEMBERSHIP ARE DISCIPLINED OR DISCHARGED, THE PLANT WILL BE CLOSED..."

Bro. Richardson spoke to Mr. Anderson & Polsgrove, had them CLEAR ALL UNION REPS & Bro. J.C. THOMAS, (trustee), AND ALL ADJOURNED TO THE LOCAL UNION HALL TO HEAR WHAT HAD HAPPENED AND WHAT WAS THE UNION'S CURRENT POSITION.

All Bgn. Comm. Members didn't go to the hall because the MEETING WAS ONLY TO INFORM THOSE THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS ON THE 2nd SHIFT WHAT TO DO IF THOSE STEPS WERE TAKEN BY MANAGEMENT. At this point, the Local Bgn. Comm. & those present did not KNOW FOR SURE BECAUSE MANAGEMENT WOULD NOT GIVE OUT THIS KIND OF INFORMATION.. THEY TRULY LEFT THE LOCAL UNION WITH THE FEELING THAT THEY MAY HAVE HEARD SOME OF THE THINGS THEY HAD SAID AND THAT THEY QUITE POSSIBLY WOULD EXERCISE A LITTLE REASONABLENESS AND GOOD JUDGEMENT???

That night at about 9:30 or 10 o'clock, ALL 2nd SHIFT STEWARDS & TRUSTEE J.C. THOMAS WERE CALLED UP FRONT ON ONE PRETEXT OR ANOTHER AND FIRED; THEY RETURNED THROUGH THE PLANT, DESPITE THE THREATS OF MANAGEMENT, AND CARRIED OUT THEIR INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE BGN. COMM.; THE PLANT WAS CLOSED DOWN COMPLETELY BY 12 O'CLOCK MIDNIGHT OF MAY 1, 1970...

Again, the rest of the Leadership that were not immediately AWARE of what ALL the developments were, met at the Local Union Hall and AGAIN, being brought up to date on just WHAT had transpired and the untenable POSITION that Management had put their Leadership as well as their Membership in, CONCURRED WITH THE POSITIONS & ACTIONS OF THE Bgn. Comm. and PLEDGED FULL & TOTAL SUPPORT TO THE TOTAL ACTION, POSITION, AND PROGRAM.. The Membership ALSO VOICED APPROVAL WHEN ADVISED OF THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP'S PREDICAMENT, ACTIONS, AND PROGRAM FOR RESOLUTION.. MANY FIREY SPEECHES WERE MADE BY ALL MEMBERS OF LEADERSHIP; the gist of which were " UNITED WE SHALL STAND, DOWN WITH INEQUITIES & INJUSTICES, & ALL FOR ONE & ONE FOR ALL, and on & on & on... THE COMPANY STRUCK BACK, THE INTNL. UNION TOOK A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE (the CONTRACT, THE LAW, THEIR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES, etc. etc.), and all of a SUDDEN, EVEN THOUGH THE CAUSE WAS JUST, EVEN THOUGH THE DIE WAS CAST, STALWART DEFENDERS OF TRUTH, STAUNCH DEFENDERS OF JUSTICE, ALL THE BOISTEROUS BELLIGERANT POSITIVE HEROES OF THE MOMENT FOUND CAUSE AND REASON TO STOP AND RECONSIDER, "for the FIRST TIME in many a YEAR, THEY and NOT THE MAN ON THE JOB MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOSE???" A thought---12 or 16---~~FIXED~~---lets let that be ENOUGH BECAUSE I MAY BE CALLED UPON NEXT AND MAYBE OTHER PEOPLE, LESSER PEOPLE, CAN AFFORD TO BE PUT IN JEOPARDY, BUT NOT ME, IT'S TIME TO TURN AROUND AND SALVAGE WHAT WE CAN, THOSE THAT ARE OUT, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO DO WHAT WE CAN FOR THEM AND MAKE THE BEST OF A BAAD SITUATION..

THAT, MY GOOD UNION BROTHERS & SISTER, IS WHERE WE STAND TODAY.

P.S.

MAYBE YOU WOULD DO ONE THING FOR ME, THE TRUTH, AND YOUR OWN ECONOMICALLY SECURE CONSCIENCES,, check with your Pres. and Bro. Jolly as to the SPECIFIC COMMITMENT THAT WAS MADE TO Bro. Richardson on the PEOPLE THAT WERE TO BE DISCHARGED ON MAY 1st, 1970 and why he DIDN'T CHOOSE TO SHARE THIS WITH THE REST OF THE CONCERNED LEADERSHIP AND PREVENT THE MAY 1st WALK-OUT???? BRO. JOLLY HAS STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT THE PRES. WAS THE ONLY ONE HE WAS ALLOWED TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH; (that ALL people discharged on the 1st of May WOULD BE CHANGED TO A SUSPENSION ON THE FOLLOWING MONDAY, MAY 4th, 1970???) DIGEST THIS AND THINK A LITTLE-----*

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

JORDON U. SIMS, UNION MEMBER, L.O. # 961

Jordon U. Sims

I will gladly STAND LIABLE FOR ANY BASELESS OR MALICIOUSLY CONSTRUED STATEMENT THAT CAN BE ESTABLISHED IN THIS DOCUMENT...

On the night of May 1, 1970, I was called by Bro. Sparks and told that Management had set up a program after their meeting with our bargaining team. When the reps and Bro. Thomas, J.C. Thomas, trustee, the other six (6) were stewards, returned to the plant, they all had members of Management assigned to follow them and watch their movements and activities. Meanwhile, the necessary steps to carry out the processing of the discharges were being taken by personnel reps in the employment or personnel office areas. Plant protection people were stationed throughout these areas and on the door to or from the main aisle. Various methods were used to summon each Chief Steward and Bro. J.C. Thomas to the front office area separately. Once, there, they were told what the real purposes of the various calls had been, that they were discharged and ushered out the front end of the plant. They were not to be allowed back on the floor of the plant to carry out the local Unions' previously stated position and program and inform the employees that the plant was to be "closed down" because they or anyone else were being fired. Heated discussions developed between all parties at this point. Union Reps, Personnel Reps, and Plant protection people. Things rapidly settled down to business and the problems at hand. The Union reps requested representation from their respective Committeemen or their President since it seemed inappropriate they represent themselves under Sec. 54 of the National Agreement dated 11-10-67. This request was flatly rejected. Request were then made to review the charges or allegations that the Company was levying against each of them to substantiate or warrant this extreme step in the disciplinary area. This request was also rejected! The Union reps were not to be allowed read or review any of the charges, they were not be given any rights to any other form of union representation, and they were to be summarily ushered out the front door because Management knew the position the Bargaining Committee had taken earlier and knew that they had been instructed to "shut down the plant" if anyone was fired.

With this final crystallization of Managements' position and intent, the Union reps and leadership adjourned the meeting or you could say "terminated any further useless discussion, and left the room to leave the plant in the accepted and orthodox manner." Mr. Hayes, the plant security head, and an associate were encountered on the way out of the office area and a few words were exchanged but nothing else. The Union reps contend that one or both of these men appeared to be armed. The 2nd shift reps continued on out of the plant carrying their people with them as they went. The initial stage of the May 1st work-stoppage had started.

Bro. C. Thornton, Committeeman, and I arrived at the plant somewhere around 11 or 11:30 PM. We entered the plant at the West Gate and proceeded east down the main aisle. Many workers were still in the plant and milling around because of the suddenness of Managements' actions. Employees sought information and clarification on what really happened, who all had been fired, and was our local Union position still the same as previously stated. They were told that our position was still the same as committed previously to them, that all 2nd shift Chief Stewards and Bro. J.C. Thomas had been fired, and that the local Union was ordering the plant closed down. With the assistance of the 3rd shift stewards and Bro. Thornton, to all intent and purpose, the Eldon Ave. Axle Plant was stopped or closed down as of midnight May 1, 1970. Bro. Mois, skilled trades steward 3rd shift, and myself toured the plant one last time before heading for Labor Relations and C. Polsgrove. Once there, Bro. Thornton joined me and we proceeded to discuss the evenings events and who had been discharged. To our surprise we found not only had Management discharged all first line Union reps on the 2nd shift, but five from the 1st and 3rd shift as well. One other employee was also included in the disciplinary actions as well, Bro. Leo Oddo, a local Union trustee working the 3rd shift. His participation or involvement are still a mystery to me but I think some degree of penalty is on his record. Bro. Thornton gathered the necessary information from Mr. Polsgrove and left the plant.

It was decided at the local Union hall to picket the plant with only Union reps in order to inform the people of the 1st shift of the actions and position taken by the local union leadership in the labor dispute. The Union picketing was successful and eventually all workers rallied in support of the leadership and the total work stoppage was effected. With the sanction of my local union, I joined others in leadership on the picket line whenever it was deemed necessary. At no time were any of the employees badgered or threatened, they were asked to lend their support to their local Union

Leadership in this struggle for respect recognition, and our equity.

Mr. Hafner, Mr. Polsgrove, and three general foremen shared my duties on the picket at the West Gate and not once can either man say that I threatened any worker. I told the workers and these Management men that the local was asking their support in keeping the plant closed until Joe Hafner and his people saw fit to recognize this Union and agrees to sit down in good faith and help us resolve our many problems.

Picketing with me on the West Gate were Brothers Sparks, Mois and Bucci.
Members that didn't stay long, H. Willis, C. Burton, W. Davis

Jordan U. Lewis