

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 3 OF 16

FOLDER 12

EWSC JOINT GRIEVANCES

Joint Grievance of A. Chandler, J. Edwards, R. McKee and J. Taylor

The Union feels the discharges of the undersigned employees is improper, illegal and completely unjustified for the following reasons:

Approximately a year ago Rose Logan, a janitor, died as a result of a combination of unsafe working conditions and the incompetence and indifference of the plant doctor and plant safety man at Eldon Avenue Gear and Axle Plant. She was struck in the right lower leg by a jitney driver whose vision was obscured by an improperly loaded skid box. The injury was obviously severe, and the plant Workmen's Compensation Representative recommended she not work until it was healed. However, in order to protect the plant's lost time record the Safety Director and the doctor ordered Mrs. Logan to work.

From the date of her injury to the day of her death she was transported to and from the plant by taxi. Each day she performed such work as dusting office furniture and folding towels, in the Medical Department. Eventually she developed a thrombophlebitis in her right leg. The usual treatment for such a condition is complete inactivity, but the plant doctor scorned to use obvious techniques. The inevitable occurred: a blood clot loosened from her leg and travelled to her heart with fatal results.

May 13, 1970 Mamie Williams, a press operator with twenty-six years seniority, died as a result of management's callous indifference to human life, and the incompetence of the plant doctor. Mrs. Williams had been on sick leave for a substantial period of time. She received a notice from management to return to work or be fired. She returned to the plant and was examined by the plant doctor. Her blood pressure was too high for her to work; even the plant doctor concurred in this. However, apparently because she was afraid of losing twenty-six years seniority, Mrs. Williams insisted on returning to work, and the doctor agreed. Regardless of Mrs. Williams' motive for returning to work, or the vehemence of her pleas, it was an obvious dereliction of duty by the doctor to allow her to return to work knowing

of her high blood pressure. She returned to work, was soon carried out of the plant on a stretcher, and a few days later she was dead.

During the second week of May, 1970 the Eldon Worker's Safety Committee, a group of workers concerned about safety in the plant, was formed.

The Committee's purpose was to educate workers in the plant concerning the abnormally dangerous working conditions at Eldon, and to inform them of possible methods of alleviation them. A number of leaflets and bulletins were distributed at the plant gates, all emphasizing safety on the job.

At approximately 6:15 a.m., Tuesday, May 26, 1970, Gary Thompson, a twenty-two year old jitney driver, died as a direct result of unsafe conditions in the plant. He was told to empty a hopper of scrap steel weighing three to five tons into a railroad car. In order to open the hatch of the hopper Thompson was forced to dismount from the jitney and pry at the hopper release catch with a stick. (It is common knowledge the release catches of the hoppers are almost always stuck shut with dirt and rust.) The jitney's emergency brakes were disconnected. (It is common knowledge that almost none of the jitneys at Eldon have working emergency or primary brakes.) Apparently, when the hopper hatch was opened, the load shifted causing the brakeless jitney to roll into a chuck hole in the loading platform. The jitney tipped over crushing Gary Thompson under tons of steel. It is our understanding that all of the unsafe conditions that caused Thompson's death--the brakeless jitney, the jammed hopper hatch release catch and the chuck holes in the loading platform--have been the subject of grievances time and time again, and the company has taken no action whatsoever to correct them.

Gary Thompson's death was a result of the very conditions the Eldon Worker's Safety Committee was trying to eliminate. Members of the Committee were convinced other deaths were imminent, and that the abnormally dangerous conditions in the plant must be eliminated immediately. On May 27, 1970 and May 28, 1970 pickets were established to explain how and why Gary Thompson had died, and to explain the imminent danger facing every worker in the plant. At no time did the pickets use such words and phrases as "strike", and "shut it down", etc. At all times factual statements such as "Unsafe plant", "two murders in two weeks", etc. were used.

The entire program of the Eldon Worker's Safety Committee was consistent with Section 502 of the National Labor Relations Act which states the withholding of labor in a good faith belief of abnormally dangerous working conditions does not and cannot constitute a strike.

Either through ignorance of basic labor law, or in a wilful and petty spirit of retaliation, management has refused to recognize our sincere good faith position in this matter. May 28, 1970 we, the undersigned grieving members of the Eldon Worker's Safety Committee, each received telegrams from the company informing us we had been discharged for violation of Section 5 of the National Agreement between Chrysler and the U.A.W. Approximately twenty-four hours later, we were told to report to a meeting with plant labor relations officials in the plant offices. At this meeting we were given official separation notices, and a report of C. Polsgrove, Labor Relations Director, was given to us. However, management was unable to produce, on demand, the actual evidence supposedly supporting our discharges, namely the reports of our supervisors that we were actually seen picketing at the plant gates. This, in spite of management's having had more than ample

opportunity to prepare and substantiate its' case against us. In otherwords, Chrysler's position is it will discharge us, deprive us of our livelihood, without a shred of evidence to support its' actions. This highhanded arrogance we can only describe as contemptible.

The Union therefore demands that A. Chandler, J. Edwards, R. McKee and H. J. Taylor be immediately reinstated and made whole.