

# SPEAR

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARY  
BLACK WORKERS

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**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.**

## **who is james johnson**

Who is James Johnson? James Johnson is you and me. James Johnson is the oldest of seven children in his family. Those closest to him have always known him to be a gentle person, very thoughtful person. He has always looked after the welfare of his family. In search of a better life for himself, James was still in his teens when he left Mississippi for the industrial jungle of Detroit. Here he lived with his uncle, who was able to persuade him to finish school. And so he did, and each day James would travel from Mt. Clemens High to his after school job at St. Joseph's Hospital. Always one to depend upon his own resources, he worked as a kitchen helper there so he could support himself until his graduation in 1955. After graduating he spent two years in the Army, whereupon he received an honorable discharge and returned to Detroit. But Detroit of the late fifties and early sixties offered a particularly hard life for Black people. As has always been the case in the United States, what was classified as a "recession" for white workers during this period, proved to be a real depression for Black workers. Finally after months of searching, James found work at the Selfridge Air Force Base cafeteria. For the following three years that passed, he worked in the cafeteria for a paltry \$35 a week. Like most Black workers, James had to sacrifice a lot of little enjoyments just to make ends meet. But out of his meager salary he somehow managed to save for the home he was to purchase later. Not one to ever forget his family, however, he regularly sent money back home to his mother down South. In this way, some of his brothers and sisters were able to finish their education.

The recession began to level off during the sixties, but the cost of living continually rose. Like so many other Black workers, James searched for better wages and working conditions. And he continued to save for that house he wanted so badly. But he never forgot his family, or people less fortunate than he. His youngest sister recalls how he would often help people on the street not because he knew them, but because he was just that way. If he thought that any cause would help someone, if only a little, he would support it in any way he could. This is how James Johnson is.



James Johnson is not a wordly man, but he is a man of honor, a gentle man, a man with pride, a man with respect for himself and his fellow men. He is an exceptionally quiet man one who usually keeps to himself. He is not a man whom you would generally see at parties or in bars. A man who, until now, was without violence in his life. But what circumstances caused a man, much like you and me, a man known for his extreme kindness, to now be charged with the shooting deaths of three men?

James Johnson had been employed at Eldon Avenue Gear and Axle Plant for two years. Like other Black workers there, he had to put up with the daily harassments by racist foremen, the lack of proper safety conditions, and the backbreaking and dangerous work. In addition, James was singled out for special harassment because of the fact that he rarely laughed or smiled while on the job. He would be put on certain jobs and given no instruction. Then the foremen would stand around watching him, hoping that he would make a mistake so that they could fire him. But James rarely, if ever, made mistakes on the job. So the supervisors evidently decided that since he was not dumb, he must be a potential troublemaker, and they kept him under constant surveillance.

In May of 1970, James was involved in an automobile accident. His car was a total loss, and the back, neck, and head injuries which he suffered as a result of the accident, caused him to undergo treatment twice a week. Because of the seriousness of his injuries, James Johnson's doctor advised him not to go back to work. When James went to get his insurance papers and to tell Chrysler Corporation details of these injuries, he was sent to an over-crowded "Industrial Clinic" where he was hardly even examined. And, in the same way that Chrysler did Sister Mamie Williams, which by ordering her off her hospital bed sent her to her death, they sent James a telegram ordering him back to work immediately. They refused to give him disability payments for the five days he was off the job. Then they sent him a registered letter stating that his insurance had been cancelled. From that time on, he was forced to work without any insurance whatsoever.

But James Johnson is you and me. What drove James Johnson to the breaking point?

James was scheduled for vacation on June, 1970. The date was posted on the bulletin board. On May 29, which was a Friday, James had "his" foreman sign his time card, and left on vacation after work. When he returned to work on schedule, he noticed that his time card had been pulled from the rack. When he asked the foreman why, the foreman would just shrug his shoulders and walk away. James was forced to work for approximately one month without a time card. One racist foreman had the nerve to continually ask James why he didn't go home, since he didn't have a time card. But James knew that if he went home, they would surely fire him. And so he stayed, and his time card finally "re-appeared". But James Johnson is not a violent man. What drove James Johnson to the point of temporary insanity?

Finally, on July 15, 1970, James Johnson was pushed to the wall. Because he was not provided with proper safety gloves, and for that reason refused to work the oven, James was charged with "insubordination" and fired. The kind of life which forced him to scrimp and save his hard earned quarters and dollars so that he could buy the home he always wanted, the financial support of his family, for which he had taken a responsibility since his teens; the refusal by racist plant foremen to upgrade him, because he didn't buck cance or grin each time they passed; the constant harassment. The inhumane conditions of work . . . . And, in a manner which all of us oppressed by the foul, racist machinery of Capitalism, are capable, of being driven, James Johnson was pushed to the breaking point.

That is why all of us, and not just James Johnson, are on trial beginning April 26. And that is why all of us in turn must put Chrysler on trial that day, put the sellout UAW on trial, must put the vicious system of Capitalist exploitation on trial, must put U.S. "homegrown" racism and imperialism on trial. We cannot afford any more James Johnson's to be "judged" and sentenced by the same racist dogs who daily push the James Johnson in us to the breaking point.



**JAMES JOHNSON HAS DARED TO STRUGGLE. LET US ALL DARE TO HELP HIM WIN.**

**HAIL  
BROTHER  
JAMES  
JOHNSON**





# BLACK WORKERS UNITE

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