

Spirit of 17



PUBLISHED BY THE COMMUNIST LABOR PARTY AT DODGE TRUCK

Volume 1/Number 2

February, 1978

"The October Revolution (Russia--1917) is the first revolution in world history to provide the workers and soldiers of the West with a living, salvation-bringing example and to impel them on to the path of real emancipation from the yoke of war and imperialism." --Joseph Stalin

CLP AGAIN TAKES STRUGGLE FOR JOBS, PEACE
& EQUALITY INTO ELECTIONS

Support General Baker!

General G. Baker, Jr., the veteran civil rights leader and auto-worker who finished second in the 1976 9th district race for State Representative, has announced he will run again for the seat in 1978.

Baker, the Communist Labor Party candidate in 1976 for the seat representing Highland Park and north Detroit, defeated the Republican and U.S. Labor Party candidates. But he was beaten by incumbent Democrat, George Edwards.

This year, the Communist Labor Party is again trying to overcome Michigan's reactionary election law which is designed to close the election to all but Democrats and Republicans. Public Act 94, passed just before the '76 elections, requires that "minor" parties not only get thousands of petition signatures but also get thousands of votes in the August primary election in the Party Qualification Section of the ballot in order to have the right to present candidates in November. Voters who vote to uphold the rights of "minor" parties to be on the ballot are disenfranchised from voting in the Primary.

SIGN A CLP PETITION

At this point, the only Party circulating petitions to be on the ballot is the Communist Labor Party. If you haven't yet seen the petitions being circulated at Dodge Truck, be on the lookout or call 341-0346.

In addition to seeking ballot status as the CLP candidate in November, Baker will also run in the August Democratic primary against Edwards.

"The defeat of Edwards would be a victory for all workers." said Baker in a statement. He continued, "For 25 years Edwards has put the interests of banks and corporations ahead of those of workers and the residents of his own district. Last election he urged us to vote for Jimmy Carter who has broken nearly every campaign promise he made to the workers, especially Negro workers whose votes put him in office. The problem of unemployment--especially for our youth--is worse than ever and my campaign is first and foremost, a campaign for jobs. It is a campaign which must be waged inside and outside the Democratic Party."

SUPPORT A FELLOW UAW BROTHER

In 1968 at Dodge Main, General Baker was a founder of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, DRUM. Fired by Chrysler for his leadership of a wildcat strike which won major gains, especially for minority workers, he was blacklisted for many years. He later got a job at the Ford Rouge plant and was fired from there for his leadership in the struggles of the unemployed in the big layoffs of 1974. He was ordered reinstated by an NLRB decision and is currently an active member of Ford Local 600. (over)

A Chief Steward at Dodge Truck, John Sollenberger, said at a recent campaign "I have known General Baker for years. He is a fellow UAW member and the kind of candidate we need to carry forward our struggle for jobs for all, the shorter work week, fair election laws and the unionization of the South. As a State Representative he would not knuckle under the cry to give Big Business anything they want at the expense of the workers--just to keep them in Michigan." His pamphlet, REPEAL 14B, TAFT-HARTLEY, makes clear his understanding of the need to organize the South as the only way to protect workers, North and South, from the ruthless corporations.

We urge Dodge Truck workers and fellow UAW members to support this struggle for independent political action by the working class. Support General Baker and sign the petition to put the CLP on the ballot.

Layoffs Again?

Once again the threat of lay-offs hangs over Dodge Truck. While most of us welcome some paid time off, our uncertain future is far less welcome.

While the question of future permanent lay-offs is now uncertain, the increasing harassment and intimidation of we hourly workers by Kahle and his various flunky supervisors is not! In the payroll office we have a new eager beaver supervisor who acts like every dime of our hard earned money comes out of his own pocket. The I.E.s (time stars) are out head-hunting when, in fact, new people were supposed to have been hired for the PPH days (anybody seen one?).

And solving problems on the shop floor (between the foremen and the people and their chief stewards)? That's a laugh! The foremen have to ask their general foreman, superintendent, labor relations and Joe Ternes just for permission to go to the john. Health and safety? Business as usual there: all promises and no action. We recently went more than one month with no ladies gloves.

Some simpletons would put the major blame for this sorry situation on the UAW and our Local 140 elected officials. This is a mistake and plays right into management's hands. We have to understand that our worsening plight is directly tied to a continuing and deepening crisis in the auto industry in general and Chrysler Corp. in particular.

For 25 years, the auto manufacturers have dominated American industry. With the deepening crisis of international capitalism symbolised by skyrocketing oil prices, this period has ended. Since they have a fairly stable financial base, Ford and General Motors, in the short run, can weather this growing storm of government regulation, the rebuilding of outmoded plants and equipment, and shrinking cars, shrinking markets and shrinking profits. Tottering on the edge of bankruptcy with the oldest, most dilapidated plants in the industry, Chrysler Corp may not survive. Chrysler management's short run answer is the classical one: cut corners on health and safety; slash manpower (=speed-up).

At Dodge Truck, there is only one short run solution for us. This Spring, as the market picks up, we need to mobilize our Local Union to put Dodge Truck management on notice that--if they want trucks off the end of the line--they will have to do a complete turnabout on health and safety in the plant, speed-up ('manpower reduction'), and supervision's general attitude toward the Local 140 rank & file and their Union reps.

THE PAGES OF THE "SPIRIT OF 17" ARE OPEN TO ALL WORKERS AT DODGE TRUCK. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY CONDITIONS, MANAGEMENT HARASSMENT AND IDEAS OR OPINIONS YOU WANT TO PUT OUT. WE WILL PRINT LETTERS OR ARTICLES THAT EXPRESS AN HONEST OPINION. CONTACT US AT 341-0346