

Pamphlet: Put People Before Profits

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always press down most powerfully, most viciously upon the backs of racially and nationally oppressed people.

If we can say that there is one thing we are definitely determined to accomplish with this campaign to put people before profits, it is this: we will demonstrate to the bosses and to their governmental representatives that racism is not going to work very much longer.

Allow me, comrades, sisters and brothers, to speak to you about some matters of "confidence." It has been approximately one month now since Jimmy Carter descended from the mountain at Camp David after more than a week of private talks with senators, corporation executives, members of his cabinet and the armed forces. At that time he utilized the national air waves to confide in us that he had just discovered that a "crisis of confidence" exists in our country.

Of course, Carter could have saved all that time and those thousands of dollars he spent to transport and house all those people at Camp David. He could simple have made a dime phone call to any one of us and we could have told him that hardly anyone any more believes a word he savs.

There are, in the audience, today, a number of sisters and brothers who work at or have been recently laid off from the Dodge Main Auto Plant. Not very long ago, about 8,000 men and women workers ran the Chrysler operation in Hamtramck - men and women who were predominantly Black and Arab. At the moment, there are 2,500 left in the plant - practically all the women workers and virtually all the Arab workers, of course, the vast majority of the original Black workers have been laid off already.

So what about Chrysler Corporation? Chrysler Corporation and this national crisis of confidence? Do you think that most people really believe Chrysler's sob story? They now are asking the government to give them a billion dollars to keep them afloat. first of all, when they ask for "government money," they are actually demanding taxpayers' money. Our money. Furthermore, they want the workers in their plants they don't lay off to give up wage and benefit increases for the next several years.

What is the real story? What is the low-down on Chrysler? The next president, Lee lacocca re-

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ceived \$61,000 for the last two months of 1978. Do you want to know why Chrysler is so shaky financially at this moment? Let's continue lacocca's story. For 1979 and 1980, in addition to his salary, which is apparently more than \$360,000 a year, he will receive \$1.5 million to compensate him for retirement benefits he lost when he left Ford. Thus, he will get more than a million dollars a year. In addition he has been given \$400,000 stock options which, under favorable conditions, can be worth millions.

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You can imagine just how much the many other Chrysler executives receive in salaries and benefits. They want our taxed to pay them a thousand million dollars to run that corporation into the ground. That is obviously a crisis of confidence.

But if they really do want us taxpayers to give them a billion dollars, then let them give us Chrysler Corporation. Then we, the taxpayers, can give it back to the Chrysler workers who will then be able to pass the profits back to the taxpayers. Or else we could eliminate profits from the industry entirely and thereby lower the process on automobiles.

There is one problem with this solution - they would call socialism - putting people before profits. But reflect upon the situation: If we took over Chrysler, I can guarantee you that we would not have a crisis of confidence.

What Chrysler Corporation proposes to do to the Dodge Main workers is nothing less than genocidal. A week ago today, I spent a few hours with a group of Dodge Main workers. As I listened to the many stories they told about workers already laid off; as I listened to their accounts of the future they themselves faced if the plant really shuts down, I became enraged beyond words.

How dare Chrysler tell thousands of workers to forget about their families, forget about the houses they are buying and turn over their mortgages to

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the banks for foreclosure! Forget about their cars - just let them be repossessed!

How dare Chrysler leave men and women stranded within their own desperation!

Can we expect any of these sisters and brothers to place any confidence whatever in the monopoly corporations of this country? As far as the Dodge Main situation is concerned, we are going to do everything in our power to prevent the shut-down. I want you to know that the workers at Dodge Main are charging you with the responsibility to organize all the pressure necessary to force the federal government to stipulate that Chrysler must - and they must absolutely - keep the Dodge Main plant open. And they must not shut down any of their

remaining operations, leaving the workers stranded.

And what about the 40-80 percent (depending on where you get your statistics) of the Black youth of our cities who have no jobs nor even the prospects of jobs? Is it any surprise that they have no confidence in the government? Meantime, the government, which has caused double-digit inflation through its military spending and support of corporation superprofits, says that inflation is the number one problem. And they say that to solve it, we have to experience a recession with an "acceptable" figure of eight to nine percent unemployment overall.

This means two or three times as much unemployment for Black workers and three or four times as much for Black women.

Can you have confidence in a President who has cynically broken every promise he has made about his commitment to developing jobs for youth?

Can you have confidence in a President who uses the human rights banner to promote anticommunism, while he remains absolutely silent when his white Southern countrymen don white robes and pointed hoods, as they set out from Selma to demand "white rights" in Montgomery? How can an advocate of human rights fail to stand up in opposition to racism?

Can we really have confidence in that kind of "confidence" man?

And how about the Rev. Ben Chavis who cannot be with us today because he continues to be imprisoned in the dungeons of North Carolina as the

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leader of the Wilmington 10? Should we really have confidence in this kind of system?

What about David Truong? - the young Vietnamese brother and patriot, sentenced to 15 years in a bizarre case of alleged espionage, in which he was entrapped on false charges by warrantless wiretaps and acts of the Carter Administration that go further than the acts for which Richard Nixon was removed.

Should David Truong have confidence in this system? Should he have confidence in the man who presumes to be our president.

Should Rev. Ben Chavis have confidence in this system and in this president? Obviously, Ben has no confidence; he labors under no such illusions. About two weeks ago, I was here in your city of Detroit and spoke to Rev. Chavis on the telephone. He asked me to appeal to you to assist him in achieving his freedom. We have formulated a petition - You should all sign it and moreover be responsible for acquiring a certain number of signatures immediately!

Last week a distinguished panel of international lawyers and judges from Sweden, India, Nigeria, Senegal, Chile, Trinidad and England completed a 20-city tour to investigate the status of human rights in these United States. They visited a score of prisons from the women's prison in Alderson, West Virginia, to the behavior control unit at Marion, Illinois; from San Quentin to the proposed Lake Placid prison on the site of next year's Winter Olympics. They were here at the invitation of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice and the U.S. Peace Council. They are now in Geneva to deliver their finding to the United Nations Subcommission on Human Rights. Let me just say that they found no grounds for confidence in this system. And they reflect world public opinion.

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National Museum of African American History and Culture

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