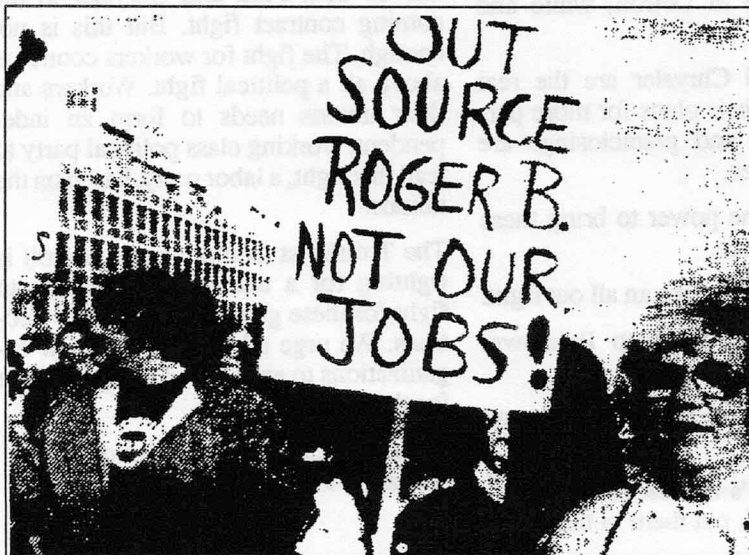


# TRUTH

A REVOLUTIONARY TROTSKYIST BULLETIN IN DETROIT-FOUNDED 1974

Edited by the Trotskyist Committee of Detroit, Supporter of the International League (for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International)

# Who's robbing the people? Coleman Young, or GM, Ford, Chrysler?



GM workers  
march in  
Flint, Mich.,  
against plant  
closings.

## INSIDE:

- Who's robbing the people?
- The obstacle to Black liberation
- Black socialists
- Stop the phony drug war!

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# Who's robbing the people?

In the last few weeks, the FBI has suddenly discovered that Coleman Young and his friends may be using public positions for private gain. The big newspapers are full of stories about Young's "private consulting firm," and about various men associated with Young that are being investigated, or have even been arrested, for misusing public funds.

What incredible hypocrisy!

Agents of the federal government, selected and trained by racist, right-wing Republicans like Reagan and Bush, suddenly discover that Black Democratic Party officials in Detroit are dishonest, corrupt, robbing the people, etc.

Why come all the way to Detroit to find dishonesty and corruption? Why not look in the White House?

These men are trying to get across the idea that Coleman Young and his friends are *responsible* for the crisis and poverty in Detroit. They are trying to cover for the real criminals.

Coleman Young does not decide what happens in Detroit; GM, Ford, and Chrysler do.

The heads of these corporations have made millions of dollars off the labor of working people in the city of Detroit and in the Detroit area over the years. Now that working people have unions in Detroit, now that Black people have a certain amount of equality in Detroit, albeit still very limited, the heads of GM, Ford, and Chrysler are withdrawing their investments from the auto industry in the city of Detroit and in the Detroit area.

GM, Ford, and Chrysler have all announced more indefinite layoffs. GM just announced that its last plant within the city of Detroit is its most inefficient plant. Ford just sold a large part of the Rouge complex, just outside the city of Detroit, to another corporation. Chrysler just announced that it plans to close its last plant in the city of Detroit.

Is there any reason to believe that these

corporations are not planning to close almost every single plant in and near Detroit, that these corporations are not planning more suffering and misery for working people in Detroit, white and Black?

GM, Ford, and Chrysler are the real criminals, and their plans for more permanent layoffs and plant closings are their latest crimes.

Workers have the power to bring these criminals to justice.

Now is the time to make an all out fight.

— Stop the layoffs; keep Poletown, Rouge, and Jefferson open!

— Workers control of GM, Ford, and Chrysler!

— Take society's resources out of the hands of the rich, put them in the hands

of the workers, let the workers organize production and distribution!

The union should fight for workers control of GM, Ford and Chrysler in the coming contract fight. But this is not enough. The fight for workers control is above all a political fight. Workers and their unions needs to form an independent, working class political party to lead this fight, a labor party, based on the unions.

The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit is fighting for a united workers slate to fight for these goals in the coming elections. We urge all worker and their organizations to enter into a common fight for these goals.

Trotskyist Committee of Detroit  
January, 1990

# The obstacle to Black liberation

January 15 was Martin Luther King day. The decision to set aside a day to honor Martin Luther King and the struggle for equality and liberation for Black people in the United States represents an important gain for both white and Black working people in the United States.

It represents an opportunity, at least once a year, to draw a balance sheet of this struggle and define the road forward.

Detroit is one of the cities where the struggle for equality for Black people has gone the farthest. Black people are a majority in Detroit and they are a majority in many institutions in Detroit, including the city council and the mayor's office. There are many places within the city of Detroit where Black people can go without being worried about being insulted or attacked by racists. This is a very important step forward.

However, it would be false to say that there is real equality for Black people in Detroit. For the more and more Blacks have become a majority in Detroit and worked to assert their control over various institutions, the more and more the banks and large corporations, namely, GM, Ford and Chrysler, have withdrawn their investments from Detroit and from the Detroit area.

While Blacks have been fighting for some control over some small territory in the United States, the racist corporations that dominate Detroit and the United States, have been trying to gradually remove everything of value from that territory, without anyone noticing what they are doing, without provoking a conflict with the exploited and oppressed population.

GM, Ford, and Chrysler obviously do not want to do business where workers have unions, where Blacks are "up-

pity" and expect certain basic needs and rights.

The developments in Detroit show that in order for Blacks to achieve real equality, it is necessary to take the

Black. It simply has to realize this, overcome the divisions in its ranks, and prepare itself to do so.

This means a fight to unite white workers, Black workers, and workers

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banks and big corporations, like GM, Ford, and Chrysler, out of the hands of their racist owners and put them in the hands of forces interested in equality for Black people.

Blacks cannot accomplish this alone, without any support from any other sectors of the population. Blacks themselves are divided along class lines; many upper class and middle class Blacks identify far more with upper class and middle class whites than they do with the masses of working class and poor Blacks.

Some Blacks are hoping that the Japanese will take over the banks and basic industry in the United States and that they will allow Blacks to be equal partners. But the history of Japanese racism and imperialism in Asia, with respect to the Chinese people and other peoples, shows that this is not a likely possibility.

The only real alternative is to fight for workers control of the banks and basic industry.

The American working class is capable of doing this. It is capable of taking the banks and basic industry out of the hands of their rich, racist owners, and running them in the interests of the masses of working people, white and

of all races and nationalities. It means a fight for real equality for Black people now. White workers have to fight for real equality for Black people, for full representation of Black people in all places, for a union program to fully integrate all unions, workplaces, working class neighborhoods, schools, etc., planned and organized by the unions. They also have to fight for the right of Blacks to establish their own nation on American soil, if they chose to do so. In other words, white workers have to fight for their Black brothers and sisters, their *class* brothers and sisters, to have all the rights that they have.

This is the only way to unify the working class. This is the only way to overcome the divisions within it. And it is the only way to achieve equality and liberation for the Black people.

No self-respecting worker or militant wants unity on a basis of inequality.

White and Black workers who understand this, who are committed to the fight for workers control of the banks and basic industry and for equality for Black people and all oppressed people, need to build a united, working class party, to lead this fight.—M. Guttshall



## Black socialists in the United States

# W.E.B. DuBois, *The Messenger*, the African Blood Brotherhood

In the last article about Black Socialists, we said that there were three distinct kinds of Black socialists in 1920. The first type was represented by W.E.B. DuBois, the second by *The Messenger* and the third by the African Blood Brotherhood.

These different tendencies, while they existed at the same time, actually represent different stages in the efforts of Black people to resolve the problem of Black liberation.

DuBois began by fighting against the embrace of capitalism by Booker T. Washington. He thought socialism was better, but his socialism was vague; he did not see socialism as a goal for Black people. *The Messenger* clearly advocated socialism as a goal for Black people. But they thought that was enough. They did not understand that the oppression of Black people as a race meant that the working class, on the road to socialism, had to resolve the problem of racial oppression in its own ranks and in society as a whole.

The African Blood Brotherhood made great advances in resolving this problem by seeing a special link between the oppression of Black people in Africa by the European imperialist powers and the oppression of Black people in America. This led them to support the Russian Revolution and join the Communist Party. In this party they began to develop a program for the American Revolution that could win socialism here and lay the basis for Black liberation.

### W.E.B. DuBois

W.E.B. DuBois was born in 1868. His early work was influenced by the strength that American capitalism had when he was young. He felt that if Black people were only treated equally then they could use American capitalism to develop their standard of living. He was one of the original founders of the NAACP in 1905.

But, as capitalism began in its decline in the early 1900s, he began to advocate socialism. His socialism was more a vague vision of the future rather than a necessity for the advancement of society and of Black people. He even joined the Socialist Party in 1910 but quit in 1912 to support the Democrat Woodrow Wilson for president. In 1907 he wrote:

"I am a Socialist-of-the-Path. I do not believe in the complete socialization of the means of production — the entire abolition of private property in capital — but the Path of Progress and common sense certainly leads to far greater ownership of the public wealth for the public good than is now the case. . . . I believe that most of the human business called private is no

more private than God's blue sky and that we are approaching a time when railroads, coal mines and many factories can and ought to be run by the public for the public. This is where the path leads and I follow it gladly and hopefully. In the socialistic trend thus indicated lies the one great hope of the Negro Americans. . . ."

He supported the United States when it entered World War I. He did not support the Bolshevik Revolution when it occurred.

### *The Messenger*

As we wrote before, *The Messenger*, was a radical magazine which began publishing in Harlem on the eve of the Russian Revolution of 1917. *The Messenger* strongly supported the Russian Revolution and the American Socialist Party. It opposed U.S. involvement in World War I. It advocated the socialism for Black people as essential to their liberation. It concentrated on convincing the Black working class of the need for socialism.

It said: "There is a new leadership for Negro workers . . . it is insistent upon the Negro workers exacting justice, both from the white labor unions and from the capitalists . . . . These old line Negro political fossils know nothing of the Labor Movement, do not believe in labor unions at all . . . The very thing which they are fighting [against] is one of the chief factors in securing for Negroes their rights. That is Bolshevism. . . . Booker Washington and all of them have simply advocated that Negroes get more work. Negroes have too much work already. What we want Negroes to get is less work and more wages, with more leisure for study and recreation. . . ."

### African Blood Brotherhood

The Socialist Party split under the influence of the Russian Revolution. Most of the supporters of the Revolution formed the new Communist Party. It is this party that really began to develop an understanding of the fight for socialism in America.

The African Blood Brotherhood was a secret society set up in 1919 by a West Indian, Cyril Briggs, in Harlem, publishing a radical magazine, *The Crusader*. While it supported the Black socialist candidates when they ran for political office, its program was different. It advocated a world-wide struggle for a "free Africa," but it placed the struggle for democratic rights for Blacks in America as a vital prerequisite for the development of this struggle to free Africa. Briggs had been editor of the *New York Amsterdam News*, the major Black paper in Harlem, but he resigned when

the United States government Intelligence Department demanded censorship of his editorials against the segregated armed forces in World War I.

The platform of the Brotherhood under the heading of "immediate protection and ultimate liberation," called for armed resistance to lynching, unqualified rights to vote in the South, a struggle for equal rights and against all forms of discrimination and the organization of Blacks into trade unions.

At its peak in the early 1920s, it had some 2500 members in 56 chapters with significant strength among the Black coal miners of West Virginia. It was driven underground in the South after it organized armed defense of a Black accused of attacking a white girl in Oklahoma.

It was born in the same political ferment that was caused by the Russian Revolution and other revolts at the end of World War I. Unlike Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), it did not advocate capitalism. It supported the uprisings of the colonial peoples and the Russian Revolution.

A major section of the leadership of the A.B.B. joined the American Workers Party, that is, the Communist Party by 1923. They were greatly influenced by the attitude of the new Communist International towards Blacks.

The new Communist International said: ". . . it is necessary for the Communist Parties to render direct aid to the revolutionary movements in the dependent and subject nations (for example, in Ireland, the Negroes in America, etc.) and in the colonies."

James Cannon, a founding member of the Communist Party and later of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, said that American Communists learned from the Communist International to:

"change their *attitude*; to assimilate the new theory of the Negro question as a *special* question of doubly-exploited second-class citizens, requiring a program of special demands as part of the overall program — and to start doing something about it."

But the Communist Party soon became Stalinized. The Communist Party abandoned its socialist program. It became an extension of the foreign policy needs of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

The struggle for Black liberation and socialism was taken up by the Socialist Workers Party. One of the Black socialists who joined this party was C.L.R. James. We will examine this Party and C.L.R. James in our next issue. — F. Michaels

## What is the Trotskyist Committee?

The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit, Supporter of the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, is a revolutionary workers group in Detroit.

The Trotskyist Committee calls itself "Trotskyist" because of Leon Trotsky and his comrades. They continued the struggle for the socialist revolution after Stalin betrayed it, founded the Fourth International to lead this struggle, and devoted their lives to this cause.

The Trotskyist Committee is open to young workers, women workers, and all workers and militants who are for:

- equality and the right to self-determination for the Black people and all oppressed peoples;
- the workers against the bosses and their agents in the unions;
- the socialist revolution;
- the Fourth International;
- the struggle of the International League for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The International League is for rebuilding the Fourth International. This means rooting Trotskyism in the working class, winning fresh working class forces to the revolutionary workers cause, and uniting truly working class, revolutionary Trotskyist forces on a principled basis.

The Trotskyist Committee welcomes all who share these goals, are prepared to accept its decisions, contribute financially to its work, and take part in its work on a regular basis.

The Trotskyist Committee concentrates its work on developing and spreading revolutionary propaganda, educating workers as revolutionaries, and on recruiting workers, and militants from other social classes truly devoted to the working class, to the revolutionary workers cause.

Leon Trotsky said: "... in the final analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided upon American soil."

And, "I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International, go forward!"

We urge young workers, women workers, and all workers and militants in the Detroit area, to seriously consider joining the Trotskyist Committee and devoting yourselves to this struggle. There is a place for each and every one of you, in this struggle.

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## Notes

### U.S. out of Panama!

There will be a demonstration on March 24 in Washington, D.C. against U.S. intervention in Central America. We urge all workers and their organizations to support this demonstration. Workers have nothing to gain by keeping U.S. troops in Panama, or anywhere else in Central or South America. It costs the workers thousands of dollars; it costs the workers the lives of their children, who are the ones who are forced to enter the military. And it is not helping working people in the U.S. or Central or South America. It's helping the rich protect their interests. At the same time, it is necessary to understand that Congress's ability to stop U.S. intervention in Central and South America is very limited. Popular mobilization's forced Congress to vote against U.S. aid to the contras in Nicaragua in 1985. So U.S. bankers and businessmen who wanted to help their rich friends in Nicaragua regain power, used their control over U.S. resources to send aid to the contras in different ways. Reagan and Bush used the White House to coordinate this activity. To stop U.S. imperialists from using the tremendous wealth in the United States to maintain rich dictators throughout the world, workers have to fight for workers control of the banks and basic industry and for dismantling the rich men's military apparatus.

### Free Noriega

George Bush has arrested and imprisoned Noriega and claims that he is going to put Noriega on trial in the United States. We urge all workers and their organizations to oppose this, to demand that Noriega be released and returned to Panama. U.S. bankers and businessmen are responsible for the problems of the people in the U.S. and Panama, not Noriega. Noriega is nothing but a lackey. The sole purpose of arresting, imprisoning, and trying Noriega in the United States is to divert attention from this fact.

### Rumania

Workers and oppressed in Rumania continue to arm themselves, maintain popular patrols, push for the execution of the worst Stalinist criminals (Ceaurescu), and, in many cases, carry out these executions themselves. American working people should support this. This is how it was in the American Revolution, this is how it was in the Civil War, and this is how it is in any serious revolution. The Stalinist apparatus in Rumania does not represent working people, socialism, or communism. It represents Western capitalist banks and a small number of privileged, dictatorial, middle class bureaucrats. Eliminating this apparatus can pave the way for building a *truly* socialist society.

### Germany

Since German workers and oppressed brought down the Berlin Wall, and one Stalinist leader after another in East Germany, demonstrations for the reunification of Germany and for the destruction of the Stalinist secret police have continued. Many socialists in the United States support the struggles for the destruction of the Stalinist secret police, but few seem to support the struggle for the reunification of Germany. This is a serious error. Germany has been, and continues to be, oppressed by Western imperialism, primarily the U.S., Britain and France. This oppression, and the failure of the Social Democrats and Stalinists to combat it after World War I, created the conditions in which Hitler arose. The only way to carry forward the struggle in East Germany is to fight for the reunification of Germany, for an end to the pro-capitalist reforms, and for a workers political revolution. This means a fight for truly free elections, for workers control of financial and industrial institutions, and for the total destruction of the Stalinist apparatus standing in the way of this. — M.G.



## Stop the phony war on drugs!

Shortly after George Bush was elected president of the United States, he announced a "war on drugs" and appointed a "drug czar." Hundreds of other politicians and local officials, from right-wing Republicans to left-wing Democrats like Coleman Young or Jesse Jackson, claim to be doing the same thing.

They've already spent thousands of dollars on this so-called "war on drugs," hired more police, carried out raids in working class and Black neighborhoods, in which innocent by-standers have been killed, invaded Panama, sent ships toward Colombia, and arrested and extradited the president of another country, Manuel Noriega. All in the name of a "war on drugs."

But *drugs* are not the fundamental problem facing young

**"... *drugs* are not the fundamental problem facing young working people and their families in the United States, whether they are white or Black... The fundamental problem... is *exploitation*."**

working people and their families in the United States, whether they are white or Black.

The fundamental problem facing working people, young and old, white and Black, is *exploitation*.

It is physically, emotionally, and mentally painful to go to work 5, 6, or 7 days a week, and have somebody else use your brains, your nerves, and your muscles, to make money for himself. It's painful to watch yourself and your fellow workers get older, weaker, and poorer, while your boss gets fatter and richer. And it's even more painful not to have a job at all, to be told that you aren't even good enough to be exploited.

As long as there is exploitation, there is going to be pain. And as long as there is pain, there is going to be drugs, in one form or another.

Rich people, who have gourmet food, designer clothes, fancy homes, fancy cars, who can afford to go to a health club, to a spa, to dinner, to the theatre, or to some private club to relax, can turn up their noses at drugs.

But almost all working people, poor people, who *suffer*, use

*something* to try to help them forget their problems, something to try to help them relax, whether it's TV, junkfood, alcohol, grass, harder drugs, religion, or jogging.

All of these things do some amount of damage. Some — like large quantities of alcohol, hard drugs and religion — do more damage than others, because they tend to prevent the taker from doing any kind of thinking. Thus working class revolutionaries have always fought tendencies to turn toward these things. They must continue to do so. But it is totally hypocritical to beat your chest and say you are better than the next man, because the drug you take might be less destructive than your neighbor's.

The war we need to fight is a war on *exploitation*.

A war for workers control of the banks and basic industry, a war to take society's resources out of the hands of the rich exploiters and put them in the hands of the workers. Let the workers plan and organize the production and distribution of basic necessities. Let the workers begin to organize a truly socialist society, in which there is no rich and no poor, no top and no bottom, no want, no misery, and no privileged, dictatorial bureaucrats. And let's build a working class party to lead that war.

The more and more we progress in the war on exploitation, the less and less young people, working people and their families will turn to drugs.

The Trotskyist Committee of Detroit, a revolutionary socialist workers group named after the famous revolutionary, Leon Trotsky, who gave his life to this struggle, is open to every young worker and militant who wants to wage and win that war.

Trotskyist Committee of Detroit

### In this issue of *The Fourth International*

- articles from Bolivian Trotskyists on the U.S. war on drugs
- Germany
- The World Congress of the LIT

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