

## **An Alliance For a Working Class Candidate For Mayor of Detroit Barbara Putnam on the Ballot! Save the Working Class — Not the Bosses!**

This must be the rallying cry of those who fight for the interests of the working class. Mayor Coleman Young (and his "opponent" Tom Barrow) want only to continue a policy of surrender to the bosses, to perpetuate capitalist schemes that have devastated the working class in Detroit. From the Ren Cen, the Vista disposal scandal, the riverfront project, the Grand Prix, the People Mover fiasco to current proposals for casino gambling and expanding Cobo Hall, every crumb from the accumulated labor of the working class has been snatched to finance these hapless projects. *Enough!*

Save the working class, not the bosses means:

### **1. Jobs Not Prisons! Youth Brigades for Useful Public Works!**

Youth Centers to provide recreation, sports, and the arts for youth, run by the youth themselves and financed by the city.

- Unions against unemployment and plant closures!
- Organize the unorganized, 30 hours work for 40 hours pay!
- Stop forced overtime!

Factory closures from Dodge Main to Uniroyal to Stroh's have thrown thousands of workers into the streets to starve, have driven the living standards of the working class in an unending downward spiral. Let the needs of the workers, not the bosses, decide!

### **2. Get Back Concessions!**

Solidarity with all striking workers. Action committees for a national strike of Chrysler workers.

- Workers Control of Industry!

### **3. Workers Defense Guards Against Racist Attacks!**

No confidence in the bosses' courts or police. Remember Karen Norman, remember the police violence in Philadelphia, and the attempts of the Nazis to march on Belle Isle!

### **4. A City-Wide Referendum Against US Intervention in Nicaragua; Against Apartheid in South Africa**

A referendum on these issues on the ballot through the efforts of the working class parties and the trade unions.

- Volunteers and aid to the workers and peasants of Nicaragua! Union boycott of all military and other supplies and aid to the *contras*.

### **5. Alliance for a Working Class Candidate! Build a Labor Party Now!**

No ballot restrictions for working class parties.

# Save the Working Class not the Bosses!

By BARBARA PUTNAM

DETROIT — We call on the other working class parties, in particular those who favor a Labor Party to *support a single working class candidate for mayor*. The main problem for the Black workers, the youth, the army of unemployed and the very poor is the lack of a unified leadership determined to fight independently for the interests of the working class. We are running a candidate, *Barbara Putnam*, for Mayor, to build *an alliance for a working class candidate*, to offer the promising experiences gained from leading a fight for a Workers Candidate for Mayor in 1981.

Twelve years ago, Coleman Young promised he would create a good business climate by erecting the Ren Cen and offering tax breaks to millionaires and their businesses to "produce jobs by the thousands, revitalize our downtown and our entire city." "Save Detroit" to Coleman Young and the Democrats has always meant dependence on bogus capitalist schemes — translated literally, it means saving the bosses *at the expense of the working class and its unions!* To the working class it has meant a weakening of the trade unions, a betrayal by the union bosses, and being subjected to the misery of capitalist scams that have cost thousands and thousands of jobs, have closed factories such as Dodge Main (a landmark on the road to the "Save Chrysler" campaign), Stroh's, Uniroyal and many more, undermining the stability of the neighborhoods and turning Detroit into an industrial ghost town.

Another central plank of Coleman Young's platform is *more prisons*. Similarly, Tom Barrow, his "opponent," stresses crime and punishment as a further means to *oppress* the working class. The focus on crime and more police only reflects Coleman Young's and the city government's shaky authority and consequently their lack of confidence in the future.

"Save the working class not the bosses" above all means to inspire the working class in its own future. Whoever thinks of the future must think first of the youth. To direct the youth onto the path of class struggle, we say, *Youth Brigades for Useful Public Works!* Give the prison funds to the youth for Youth Centers run by the youth!

According to a new study done by a Chicago accounting firm, Michigan is ranked as "worst business climate," because of unionization, wages, and unemployment compensation. These are the areas that Coleman Young and Governor Blanchard have been steadily trying to whittle away and overturn — *the gains of the working class!* But it also means the working class in Detroit and throughout Michigan remains stronger than in other parts of the country, therefore, a fight here for a working class candidate for Mayor of Detroit lays the basis for a *Labor Party based on the unions*.

A fight against unemployment in the unions means *organize the unorganized!* It means unity of the unions and the working class against

plant closures; a perspective of *workers control of industry*.

The overall effect of Coleman Young's "Save Detroit" campaign has been increased *racial oppression*, heavier unemployment, higher infant mortality rates, youth unemployment as high as 90%, and more directly, police and legal violence perpetrated on Blacks. *Remember Karen Norman!*

## Why not Critical Support to the SWP Candidate?

By DAVID MARK

In the Detroit mayoral elections, the Trotskyist Organization will organize a campaign for a workers candidate. The key to this campaign will be an attempt by us to form an *alliance* of working class parties to present a united front in the elections on a program of workers demands.

In the United States, and certainly in Detroit, the main brake on each and every workers mobilization has been the willingness of workers leaders, mainly the trade union officials, to compromise and make concessions to the bosses.

In 1983 more than 600 resolutions came to the floor of the UAW National Convention directed against concessions, and since then there have been many militant strikes to get back concessions — UAW locals, the AP Parts strike in Toledo, the Arizona copper miners to name a few.

### Democratic Party and Labor Party

Nevertheless, American workers have made many attempts over recent years to break out of the framework of concessions. These struggles have resulted in some partial victories and, as well, they have changed the character of the mobilization of the workers from one of acquiescence to concessions to one of suspicion and at times outright opposition to compromise.

Therefore, tactics which emphasize the unity of the working class against the bosses, and which actually *organize* this class unity, are good tactics. Those which result in class collaboration or only passive support to a working class unity are bad tactics.

Save the working class not the bosses means *solidarity* with the workers and peasants of Nicaragua and South Africa. It means organizing in the unions for a *city-wide referendum* against the war on Nicaragua and against US aid and support to apartheid in South Africa.

"Save the working class not the bosses" — that is the platform of a workers candidate for Mayor of Detroit.

### Critical Support

It has been the practice of working class parties who did not put forward their own candidates to give critical support to other parties. Certainly, it is correct to call for a vote for a candidate of another working class party rather than to call for a vote for a bourgeois candidate or for abstention. But the best way to draw the class line in today's situation where the working class is searching for its unity in *action* is the *united front*. In the present period, the working class is not going to listen to a party that is unwilling to organize united actions of the *class* against the bosses.

A workers candidate for Mayor of Detroit therefore, will be measured not so much initially by the platform of the candidate as by the success with which the candidate, the platform, and the campaign is able to actually *organize* a united front against the bosses.

### Past Experience

Here we can bring in our own experiences in electoral tactics. If we were strictly to rely on a tactic of critical support, to say the Mayoral candidate of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), then we inevitably are forced to this extent to rely on the SWP as our spokesperson in the campaign.

Unfortunately, the SWP, not to mention other parties, rely on a policy of *tailing* behind the mobilization of the working class, rather than fighting themselves to build such a mobilization.

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# Racism in Detroit

By FRED MICHAELS

Mayor Coleman Young often refers to the politicians of the suburbs surrounding Detroit as "racist," because they refuse to pay Detroit for its legitimate charges for sewer and water treatment services. He refers to state legislators from the rural districts of Michigan as "racist" because they vote against more state money for Detroit. In both cases, Young is correct. But that is only the tip of the iceberg of racism in Detroit.

Detroit working people, Black and white, have made great strides in driving racism out of Detroit. In 1924 a Ku Klux Klan candidate was nearly elected mayor. In 1943, a police-led riot against Blacks left 24 Blacks dead and hundreds injured. In 1973, John Nichols, head of the racist Detroit police department and of the anti-Black, anti-working class STRESS squads was defeated in his bid to be mayor. No longer is it possible for such overtly racist squads to be built in the Detroit police department, or for racist vigilantes to run loose on the streets of Detroit.

But racism continues. The conditions of life for the vast majority of Black working class people have gotten worse since 1973.

- Infant mortality for Black babies is the same as in the very poor country of Honduras in Central America.

- Unemployment for Black adult males is in the high teens.

- Unemployment for Black teenagers hovers around 50% and has for several years.

- The working class neighborhoods need new houses, new streets, new parks, new schools.

What are the forces that cause racism today? The same forces that caused it yesterday — the capitalists — the big-monied interests, the banks and the corporations.

They supported the KKK in 1924; they built the police department of 1943 and 1967-73; some supported Nichols for mayor in 1973.

Today these capitalists are Henry Ford II, Roger Smith of General Motors, Lee Iacocca of Chrysler, Max Fisher and Al Taubman, financiers and others.

They have a racist program that they have implemented — a program of plant closings, a program of forced concessions from Detroit autoworkers, a program of building downtown Detroit as a playground for rich suburbanites — this program is the cause of the misery of Black Detroiters today.

Coleman Young supports this program. He has made it his program. He claims it is not a racist program. He claims that these capitalists are helping Detroit.

Young's program, the capitalists' program, has not only not led to jobs, but thousands of jobs have been lost. He claims that by building up downtown Detroit that the benefits will trickle down to the neighborhoods. But in 12 years, the neighborhoods have dried up. Instead of improving city services, he has imposed concessions on city workers. He supports curfews against young people, but lets the

capitalists remove jobs by the thousands. He claims to want to stop crime, but he wants to bring in casino gambling.

It is not surprising that Young's re-election fund is filled with \$2 million from Lee Iacocca, Henry Ford II, Roger Smith and the union bosses of the UAW. That is why for the last three elections there has not been a "serious," that is, capitalist, candidate for mayor against Young. He has the support of the capitalists of Detroit. They support him because he can sell the capitalist program to the Black workers of Detroit.

To continue the struggle against racism that the working class of Detroit has waged, to continue the struggle for the rights of workers, Black and white, to a decent standard of living, the working people of Detroit need a working class program and a working class candidate not Mayor Young — he has a capitalist program and has for years, and is therefore a capitalist candidate.

Join with us in making Detroit a city where the workers' interests come first, not last. Join us in a struggle for a working class program and candidate in the 1985 elections.

## Critical Support ...

Our recent experience in the 1984 elections showed this. Despite all attempts we were never able to force the SWP to run anything other than an "educational" campaign.

### Ballot Status

The problem is that it is not enough merely to be "for" a workers candidate — we have to bring it about. By getting on the ballot, the Trotskyist Organization can fight for an alliance in the most open and public manner.

If we are successful in getting ballot status, then we will bring the fight for a workers candidate to the doorstep of all parties who claim to represent the working class.

Our position will be that we are ready, and more than willing, to withdraw our own candidate for any other on the basis of a real alliance with any other working class party.

In the present situation, the validity of our program and party must not be taken for granted. It must be proven to working people by testing out our ideas in the practical struggle of workers against bosses. We demand the same from other parties who claim to represent the working class.

The record of the last Mayoral campaign shows what is possible.

In the 1981 Mayoral campaign there were two working class parties on the ballot for Mayor of Detroit — the Trotskyist Organization and the Socialist Workers Party. The TO candidate received 1,361 votes, while the SWP candidate received 1,561 votes. Simple addition would have led to a combined vote of about 3,000 if the SWP had agreed to put forward a

common candidate with the TO. (In fact, we approached the SWP on several occasions and offered to withdraw our candidate if necessary on the basis of a united front against the bosses candidates, but the SWP never considered the proposition preferring to run a strictly "educational" campaign with their own candidate.) Needless to say, a united front would have resulted in far more than 3,000 votes however, and it would have served the purposes of "education" far better by mobilizing workers on a class basis. At that time, Coleman Young was wringing the Detroit city workers dry with concessions and there was a city-wide strike on. Therefore, the united front that we proposed was not merely unity for unity's sake, but to defend and advance a workers struggle that was going on at the time.

Nor was the SWP the only organization that acted in a narrow and sectarian fashion toward the Detroit city workers strike. Amazingly, the Revolutionary Workers League which was deeply involved in this strike, many of its supporters were city workers, abstained in the vote for Mayor. They did not even make the connection between the workers economic struggle and the political struggle against Young and the Democratic Party.

Despite the failure of other organizations to realize the stake of a united front against the bosses in 1981, the Trotskyist Organization still utilized every opportunity to make our campaign an action in solidarity with the city workers. We distributed thousands of leaflets to their unions calling on the union locals to support a united workers candidate, we appeared on the radio and the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News* carried a story on our campaign in which we called for a "general strike of city workers."

There were many lessons of this campaign, but the most important was not realized — a united working class candidate against the bosses. This time we intend to do everything in our power to bring about an alliance for a workers candidate, and to reach this goal, as well as insure that a militant struggle against the bosses is led, we are making an all-out effort to get our candidate, Barbara Putnam, on the ballot.

With your help and militant efforts we will get a single working class candidate on the ballot and we will achieve a united front against the bosses!



# City-wide Referendum Against US Intervention; Against Apartheid

By FRED MICHAELS

The support among US working people for the people of Central America and South Africa struggling to be free of US imperialism has been growing. The union endorsements for the April 20 demonstrations and the National Student Day Against Apartheid (April 24) are only the latest in a series of actions designed to protest and stop US government support to the racist South African government and the Central American dictatorships.

Now, with the 1985 Detroit Mayoral elections, there is an opportunity to solidify this support, to build this movement among broad layers of workers by placing a resolution for a vote:

*Resolved: that the US government stop all military and economic aid to the governments of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador; that the US government end its embargo of Nicaragua and end all aid to the contras attempting to overthrow the Nicaraguan government; that the US government stop all economic and military*

*support to the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.*

By placing this policy up for a vote we can mobilize hundreds of thousands against the Reagan imperialist policy and the complicity of the Democratic Party!

This election comes at a critical time for the movements in Central American and South Africa. The growing movement in South Africa needs the open repudiation of Reagan's policy by the American working class.

Nicaragua has just been embargoed by Reagan — and, according to reports, the embargo hurts an already threatened economy. The Democratic Party in the Senate just reversed itself, voting for \$38 million in aid to the *contras*. A vote for the city-wide referendum would send a clear message of support to the workers and peasants of Nicaragua and the Black workers of South Africa and rally others around the country to do the same.

In both cases, such a powerful expression by Detroit workers could be the foundation for a



South African Youth

struggle in the unions to launch a campaign of *volunteers to Nicaragua*, and a *boycott* of all aid to the *contras* and the dictatorships; and a union boycott of the apartheid regime. But the political groundwork must be prepared. A referendum and the political struggle for it is an integral part of that groundwork.

Last year a coalition of organizations made an effort which we supported to get a resolution on Central America on the ballot for the November presidential elections. The tactic however, was weak in that it relied on the Detroit City Council to request it be placed on the ballot. It failed. The Wayne County Election Commission (controlled by the Democratic Party) felt that such a resolution would be too embarrassing for the Democratic Party. It found a legal means to rule the referendum off the ballot.

This means that the only way to get it on the ballot is to gather signatures for it. Such a mobilization requires a united effort among all those who support the Black workers of South Africa and Nicaragua. The Trotskyist Organization is open to any and all proposals to bring these issues in resolution from Detroit voters this fall.

Join with us in making 1985 the year when one million Detroiters say "No!" to Reagan's anti-working class and racist foreign policy. Support a ballot initiative.



1984 May Day celebration in Nicaragua. Their banner says: "Only the workers and peasants will go all the way."

Trotskyist Organization/USA

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