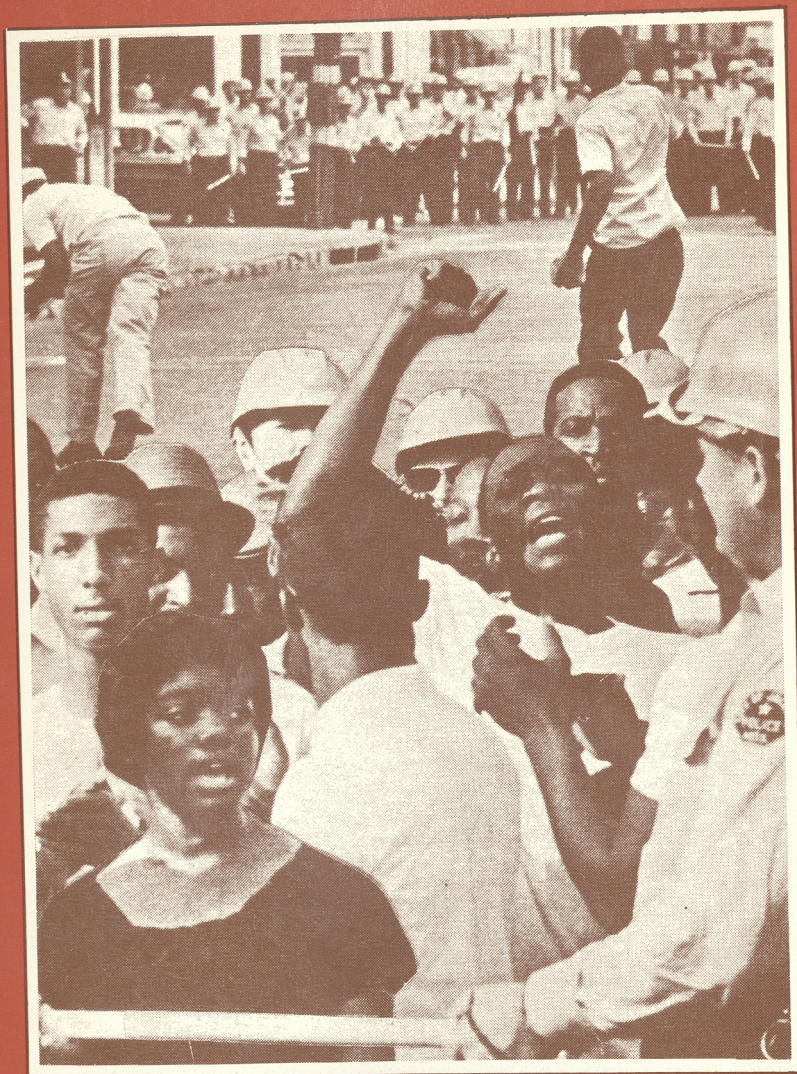


THE BOLD, *BAD* '60s



JAMES E. JACKSON

**THE
BOLD, BAD '60s**

*For
Panicos Leonides,*

*in good friendship
with a common cause.*

*Jim Jackson
5/4/92*

ΔΩΡΕΑ
ΕΛΛΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΝΙΚΟΥ
ΠΑΙΟΝΙΔΗ

James E. Jackson
21 St. James Place, Apt. 15M
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205

January 21, 1992

Dear Comrade,

Bertolt Brecht once wrote a line to the effect that:

*We who want happiness for the people of the whole world,
can be so cruel to each other.*

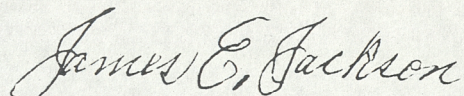
This is no way more evident than in the Party's lack of a working-class policy of some measure of humane care and concern for retirees who have filled their "two score and more" work time in the Party's employ, and now can no longer work as before.

All medical and hospital insurance policies should be continued for the remainder of the comrade's life; it is the Party's duty and the comrade retirees' right. Also, some fair share of the comrade-worker's wage to supplement Social Security should be given as a socially responsible obligation. It is his and her due. It is a common trade union demand.

A working-class, just and humane policy must replace the absence of a policy in this area. A promptly set forth, fair and just policy and practice, without discrimination on grounds of ideological difference or personality likes or dislikes.

Such are the concerns we are addressing to the leadership in this letter. We hope you will give it your active support.

Sincerely yours,



James E. Jackson

Date: January 21, 1992

To: Gus Hall, Chairman; Judith LeBlanc, Organizational Secretary; and National Board, Communist Party USA

From: James E. Jackson

Comrades,

You are well aware that I announced my intention of retirement from functionary status at the November meeting of the National Committee, to take effect at the conclusion of the 25th Convention of the Party. By the time of the Cleveland Convention, I had rounded out sixty years and six months as a member of the Party.

During my Party membership period I have worked 51 years as a national cadre assigned to Party posts in several Districts and to staff work in some mass organizations – of the youth, the Southern Negro Youth Congress and the American Youth Congress; of the trade unions – in tobacco in Virginia and North Carolina, in Alabama with the United Mine Workers, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, and the United Steel Workers; in Louisiana with the National Maritime Union, transport workers, farmworkers and tenants; in Texas and Oklahoma with oil and pecan workers; in West Virginia with the United Mine Workers and the Party.

The 10th Congress was the first Party convention I attended (I gave the report for the Virginia State Committee there). But for the crisis Convention of 1945, when I was abroad during World War II, I participated in all subsequent Conventions up to the 25th (where I had vote but no voice). In Michigan, I headed the Party at Ford's huge River Rouge plant, when Local #600 of the United Auto Workers led the nation's biggest and longest strike against speed-up.

After five years in the underground, I stood trial in Foley Square for defiance of the Smith Act. During the dramatic decade of the 1960s—decade of the democratic revolution in Dixie, of Cuba's triumph, of Kruschew's visit, of John F. Kennedy's assassination and Martin Luther King's martyrdom—I edited *The Worker*. I also reported on the 21st Congress and a visit to new China.

I suffered jailings in Richmond, Memphis, Atlanta, New Orleans, Detroit and New York. I was Party Secretary for the Southern region and of the Negro

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Affairs Commission, then National Education Director, and chair of the International Affairs and Peace Committees.

I have worked the shop worker's equivalent of two lifetimes in the several assignments given by the Party. Now I am old and it is past time that I retire and restrict my service to what I can do with my remaining energy. I have been a student and teacher of sorts about the ideas of tempestuous life as refracted through the prism of the thought patterns of such seekers of the freedom way as Marx and Engels, and forefront leaders onto the true path as Lenin. I will use my remaining time seeking the truth in what I am reading, carefully listening to what I am hearing, assaying what I have and will be learning about where we are going, where we want to be, and how best to get there.

I have an equity invested in this Party, my life and some part of that of my most loved ones. It is an elementary right that labor holds with the world around, that some fair and just provision be made for *the health-care and sustenance share* for retirees in the political vanguard of the workers no less than the care and concern for the well-being of retiring union men and women in the workplaces of the capitalists.

These considerations are the well-earned and just due of the right of working people. There is no cause for withholding them for differences in political assessments or of critical projections or for like or dislike of a personality. I have not ever, and I will never, bargain away my right to think as I please and act upon my principles and convictions, for either bread or medicine.

I have a profound interest in the present condition and future outlook of this Party; my life for six decades has been inextricably linked up with, and primarily determined by, its will. It has been the senior house of choice for the Communists of our country. I would that it would extricate itself from its cocoon of vainglorious pretension and judgmental pontification about the ways others should solve the problems of their crisis circumstances, and seriously address our own, with some critical humility.

My letter is not an appeal for mercy or charity. It is an assertion of my right to a just and fair retirement package.