

TRUTH

Get Out the Unions April 20!



March on Washington to Defend Nicaragua!

The Trotskyist Organization calls on trade unionists, workers and all working class organizations to build the April 20 march on Washington, D.C. — to stop US intervention in Central America. A massive demonstration in opposition to the Reagan administration's intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador clearly serves the interests of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions.

Nicaragua hurts US imperialism. The workers and small farmers of Nicaragua need the practical aid of their class brothers and sisters in the United States. The April 20 march, though important in its own right, would have far greater impact if it resulted in a permanent alliance of active aid of trade unions and working class organizations to the Nicaraguan Revolution. Build a permanent Workers Front to Defend Nicaragua!

The Emergency National Conference against US Military Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (the Cleveland Conference) represented a new and important development in the American political situation. For the first time, sections of the American trade union movement participated in the planning and organizing of major actions against US military intervention.

It was not until the very end of the movement against the Vietnam War, and then only under the wing of the Democratic Party, that trade unions openly opposed the intervention in Vietnam. That this trade union support comes now, at the beginning of US intervention in Central America, even if it is still only limited support, is extremely significant.

The United States is more actively involved in Nicaragua and El Salvador today than it was in the early days of Vietnam. American imperialism not only faces the loss of a century-old stranglehold over Central America and the Caribbean, it also faces an even more grave danger. The possibility that American working people will begin to see with their own eyes that the driving force behind the Nicaraguan Revolution is the Nicaraguan worker, the small farmer and young students, whose hopes and aspirations are the same as theirs. One can imagine Ronald Reagan remarking to one of his advisers, "If those blue collars and colored people find out what's really going on in Central America, all hell will break loose."

To that end, the Reagan administration has concocted the big lie. The big lie is that Central America is being taken over by the Soviet Union and that if the people of Central America are allowed to choose their own destiny, they will become a staging ground for a Soviet takeover of the US itself. This big lie is doled out in little pieces. The hated torturers of the ex-dictator Somoza are labeled "rebels" and "freedom fighters." To make it worse, the newspapers and media repeat these golden phrases over and over every day. "Military maneuvers" are covering a permanent buildup of the US military in Central America. And finally Ronald Reagan's re-election is touted as an endorsement of Reagan's policies across the board.

So why doesn't Reagan invade? Because the first marines to cross the Nicaraguan border will face a united nation of working people determined to defend the gains of their revolution. In order to crush the Nicaraguan Revolution Reagan will be forced to reinstitute the

draft. More concessions and an even deeper attack on the American working class will be needed to support such a long term invasion. The people of many Latin American nations will surely rise up in anger against the US invasion, and possibly lead to other revolutionary situations.

Therefore, Reagan must pave the way for deepening US intervention in Central America first. And the major tool in Reagan's hands for doing this, not to mention a major factor in Reagan's re-election, is none other than the Democratic Party. Reagan needs the Democratic Party to make the world believe that there is a more peaceful side to the US government. The Democrats have supported every major policy move Reagan has made regarding Central America — the invasion of Grenada, military aid to El Salvador, partial release of covert aid to the contras. Time and time again, the Democratic Party has proven that if it is the unions and Blacks who support it, it is the rich

By MARGARET GUTTSALL

A New York City grand jury just decided *not* to indict Bernhard Goetz for attempting to murder four Black youth on a New York City subway. Goetz told police in a video-taped confession that the youth *never* threatened his life, that he simply *thought* they were going to rob him. Nevertheless, he shot them all, two of them in the back as they were running away (one is now in a coma, paralyzed from the waist down), and says he only stopped because he ran out of ammunition. According to Goetz's neighbors, Goetz, an upper class white man, is a virulent racist who armed himself after he was allegedly mugged three years ago and has repeatedly told associates: "Sooner or later I'm going to get them."

On the other hand, the Wayne County prosecutor in Detroit, Michigan is pursuing its efforts to convict Karen Norman, a young Black working class mother, of premeditated murder, for killing a man who attacked her, raped her and threatened to kill her, in her own home. While there was a barrage of publicity against Karen and the judge restricted testimony in her favor, the prosecution was still not able to obtain a conviction in the first trial. All twelve jurors voted *against* convicting her of premeditated murder. Four voted initially to acquit her of all charges. Finally, under the pressure of the judge, the jury voted 11 to 1 to convict her of second-degree murder. Iris Holland, the one juror who held out, told the *Detroit Free Press*, in reference to testimony presented by the prosecution: "I do not feel that individuals on the jury felt that the testimony was anything but made up..." She also said that she thought a majority of the jury would have been swayed toward a not guilty verdict if the judge had allowed testimony on the rape trauma syndrome (*Detroit Free Press*, January 30, 1985).

These incidents are not "flukes," miscarriages of justice. We can name many others just like them — the acquittal of the Ku Klux Klan members who murdered the working class militants in Greensboro, North Carolina; the acquittal of the two white men who beat Vincent

and the capitalist class that it serves.

This brings us to the last point. Why has the continuations committee elected by the Emergency National Conference nearly dissolved itself (to the point where it is granted one seat) into the national steering committee of the April 20 action? Why has it bent over backwards to accommodate the few organizations of the Nuclear Freeze movement, which incidentally share the same line as the Democratic Party, to the exclusion of building on the trade union support that began to develop at for Cleveland Conference.

We believe the answer is that the organizers of the Cleveland Conference have lost confidence in the working class and the trade unions as a backbone of the movement against US intervention in Central America. They believe that the Democratic Party, despite all the lessons of the 1984 elections to the contrary, can be pressured to oppose Reagan's intervention in Central America.

But this is totally false. While it is true that it is impossible to divorce the mobilization against US intervention from the results of the elections, the real lesson of the elections is that the Democratic Party is incapable of fighting Ronald Reagan because it is a party of the capitalist class. Far from opposing US imperialism it is and has been the instrument of US foreign policy since World War II — Korea, Vietnam and now Central America. What the 1984 elections lacked, and what the mobilization against Reagan now needs is a trade union break from the two capitalist parties and the government and the building of a Labor Party. This is the key to everything that working people are fighting for.

The Trotskyists repeat their call, first launched at the Emergency National Conference, for a Workers Front to Defend Nicaragua: *Volunteers and aid to Nicaragua and the rebels in El Salvador!*

Union boycott of aid to the dictatorships!
Build a Labor Party based on the trade unions!

Statement of the Secretariat

Karen Norman and Goetz

Chin to death in Detroit, Michigan; the arrest and murder of Michael Stewart by New York police after they stopped him for writing on subway walls.

Nor are these incidents simply a result of Reagan, Reaganism, or even white racist Democrats. If this is true, how can you explain the persecution of Karen Norman in a Black city, with a Black Democratic Party mayor, by Black Democrats (Elliott Hall, Beverly Jasper)?

The system itself is the problem. These incidents show that the American capitalist judicial system is racist and anti-working class. The anti-crime campaign is racist and anti-working class. The propaganda, police and prisons that both the Republican and the Democratic Party factions of the bourgeoisie are generating are being used *against* Blacks and working people. Thus the system itself and all those responsible for persecuting Blacks and working people must go.

But how do you go about overthrowing the capitalist system itself? This seems like an overwhelming task. But it begins with an independent struggle for the rights of the working class under the system. Freedom from racist terrorism, both the "illegal" and the "legal" kind. This means a fight for the death penalty for racist terrorists like Goetz. Imprisoning them will not do any good. They will just use prison terms to become martyrs and rally more to their cause. It means a fight to force the state to drop the charges against victims of legal racist terrorism like Karen Norman and to punish those responsible for it. In this kind of struggle it will be possible to form the leadership and organization necessary to overthrow the system.

The Trotskyist Organization urges all working class organizations to make a common fight for these demands. Many have protested Goetz's release, yet most have been silent about Karen Norman. They are reluctant to mobilize the working class against *both* the Republican and the Democratic Party factions of the racist bourgeoisie. We are not. Join us.

Keep Stroh's Open

Stroh's Brewery has been in Detroit for 135 years and very suddenly decided to close its Detroit operations and consolidate its other sites to "stay competitive." Mayor Coleman Young's attitude is "upbeat" over the closure. He says, after all Stroh's will keep its corporate headquarters in Detroit. But for the 1,000 workers thrown in the street all he and the Democrats can say is "sorry about that."

An answer for the workers will never come from a capitalist party, even one that pretends to be a "friend of labor." Workers need their own answer: a union-wide mobilization aimed at getting all UAW locals and other unions behind a plant occupation to make Stroh's stay open.

According to Peter Stroh, chairman of the brewery, "No capital investment, concessions or any combination of these can transform it into a sufficiently viable brewery for the long term in the current industry environment." (*Detroit Free Press*, February 9). But for several years now, the bosses have been arguing that concessions will bring about the desired capital to make their companies "viable." So, it is not concessions, but the "current industry environment" that determines whether or not a company will stay or go.

Stroh's proposed closure has created quite a stir. In letters to the *Detroit News* printed February 15, some writers appeal to Stroh's sense of morality. "Don't the millions of hours Detroiters have spent in the brewery making Stroh's prosperous mean anything? Apparently not." "Fidelity is gone, and the hurt inside Detroit is like that of a lover spurned." But then, capitalist morality is about making *profits*, not love.

One writer goes a little farther. "Plant closings and layoffs are at epidemic proportions around the nation because we continue to accept the drive for maximum profits as a natural and unavoidable law of economics" and lamely ends up calling on the capitalist government to take over industry. But the "drive for maximum profits" is the heart and soul of capitalism and is indeed a "natural and unavoidable law" of capitalist economics. Stroh is no moralist, he is a capitalist acting out of self-interest — an interest opposed to that of the workers at the brewery in Detroit. And that sums up the problem for the workers.

Another event, just as important as the proposed Stroh's closure, but one passed over by the Democrats and union bosses alike, was a walkout by Local 78 of the UAW at a wheel and brake supplier for the Big Three. At the two Kelsey Hayes plants in Detroit, 1,200 walked out February 1 demanding that the company give back concessions it took from them in 1982 — and they won! But according to a worker at Local 78, "All we did was get back the 65 cents they took away in 1982."

This demand to get back concessions first appeared publicly in 600 resolutions presented to the UAW Bargaining Convention in Detroit last March. Now the struggle is more concrete, the workers are beginning to strike to get back concessions. But the worker at Local 78 already expresses a need to go farther than restitution of concessions.

The Detroit Democrats are in trouble. Coleman Young has obliged the capitalists by minimizing the destructive impact on Detroit of the recent departure of Vernor's Bottling Company (500 workers) and now Stroh's — a total of 1,400 lost jobs. And he must also face an escalating war to get back concessions. Concessions, if we will remember, were originally proposed, developed and pushed for by the Michigan Democrats that included closing Dodge Main and the beginning of the infamous "Chrysler syndrome."

Concessions and plant closures have not resulted in a higher standard of living for the workers as promised, indeed these "cost-cutting measures" have made workers lives much worse. Only the capitalists have benefited; proof positive is GM, Ford and Chrysler bragging about highest-ever profits as Detroit dies for the working class.

There is no reason for workers to tie their interest in a decent standard of living to the whims of capitalist economy nor to its Democratic Party in any way whatsoever! Labor candidates vs. Coleman Young and the Detroit Democrats in the Mayoral elections is a political way to advance the fight in the unions to keep Stroh's open, to get back concessions and to consolidate a responsible leadership of Blacks, the unions, youth, women workers and the poor — a Labor Party.

Workers Front to Defend Nicaragua

The Work Brigades — Part 1

By FRED MICHAELS

Accompanying this article are the responses from the local coordinator of the work brigades to Nicaragua and the national Nicaragua Exchange to the applications of militants of the Trotskyist Organization. The first letter is from the Detroit local coordinator, Amy Good, motivated by the rejection of our applications. Indeed, the motivation was so "convincing" that it caused the rejection of another application from a militant in Chicago after the local coordinator supported her.

First, this shows that the reasons for the rejection of both comrades are in Amy Good's letter — a fact not dealt with honestly by the Nicaragua Exchange.

In fact, political honesty is what Amy Good claims is the reason for her "concerns" — that our comrades will "misrepresent" the truth about Nicaragua because we have "misrepresented" the truth about events in Detroit.

The "facts" are wholly in our favor. And, if one of the points raised *against* our comrades is

Young Nicaraguan Women defend the revolution



raising a campaign for involving the masses of working people in the brigades, what exactly are the brigades for?

We will answer this last question in our next issue.

But raising the question of "honesty" is only a cover for the real question. Amy Good is upset that the Trotskyist Organization has proved, in particular at the Cleveland Conference and around the Grenada actions, that the desire to tie the movement to the Democratic Party and its supporters in the anti-intervention movement means that more often than not the revolution is *not* defended at all. At root here is a fundamental conflict — a movement of class solidarity or a movement controlled by the Democratic Party?

While the "facts" for each point that she raised can be countered, let us focus on the actions around the anniversary of the invasion of Grenada.

The invasion of Grenada was the single most important attack on the working people of the US and Central America in Reagan's first term. It was supported by the Democratic Party and its presidential candidate, Mondale. Organizing class solidarity among working people with Grenada was and is a powerful and necessary part to building a movement of class solidarity. The actions of October 20-27, were part of a national week of actions on the first anniversary of the invasion under the slogan: US Out of Grenada!

CISPES was informed of the planned action and of the Survival Line organized by the Nuclear Freeze. It chose to really build the Survival Line and leave the Grenada action alone. The proof? CISPES mobilized 350 people for the Line, the entire steering committee participated, etc. The Grenada demonstration, a march and rally through a Black working class neighborhood, had about 8-10 people from CISPES who came on their own. CISPES had no organized presence. Not one CISPES member marched.

What was the Survival Line? It was part of a national week of action called by the Nuclear Freeze. It was called to support Mondale. In Chicago, a demonstration was held that was considered to be so completely devoted to

support for the Democratic Party that the Cleveland Conference, which wanted to unite with the "freeze movement," refused to endorse it! The main slogan of the action nationally was "Vote as if your life depended on it."

So CISPES made a choice to build one rather than the other. But the choice did not stop there. The Grenada Coalition decided after its actions to become involved in the proposals to merge CISPES with other solidarity networks. The spokesperson for the Coalition was informed that the Coalition could not speak or vote at these meetings!

The Trotskyist Organization does not accept the rejection of our applications. We intend to appeal it — to organize support for a workers front to defend the Nicaraguan Revolution.

We urge all working class organizations that support volunteers to Nicaragua to send protests to the Nicaragua Exchange and the Nicaraguan Embassy with copies to the Trotskyist Organization. We especially call on the organizations that participated in the Emergency National Trotskyist Conference — the International Workers Party, Workers Socialist League and the Revolutionary Workers League.

Further, we urge all individuals and organizations from the Cleveland Conference that supported bringing our motion on the workers front to the floor to protest as well. The question for these individuals and organizations is simply a defense of a legitimate place in the movement for volunteers and a Labor Party.

We plan to organize this support and appeal to the Nicaraguan Embassy to overturn this decision. This political struggle, which we have expected since we took up the defense of the Nicaraguan Revolution, can be decisive for the open broad mobilization of *class solidarity* with the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Send letters to: Nicaragua Exchange
239 Centre Street
New York, NY 10013

Nicaraguan Embassy
c/o Amilcar Navarro R.
1627 New Hampshire N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

Letter to Nicaragua Exchange from Detroit Coordinator of Work Brigades

Dear Corinne and Sara,

Please find enclosed an application from Fred Michaels for participation in the Nicaraguan Work Brigades. Also enclosed are copies of 5 articles from *Truth*, a publication of the Trotskyist Organization of the USA, of which Fred is a member.

My purpose in enclosing these articles and in providing additional information below regarding my view of Fred's participation in anti-intervention/solidarity work in the Detroit area, is to enable you to be as well-informed as possible in making a decision about whether or not to accept Fred on a work brigade. These articles and observations are the basis of a number of reservations that I have about Fred participating in the brigades, given several of the screening criteria you've included in the area organizer packet, as listed below. Bill Collins and I, the area organizing team in Detroit, are fully prepared to accept and implement whatever your decision is, e.g., if you determine that these concerns should not stand in the way of Fred's joining a work brigade, we are willing to work with Fred around orientation and follow-up.

The screening criteria around which I am raising these concerns are:

- politically responsible
- being willing to learn about Nicaragua and to communicate what he/she has learned
- statement that "we are not looking for people who are convinced that they have the correct political line."

There are a number of statements made by Fred in these articles (underlined) that I consider to be simply untrue, or at best, gross exaggerations of the truth, e.g.,

1) "The movement suffered for the past two years under the policy of support for the Democratic Party by CISPES... There were no practical steps taken to defend Nicaragua such as national demonstrations and only a few local actions..." Organizations like CISPES... did nothing really to build the (July 21 Detroit) demonstration." (9-12-84)

2) "CISPES... virtually boycott(ed) the (10-27) Grenada actions... was against the demonstration... CISPES locally... chose to support Mondale. Now it finds itself tied almost exclusively to pacifist Church groups." (11-7-84)

I would refute each of these statements, given that, in my view:

1) There have been many local actions by CISPES groups over the past two years, including a Nov. '84 national demo;

A CISPES steering committee member coordinated the 7-21 event; several other members attended meetings regularly; CISPES lent their bulk mailing permit, publicized the event through its own newsletter, and turned out most of its active membership to attend the event.

2) Detroit CISPES, despite late notice of the Grenada action, and no follow-up by organizers to those 5 or 6 CISPES members who signed up to work, was represented by 3 speakers and at least 8-10 people at the event. Detroit CISPES is clearly, adamantly against any policy of supporting Mondale. While Detroit CISPES is working closely with churches and others around contingency plans in response to military escalation in Central America, the statement that it is tied almost exclusively to pacifist church groups is, to me, clearly unfounded.

Fred's response to this view is that he considers these issues as a matter of political opinion, not fact or falsehood.

In responding to Fred's statements, I want to be clear that I do strongly object to them as a core member of Detroit CISPES, and I recognize that, on this basis alone, my disagreements with his claims and positions warrant no bearing on his application to participate in the work brigades. My concern regarding the brigades, however, is based on my view that Fred has demonstrated a pattern, in the statements mentioned, of misrepresenting the facts in an irresponsible manner in order to bolster the points or persuasive arguments in his articles. I would be concerned that this pattern would re-occur in his communications about his experience and observations in Nicaragua.

At a CISPES meeting following my initial discussion with Fred regarding my concerns, he criticized the screening process for the brigades as an effort to limit brigade participation and to exclude members of "working class organizations"; he then called CISPES to launch a massive effort to mobilize workers on a large scale to go to Nicaragua. He has, on other occasions, called for campaigns to send both volunteer fighters and arms to defend the Nicaraguan revolutions.

In making a decision about Fred's application, the following positive points should also be considered:

— I have every reason to believe that Fred is sincere in his earnest desire to defend the Nicaraguan revolution in the ways that he believes are best

— He stated he has no organizational connections in Nicaragua, and doesn't speak Spanish, so I would not expect that there needs to be any concern regarding his directly using the brigades to implement his organization's goals in Nicaragua.

— Fred has expressed willingness to submit to the discipline of the brigade leaders.

— Fred generally refrains from "proselytizing" his political views at CISPES meetings, aside from making or speaking in favor of proposals that are consistent with those views, e.g., mass organizing of work brigades to Nicaragua.

I hope this info is useful to you in making a decision re: Fred's participating in the work brigades. Feel free to contact me, Bill Collins or Fred if further information is needed.

In solidarity,
Amy Good

Letter from Nicaragua Exchange



239 CENTRE STREET, NYC, NY 10013
212-279-8623

7 January 1985

Fred Vitale
4205 Jamban
Dearborn, MI 48126

Dear Fred Vitale,

Thank you for applying to the 1984-85 work brigades. We're sorry that we will not be able to accept you as a brigadista in the program.

For many people, the brigades are not the most appropriate way of working to support the people of Nicaragua; the difficult living conditions and the emphasis on group relations make special demands on brigade participants. We hope that you will continue working here with the many solidarity groups active in support of Central America issues instead, and hope that your involvement continues to be a force for peace.

Again, thank you for your interest, and best wishes.

In solidarity,

Sara Niles

Sara Niles
Coordinator, Brigade Program

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April 20 Call — Attack on Class Consciousness

The National Steering Committee of the April 20 Spring mobilization has released the final text of a "Call for Spring Peace and Justice Mobilization." The Trotskyist Organization has endorsed the April 20 march against US intervention in Central America and is actively working in local coalitions in Detroit and Chicago to build it. However, we believe that the final text of the Call mentioned above bears the fruit of dragging the Democratic Party into the April 20 action. In fact, portions of the call are an attack on class consciousness but are also untrue.

We will refer to these passages shortly, but first we must offer our amazement at the blanket approval of the final text which appeared in the newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, *The Militant*, January 25, 1985. A front page article entitled, "Call is out for April 20 antiwar protest" quotes from the Call but does not even mention the most controversial parts. It is indeed amazing that the SWP, which only months before the recent presidential elections railed against the dangers of "electoralism," could completely miss such blatant attacks on class consciousness as appear in this Call.

"We know our government," declares the Call, "can and must take the initiative to reduce the threat of nuclear holocaust. It is possible for the contending powers to agree to take their disputes to the negotiating table, rather than the arms factories and battlefields."

No, the US government cannot and will not "take the initiative" in ending its war drive. It cannot because to do so would allow the revolution and working people of Central America to triumph. It will not because it is a government based on the class interests of the American bourgeoisie — the most powerful capitalists in the world.

Saying the government will prevent war throws away all forms of class struggle. If the US government will take the initiative then every independent movement must become an appendage of this government by way of pressuring it to "take the initiative."

The statement blurs the lines between the just struggle of nations such as Nicaragua for their freedom from US imperialism, and the intervention of nations such as Israel in Lebanon as a surrogate for US foreign policy. All are "contending powers" which must sit at the negotiating table. But Nicaragua is justified in its armed defense of its borders without conditions!

Furthermore, this statement shows that in most cases where the "danger of nuclear holocaust" is invoked, it is either designed to sell valuable TV commercial time, or to deaden the minds of American working people to the need to actively mobilize against the aggression and intervention of US imperialism that is going on today in Central America.

The Call goes on: "Treasuring our heritage of liberty, freedom and human rights, we stand proudly together: Black, Latino, Asian, Native American and White, young and old, women and men, lesbian, gay and straight, and proclaim that nothing justifies the denial of full equal rights to all."

The fact that the authors have the gall to refer to the "heritage" of Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, women, and gays as one of "liberty, freedom, and human rights" is beyond belief! It is precisely these sections of the working class and these nations that have suffered the most under the yoke of imperialism and its racism.

Last October in Cleveland union representatives participated in the Emergency National Conference where April 20 was planned as part of building the movement against US intervention. Although union participation was a major gain, interestingly enough, the word "union" or "labor" or "worker" does not even appear in the Call. And in particular it does not appear in the above phrase on human rights.

What is clear from the Call, and not only from certain passages but also from the Call in its entirety, is that the authors have been so frightened by the re-election of Ronald Reagan, and are so awed by his supposed "conservative mandate" (which they, no doubt, religiously deny in public), that they have forgotten that the working class, or the trade unions, or the working people of Central America even exist.