

"WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!"

TRUTH



A BULLETIN FOR SOCIALISM AND TROTSKYISM

NO. 222 OCTOBER, 1987 \$0.50

U.S. Out of Central America!

A Perspective for the Anti-Intervention Movement - page 3

Can the
workers'
problems be
solved in the
1988 elections?
-- page 8

The Big Lie of
the Anti-Import
Campaign --
page 5
The Ford Contract -- page
7

Other articles include:
Call for an Open Trotskyist
Conference -- page 10
Reprint of the Arias Plan --
page 11

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Saturday, October 31. October 31 is the final
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Table of Contents

A Perspective for the Anti-Intervention Movement	3
Remember Ben Linder	4
Our Work in Building October 4th	4
The Big Lie of the Anti-Import Campaign	5
Chin's Mother Leaving U.S.	6
Ford Contract	7
Bombing of Iranian Ship.	7
Can the workers' problems be solved in the 1988 elections?.	8
Call for U.S. Open Trotskyist Conference. . 10	
Arias Plan reprinted	11

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A Perspective for the Anti-Intervention Movement

By David Mark

As actions against US intervention in Central America conclude in many cities, the question of which direction the anti-intervention movement should go in is being debated. The task of activists, of working people who want to get the U.S. Out of Central America is to build a movement that does not stop demonstrating, mobilizing and organizing until the U.S. is out (see box). It must be independent of the U.S. government and its two parties, the Democratic and Republican, because both support the oppression of Central America.

The next step in building such a on-going movement is Spring Actions. The best outcome of the current debate would be a national Spring demonstration in Washington, D.C., Chicago, or New York City, with broad participation by the trade unions. The time is now for those coalitions, organizations and individuals that support such an action, or regional actions, to begin communicating and making plans.

The debate over what to do next, if anything, is centered on support to the Arias plan (reprinted in this issue of Truth). Support to the Arias plan is counterposed to building a movement to get the U.S. Out of Central America. The plan preserves the U.S. presence in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and through the "opposition" in Nicaragua.

The headline of the August 28th Militant, newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, read "Central America treaty deals blow to U.S. war." In a similar way, the Guardian, an independent radical newsweekly, began its September 2nd front page story by writing, "The peace plan signed by the five Central American presidents represents a severe setback to Reagan administration policy in the region. These views fairly well represent one side of the debate in the movement.

If this side is correct, then the Central American treaty, and all such diplomatic efforts undertaken to enforce it represent a line of march for the movement against US intervention in Central America. In other words, supporting the treaty equals peace in Central America. But does it?

Of the countries who have signed this accord, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the first three are virtual dictatorships. The Honduras serves as a base for US military operations in Central America and for the contras. In El Salvador the only legal parties are the right-wing Christian Democrats of Duarte, and the party of D'Abbuison which leads the death squads -- trade unions, peasants cooperatives, and all other oppositions are the hunted. Guatemala is engaged in regular atrocities against peasants, students, and

trade unions. And all of these countries, with the exception of Nicaragua, are allies of the United States and have supported its intervention against Nicaragua. The only trustworthy party to the treaty is therefore Nicaragua itself.

The Arias peace plan is a direct result of the failure of the contras to overturn the Nicaraguan revolution, and of the continued struggle of workers and peasants in Central America. It is also a result of the crisis of the Reagan administration and contra-gate. The Guardian, which supports the peace plan, reports that Democratic Senators Christopher Dodd (Conn.) and Robert Byrd (W. Va.) helped Arias formulate the plan and actively lobbied Costa Rican and Salvadoran officials to support the plan. The Arias plan is not a victory -- no, it is an attempt to buy time in Central America and to gain concessions from Nicaragua. That it has caused internal squabbling in the Reagan administration is not surprising -- Reagan's policies have thus far failed miserably to stem the tide of revolution in Central America.

Naturally, we do not think that any position on the Arias plan should be used to exclude anyone or any organizations from coalitions, demonstrations, etc. Many who support the Arias plan may think they can help the Central American nations by supporting this plan. But the movement should be committed to get the U.S. out of Central America and not change its focus with every diplomatic maneuver that comes down the pike.

The forces that are now involved in the struggle against US intervention -- the movement -- are politically very contradictory. It contains everything from socialists to Democrats, from workers to professionals, and from young to old. But it is not a movement that is dependent on the parties of the ruling class. With conflicts and diverging political agendas it nevertheless acts in its own name. It has recently begun to attract new forces and a new generation of young students and workers. Changing its character from one of active protest to passive support for what is effectively the status quo in Central America, would be the end of its independent struggle when we are in reality only at the beginning of the revolutionary upheavals that are shaking the oppressed nations of Central America and the world.

Now is the time to move forward to planning and preparing a spring action against US intervention and for building an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans in the 1988 elections.

Our work in building the October 4th Demonstration

By David Mark

Members of the Trotskyist Organization have been active in the October 4th Coalition winning support for the demonstration in unions, among high school students, and at Wayne State University.

Our organization has been in the Coalition since it started. We participated in the Outreach Committee, especially the student and labor outreach subcommittees. Through work in the student outreach sub-committee, we made contact with a group of high school students who wanted to convince students to come to the demonstration. They thought by bringing a student leader from Central America to Detroit that they could build the demonstration. We were able to obtain funding from Wayne State University Student Council to bring a young Guatemalan student leader, Marvyn Perez, to Detroit to speak at a forum held for him at Wayne State and to speak at the October 4 demonstration. Afterward, several meetings were organized at local high schools where Marvyn spoke. The students have launched their own newsletter to continue their outreach efforts.

In addition, we raised a resolution of support for the demonstration in UAW Local 2071, Wayne State University clerical workers, and the resolution was passed.

Remember Ben Linder!

The family of Ben Linder, a young North American engineer who was working in Nicaragua to help the Nicaraguans and was murdered by the U.S. financed contras, has established a memorial fund to try to raise the money necessary to complete the dam that Ben was working on when he was murdered.

We urge all young workers, students, militants and working class tendencies to contribute to this fund and follow Ben's example by fighting for volunteers for Nicaragua in their organizations.

Contributions can be sent to: Ben Linder Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 6443, Portland, Oregon 97228.

U.S. Out of Central America means:

- . Stop all aid to the contras.
- . Remove all U.S. advisers and troops from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.
- . End the economic blockade of Nicaragua, including blocking loans from international organizations controlled by the U.S.

The Big Lie of the Anti-Import Campaign

By Fred Michaels

In the September 1-15 issue of Solidarity (the official union publication), the UAW leadership wrote an open letter to the UAW ranks. It states: "Our top legislative priority is a trade bill that deals with the huge U.S. trade deficit which is crippling our industrial base and exporting the jobs of American workers." They urged members to write to the Congressmen.

The note next to this letter says: "What they do -- or don't do -- could determine whether or not you have a job next year or the year after. The issue is how effective the trade bill will be . . ."

The trade bill and its accompanying threat are the latest efforts in the single most important campaign of the UAW in the last 10 years -- the anti-import campaign. And, it is based on a lie: Foreign workers and companies are taking away jobs from us.

If foreign workers have taken our jobs, than they? it should show some time over the last 11 years.

The Facts

Let us look at the countries Owen Bieber, president of the UAW, attacked in his press conference opening negotiations with GM. He said, "We want to make sure the so-called 'heartbeat of America' keeps on beating here and not in Korea and Mexico and Japan and Canada and all the other places GM goes for vehicles and parts while it puts tens of thousands of American workers on unemployment lines."

For Korea, the total unemployment rate in 1984 was the same as 1976. For Mexico, the rate for 1983 was the same as 1976. For Japan, the rate actually rose from 1976 to 1984. For Canada, the rate went up 3 percentage points from 1976 to 1984. For the U.S., the unemployment rate dropped a percentage point in the same period. (United Nations Labor Statistics Yearbook 1986)

This is a total unemployment rate. What about the automotive industry alone?

From 1980 to 1984 worldwide production in the metal-working industry increased roughly 12% while employment dropped approximately 2%. The workers produced 12% more work, with 2% less people. In other words, there has been a worldwide decrease in the number of metal workers. (United Nations Industrial Statistics Yearbook 1984)

The nations Bieber attacked are suffering even greater increases in unemployment than the U.S. And metal workers the world over are working

harder and producing more with fewer and fewer workers.

Workers in the U.S. are in the same boat with the world working class.

The New Trade Bill

The new trade bill is supported by the AFL-CIO. The major trade union federation supports the bill with a twisted logic.

The AFL-CIO supports this new trade bill with a clause that says that the U.S. should refuse to allow any goods to come in from any country that does not enforce a bill of workers rights of the International Labor Organization (ILO). Let us forget for a moment that the U.S. government has refused to agree to this bill of rights. Since unions are outlawed in Korea, for example, we should refuse to accept any goods from there until the government agrees to these workers rights. (New York Times, May 31, 1987)

Naturally, big businesses and corporations are against this amendment because they do not want any interference in their right to make a profit, like laws against child labor, etc. But just because they are against it does not mean the workers should be for it.

For workers in the U.S., supporting this trade bill is a bad policy. Korean workers will lose their jobs if the goods they produced cannot be sold in the U.S.

Instead the AFL-CIO should attack the source of the problem: the U.S. government's support to the repressive regime in Korea that prevents the workers from organizing.

The same issue of Solidarity mentioned above has an article on the upsurge in Korea. It says, "For years, Ford, GM . . . could pay lower wages (in Korea, Mexico etc.) while threatening workers and communities back home with more shutdowns if they didn't become "competitive" with foreign workers. . . . While it is too early to say that the days when corporations could play off workers in one country against those in another are over, an upsurge of worker solidarity is starting to shake the roots of that practice."

What has the UAW done to show its "worker solidarity?" It passed a motion supporting the Korean workers strike, while it is spending its money and its time organizing against the Korean workers in the Congress by supporting the trade bill! It is clear that for the UAW leadership the profits of American corporations are more important than solidarity with the Korean workers.

These workers have shown their desire to organize unions and fight companies owned by U.S. banks and corporations. If the AFL-CIO and UAW would demand that the US pull out all of its troops and stop supporting the dictatorship, the Korean workers would make great strides in dealing with these corporations. That would be true "worker solidarity."

The anti-import campaign is based on a lie. This lie ties American workers to American corporations. And the American working class has paid dearly with closed factories, lost jobs and lower wages for this lie. The true allies of American workers are workers around the world. Real solidarity with these workers, with the Korean workers, is the first step toward beating Ford and GM here at home.

Next issue: Why are factories closing around the world?

Chin's Mother Leaving U.S.

On June 19, 1982, at the height of the anti-import campaign of the UAW, Vincent Chin was attacked and beaten to death by Ronald Ebens, a Chrysler Co. employee, and his stepson, Michael Nitz. Although Vincent was Chinese, Ebens thought he was Japanese. Ebens saw Chin in a Highland Park bar and began to blame Chin for the auto recession and yelled racist remarks at him. Ebens and son followed Vincent after he left the bar and beat him to death with a baseball bat.

Ebens pleaded guilty to manslaughter, was sentenced to 3 years probation and never served a day in prison. Nitz, who held Chin down while he was beaten, pleaded no contest and never served any time in prison either.

In July 1986, in a civil suit, Ebens agreed to pay \$1.5 million as a settlement. Again, another mockery of justice took place. Ebens is to pay \$200.00 per month. Ebens says that he would have to live to 672 to pay off the entire amount.

An interview with Ebens appeared in Detroit Magazine, August 30, 1987. In the interview, Ebens continues with the racist remarks and attitude that led him to murder Chin.

Chin, who was adopted from China by naturalized American citizens who were Chinese, worked two jobs to raise enough money for his family-to-be. His marriage was scheduled for one week after his visit to the bar.

His mother, Lily Chin, spoke about the U.S. She said, "If it wasn't for me bringing him to America, he wouldn't die so young. China is poor, but at least he would eat, and he would not die so early."

Lily has lived and worked in the U.S. for forty years and been a citizen since 1955. Now, after the murder of her only son, she is returning to China. "If they [her son's killers] were in prison today, I would not leave this country. But they're not in prison. This country just hurts my heart."

F.M.

September 27, 1987

The Ford Contract

The tentative agreement between Ford and the UAW is not a good contract for the workers, and deserves to be rejected. The concessions on work rules will make life in the plants much more difficult. Wages will not keep pace with inflation, even with the retained cost-of-living payments.

The "guarantee" from Ford not to close plants, in the 1984 contract, occurred after Ford had reduced its work force 43% from 190,000 (1978) to 104,000 today, and closed all the plants it had planned to. The guarantee of the 104,000 jobs is conditional in that temporary layoffs can occur for any length of time. Local agreements, already set up for work rules and work category concessions, can overturn this number on a plant-by-plant basis.

Furthermore, after the reopenings of the Chrysler contract earlier this decade, the precedent is there for Ford if it feels that its profits are severely affected. And, since two plants scheduled by Ford to close this year were not included in this total, the precedent is there for GM to go ahead with its scheduled plant closings too.

But the contract is not a defeat either. The situation between the classes, including the crisis of the Reagan administration and the Mulroney government in Canada, influenced the companies to settle quickly. The common expiration date with the Canadian contract conditioned Ford's and Chrysler's response. A strike at Ford with Chrysler workers in the U.S. not working because of a Canadian strike, posed the potential for broader strike action against Ford, GM and Chrysler in both countries. The risk was too great.

The Ford workers did not accept changes that have already been forced onto Ford salaried workers including co-payment of medical benefits and the loss of cost-of-living payments. GM salaried workers have lost cost-of-living payments and increases altogether. Canadian workers were able to win at least part of their demands for pensions to keep pace with inflation.

Ford workers in the U.S., especially in the big plants, are not voting. Voting is down to 25% in some locals according to UAW officials. Overall, the turn-out was around 50%, according to Solidarity House. This low a turnout is not because, as the UAW leadership claims, "the workers support the contract." It expresses a distrust of the leadership, and a feeling of powerlessness by the workers in controlling what happens to them in the workplace and the direction of their union.

Some of the early returns available at press time were: Ford Wixom Assembly plant (Lincoln Town Cars and Continentals) voted 641-489 approving. Skilled trades voted 53-127 to oppose and production workers 588-362 to approve. Local 249, Kansas City, Missouri, with 4,160 workers only 1,044 voted. Of these 644 were for and 400

were opposed. The workers at the Ford radiator plant to be closed this year voted to turn the contract down.

Bombing of the Iranian Ship

The bombing of Iranian ship in the Persian Gulf in September by the U.S. should be condemned by all unions and working class organizations.

The U.S. government is in the Persian Gulf to protect the interests of big business and the banks. This is what the question of keeping "free the international shipping lanes" means.

There is a war going on in the Persian Gulf, the Iran-Iraq War. In 1979 the shah of Iran, a U.S.-supported dictator, was overthrown by the Iranian people. The U.S. government, with the support European nations, began this war by using Iraq to attack the Iranian Revolution.

As a defense of the Iranian revolution against an imperialist-sponsored war, the workers of the world had to side with Iran against Iraq. The Iranians drove the Iraqis out of Iran.

Since that time, the Khomeini government has invaded Iraq. Such a new war, and the incredible sacrifices it has demanded of the Iranian people, has been used by the Khomeini government to divert the people's attention from the inability of his government to satisfy the demands of the revolution.

The U.S. did, as the Iran-Contra hearings showed, sell weapons to Iran secretly; it sells weapons to Iraq openly. It has used the problems of these two countries to have them drain each other's resources in a senseless war.

The main enemy for the U.S. continues to be Iran because of the 1979 revolution. When the United Nations, at the U.S.'s insistence, passed a resolution calling for a "cease fire," Iraq bombed more oil tankers stationed in Iran than at any time since 1984. Iraq claimed it did so to "convince Iran to support the cease fire." The ships that were bombed belonged to other countries, for example, Liberia.

The U.S. should get out of the Persian Gulf -- remove its military bases and its ships. This is the first step toward any possible peace in the Middle East.

Can the workers' problems be solved in the 1988 elections?

By Fred Michaels. The U.S. government -- a government of big business and banks -- is in crisis. This government is run by a Republican Party president -- Reagan -- and a Democratic Party Congress. The crisis of the government means a crisis for both of its parties.

Workers' Problems

The workers problems in the U.S. today are three:

- 1) wages are too low, not enough to live decently and provide a future for their children;
- 2) unemployment which is causing the workers districts of the major cities to be destroyed by big business and criminals;
- 3) the U.S. government's oppression of other countries, using the country's resources to oppress other countries rather than support their struggles for the same goals as U.S. workers.

So we say yes, the workers can make an important step forward in solving their problems in the 1988 elections by taking advantage of this crisis. A workers government, a government for the workers and not for big business, should be the goal of the workers in the 1988 elections.

A Workers Government

A workers government would:

- 1) force big business to employ all workers at living wages;
- 2) sponsor a huge public works program to rebuild the cities, to provide good jobs for all the young workers by taking the money from the Defense Department budget;
- 3) stop all U.S. government actions against other countries such as Nicaragua and El Salvador, support to the South African apartheid government.

A workers government requires a workers political party, a Labor Party, to run it. The main base of support for such a party is the unions. In the 1988 elections, the working class needs its own presidential candidate, independent of the Republican and Democratic Parties, to fight for this program. This is how the workers can make progress in solving their problems in the 1988 elections.

The Roots of the Crisis of the Government

As we have said in Truth, the workers and poor who are fighting against U.S.-supported oppression are the first cause of this crisis in U.S. politics -- the workers and poor of Nicaragua and El Salvador, South Africa, Korea and the Philippines. (See the past few issues of Truth.)

Second, the workers in the U.S. are more and more rejecting the Reagan administration (and the Democratic Congress which has supported it) and rejecting concessions and take-backs from the corporations and local governments.

More than 80% of Americans watched, listened or read about the Iran-Contra Aid hearings that showed in detail the secret government set up to support the Nicaraguan contras. For something as dull the Senate hearings on the nomination of Robert Bork for Supreme Court justice, the amount of those taking an opinion was 26% against him, 16% for and 57% undecided or no opinion. Only two weeks ago, before the hearings began, 12% were unfavorable, 11% favorable, and 77% were undecided or had no opinion. (Detroit Free Press, September 23, 1987).

The recent teachers strikes in Detroit and Chicago, strikes against school boards and city governments led by Black Democratic Party politicians, drew support from the working class parents of the school children. In both cities, workers and their children from the neighborhoods picketed with the teachers, supporting the teachers' demands for higher wages and smaller class sizes. In Detroit, a group of parents organized to "recall the entire school board."

Thus, the rejection of politicians, a trend of many years, is beginning to change to an active opposition.

Increased political involvement has expressed itself in some local elections. Elections officials were "surprised" by the 30% voter turn out for a Democratic mayoral primary in Flint, Michigan, a town hard hit by plant closings. (Detroit Free Press, August 5, 1987).

And in Detroit, a Black woman won the Democratic primary for a vacant Wayne County commissioner seat from a East Side working class neighborhood against well-known ex-Congressman Charles Digg. She raised much of her campaign money from unemployed autoworkers.

The increasing number of strikes -- from Maine paperworkers to Blue Cross workers -- shows that the workers are refusing more concessions and plant closings. In the most unionized states -- Michigan, New York, Illinois and New Jersey -- "the percentage of unionized workers has been rising gradually for the last three years, reversing a longtime trend. And unions have been winning a larger number of plant elections for the last three years in 8 of the 11 largest states." (Detroit Free Press, September 6, 1987).

Jesse Jackson

Jesse Jackson is the most popular Democratic Party candidate and the candidate that many workers and working class organizations are supporting. Let us see what his program is.

Jackson refused to support the Chicago city workers strike (including the teachers) in 1983 for more wages and smaller class sizes. His organization, Operation PUSH, joined in a lawsuit demanding the schools be reopened "on behalf of our children." Harold Washington and the school board tried to link the public employees strike with the racist forces in Chicago around Ed Vrdolyak. With this lie, the school board tried to get workers to cross the picket lines and break the union. But the teachers union is at least 50% Black and the overwhelming majority of the janitors, etc. are Black. This was sheer demagoguery designed to split the workers (See Truth No. 173, October 1983).

Jackson refused to support the P-9 workers strike at Hormel to stop concessions and against scabs taking their jobs. Instead, he offered himself as a mediator between the workers and a company that got the National Guard against its workers.

He formally opened his 1987 campaign by announcing on Labor Day in Pittsburgh that he was a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination. He said, "Our mission is to protect the American family from those who are importing drugs into the country and those who are exporting jobs out of the country."

"I shall endeavor to build a coalition that will shift the incentive from merging corporations, purging workers and closings plants to reinvesting in America and retraining our workers," he said ABC-TV's "Good Morning, America."

"I have learned that by focusing on the issue of economic justice, we can build the coalition necessary to win," Jackson said at the Pittsburgh Labor Day rally, wearing a union jacket and a hardhat bearing the sticker, "Bring Jobs Back to America."

Jesse Jackson sounds very supportive of labor because he is saying the same things that the union leaders are saying. But the union leaders are supporting big business. (See article on the Big Lie of the Anti-Import Campaign.)

Jackson would cut \$6 to \$8 billion from the \$343 billion defense budget for domestic needs (Detroit Free Press, September 27, 1987).

On a trip to Africa he called for withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, even though South Africa was invading its southern border. He called for reopening of the Nicaraguan newspaper, La Prensa, after it had become a rallying place for the the contras supported by the U.S.

He acted as an unofficial U.S. ambassador to get a Navy pilot involved in attacks on the Middle East, freed from Syria.

All of his program can be summed up in his position on the 1988 elections -- unconditional

support for the Democratic Party nominee, just as he supported Mondale in 1984.

While many workers supported Jackson in 1984, the workers made no advance based on that support as the last four years has demonstrated.

The problem in the U.S. is that the government is a government of big business and the banks and not a workers government. The workers can advance towards their own government in the 1988 elections by rejecting the Democratic Party program and candidates, including Jackson, and supporting their own program and their own candidate.

Labour Party ???
Labour Candidates ???

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Trotskyist Conference Underway

The Coordinating Committee for a U.S. Open Trotskyist Conference, established by the San Francisco conference in December, 1987, has issued a call for is an open Trotskyist conference printed on this page. (The documents of the conference are available.)

The Trotskyist Organization supports this initiative. We think it can be an important step in resolving the crisis of Trotskyism in the U.S. and internationally. It can be a step in the preparation of a Trotskyist Congress with the goal of implanting Trotskyism in the U.S. working class. The clarification of the Trotskyist program is the key to the success of this effort.

This conference can take up many important political questions facing the American working class at this time -- the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America, the 1988 elections, the struggle against racism, the struggle against Gorbachev's reforms, and perspectives for building the Fourth International. It can clarify the Trotskyist policy on these questions and map out plans to fight for it in the working class.

We urge all tendencies that identify with Trotskyism, as well as groups of young workers, students and militants interested in it, to join in preparing this conference, submit proposals for the agenda, discussion documents, resolutions, etc.

This is especially important now that the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which used to be the Trotskyist party in America, has abandoned the Trotskyist program. To date it has not even announced candidates for president. If the elections pass without SWP candidates, it will be the first time in over 25 years that the working class will not be able to vote nationally for candidates that support a Labor Party.

In this situation it is very important for tendencies that remain true to working class, socialist -- in other words, Trotskyist -- principles, to gather together their forces and make a common fight. Groups and tendencies that want more information may contact any individuals or organizations listed at the end of the call.

M.G. September 13, 1987

Call for an Open Conference of Trotskyists

We call for an open Trotskyist conference, to be held in Detroit, Michigan, April 2 and 3, 1988.

The conference will be open to all groups and individuals, in the U.S. and internationally, that identify with Trotskyism and that want to

participate in the conference on the basis of workers democracy.

We plan to take up the following questions as well as others that the majority of the participants decide to discuss:

. building labor participation in actions against U.S. interventions in Central America, the Mideast, and elsewhere;

. promoting the idea of a labor party in opposition to the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties and all their candidates;

. furthering discussion among Trotskyist tendencies.

The gathering will be organized following the principles of workers democracy. Accordingly we will:

. defend the right of working people to hear or express any idea;

. condemn the use of the state or the courts anywhere by anyone (including by people who call themselves "Marxists") to harass or suppress any point of view in the working class;

. expose and denounce the use of slander as a method to resolve political differences.

If you would like to help prepare this conference and participate in it, contact the Coordinating Committee. Proposals for the agenda, discussion documents, and/or resolutions can also be sent to the Coordinating Committee.

Coordinating Committee for a U.S. Open Trotskyist Conference

David Kerr, P.O. Box 82 Needham Heights, MA 02194

International Socialist League (Fourth International), P.O. Box 831 New York, NY 10008

Revolutionary Workers League, P.O. Box 1297, Detroit, MI 48231

Trotskyist Organization, P.O. Box 32546 Detroit, MI 48232

Workers Socialist League, P.O. Box 40458, San Francisco, CA 94140

Reconciliation with the Contras is Impossible

We are reprinting the "peace plan" for Central America proposed by Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica, and that Nicaragua has agreed to.

The Trotskyist Organization opposes this plan. It calls for national reconciliation with the contras, as well as with the dictatorships in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. It also calls for amnesty for the contras.

The experience of the workers and peasants in Central America has shown that reconciliation with the contras and other agents of U.S. imperialism is impossible. After the revolution in Nicaragua in which Somoza was overthrown, the Sandinistas decided to be "generous," not to put Somoza's national guard on trial and punish them for their crimes. It let them go. The contras have repaid the Sandinistas for their generosity by waging war on the people of Nicaragua, assassinating and torturing those devoted to the revolution, including North Americans like Ben Linder.

The only way to establish peace in Central America is to drive U.S. imperialism and its agents out of Central America, disarm them and punish them for their crimes.

This is why the Trotskyist Organization is fighting for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all forms of aid to the contras, including direct aid, the blockade, U.S. forces in surrounding countries, and aid to the dictatorships in the surrounding countries. We also urge all tendencies to support Ben Linder's brother's call for volunteers to defend Nicaragua.

A leadership that bases itself on these principles is necessary in North, Central and South America.

We urge all young workers, students and militants to read and study this plan and draw their own conclusions.

Below we reprint the Arias Plan as translated by the Nicaraguan government as printed in the New York Times, August 12, 1987.

The governments of the Republic of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, determined to achieve the objectives and to develop the principles established in the United Nations Charter and the Charter of the Organization of the American States, the Document of Objectives, the Caraballeda Message for Peace, Security and Democracy in Central America, the Guatemala

Declaration, the Punta del Este Communique, the Declaration of Panama, the Esquipulas Declaration, and the Contadora Treaty Proposal for Peace and Cooperation in Central America of July 6, 1986, have agreed on the following procedure for establishing a firm and lasting peace in Central America:

National Reconciliation

Dialogue

To urgently carry out, in those cases where deep divisions have resulted within society, steps for national reconciliation which would allow for popular participation with full guarantees in authentic political processes of a democratic nature based on justice, freedom and democracy. Towards this end, to create those mechanisms which, in accordance with the law, would allow for dialogue with opposition groups. For this purpose, the corresponding Governments will initiate a dialogue with all unarmed internal political opposition groups and with those who have availed themselves of the amnesty.

Amnesty

In each Central American country, except those where the International Commission of Verification and Follow-Up determines that such a measure is not necessary, an Amnesty decree will be issued containing all the provisions for the guarantee of the inviolability of life; as well as freedom in all its forms, property and the security of persons to whom these decrees apply. Simultaneous with the issuing of the amnesty decree by the Government, the irregular forces of the respective country will place in freedom all persons in their power.

National Reconciliation Commission

In order to verify the compliance with the commitments that the five Central American Governments subscribed to by the signing of this document, concerning amnesty, ceasefire, democratization and free elections, a National Reconciliation Commission will be established whose duties will be to verify the actual carrying out in practice of the national reconciliation process, as well as the full exercise of all civil and political rights of Central American citizens guaranteed in this document. The National Reconciliation Commission will be comprised of a delegate and an alternate delegate from the executive branch; a bishop delegate and an alternate bishop delegate recommended by the Episcopal Conference, and chosen by the Government from a list of three candidate which should be presented [by the conference] within a period of 15 days upon receipt of a formal invitation. This invitation will be made by the Governments within five working days from the signing of this document.

The same procedure will be used to select a delegate and alternate delegate from the legally registered political opposition parties. The said list of three [candidates] should be presented within the same above mentioned period.

In addition, each Central American Government will choose an outstanding citizen, outside of public office and not pertaining to the party in power, and his respective alternate, to be part of this commission.

The decree, which puts into effect the agreements for the nomination of the members of the respective national commissions, shall be communicated immediately to the other Central American Governments.

Exhortation for the Cessation of Hostilities

The Governments make a vehement appeal so that in the States of the area, currently suffering from the activity of irregular or insurgent groups a cessation of hostilities be arranged. The Governments of these states commit themselves to undertake all the necessary steps for achieving an effective cease-fire within the constitutional framework.

Democratization

The Governments commit themselves to promote an authentic democratic, pluralist and participatory process that includes the promotion of social justice, respect for human rights, [state] sovereignty, the territorial integrity of state and the right of all nations to freely determine, without outside interference of any kind, its economic, political, and social model; and to carry out in a verifiable manner those measures leading to the establishment, or in their instances, the improvement of representative and pluralist democratic systems which would provide guarantees for the organization of political parties, effective popular participation in the decision making process, and to ensure free access to different currents of opinion, to honest electoral processes and newspapers based on the full exercise of citizens' rights.

For the purpose of verifying the good faith in the development of the democratization process, it will be understood that there shall exist complete freedom of the press, television and radio. This complete freedom will include the opening and maintaining in operation of communications media for all ideological groups, and the operation of this media without prior censorship.

Complete political pluralism should be manifest. In this regard, political groupings shall have broad access to communications media, full exercise of the right of association and the right to manifest publicly the exercise of their right to free speech, be it oral, written or televised, as well as freedom of movement by members of political parties in order to proselytize.

Likewise, those Governments of Central America, which have in effect a state of exception, siege, or emergency [law], shall terminate that state and re-establish the full exercise of all constitutional guarantees.

Free Elections

Once the conditions inherent to every democracy are established, free, pluralist and honest elections shall be held as a joint expression of the Central American states to seek reconciliation and lasting peace for its peoples. Elections will be held for a Central American parliament, whose founding was proposed in the Esquipulas Declaration of May 25, 1986. In pursuit of the above mentioned objectives, the leaders expressed their will to progress in the formation of this parliament and agreed that the Preparatory Commission of the Central American Parliament shall conclude its deliberations and submit to the Central American presidents the respective treaty proposal within 150 days.

These elections will take place simultaneously in all the countries throughout Central America in the first half of 1988, on a date mutually agreed to by the Presidents of the Central American states. These elections will be subject to vigilance by the appropriate electoral bodies. The respective governments commit themselves to extend an invitation to the Organization of American States and to the United Nations, as well as to governments of third states, to send observers who shall bear witness that the electoral processes have been held in accordance with the strictest norms of equality, of access of all political parties to the media, as well as full guarantees for public demonstrations and other kinds of proselytizing propaganda.

The appropriate founding treaty shall be submitted for approval or ratification in the five countries so that the elections for the Central American parliament can be held within the period indicated in this paragraph. After the elections for the Central American parliament have been held, equally free and democratic elections shall be held with international observers and the same guarantees in each country, to name popular representatives to municipalities, congresses and legislative assemblies and the presidencies of the republics. These elections will be held according to the proposed calendars and within the periods established in the current political Constitutions.

Cessation of Assistance to Irregular Forces or Insurrectionist Movements

The Governments of the five Central American states shall request the Governments of the region, and the extra-regional governments which openly or covertly provide military, logistical, financial, propagandistic aid in manpower, armaments, munitions and equipment to irregular forces or

insurrectionist movements to cease this aid, as an indispensable element for achieving a stable and lasting peace in the region.

The above does not include assistance for repatriation, or in lieu thereof, the reassigning of assistance necessary for those persons having belonged to these groups or forces to become reintegrated into normal life. Likewise, the irregular forces or insurgent groups who operate in Central America will be asked to abstain, in yearnings for a true Latin American spirit, from receiving such assistance.

These petitions will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Document of Objectives regarding the elimination of arms traffic, whether it be inter-regional or extra-regional, intended for persons, organizations or groups attempting to destabilize the governments of the Central American countries.

The Non-Use of Territory to Invade Other States

The five countries which signed this document, reaffirm their commitment to prevent the use of their own territory and to neither render or permit military or logistical support to persons, organizations, or groups attempting to destabilize the governments of the Central American countries.

Negotiations on Matters Relating to Security, Verification, Control and Limitation of Armaments

The Governments of the five Central American states, with the participation of the Contadora group in exercise of its role as mediator, will continue negotiations on the points still pending in the Contadora Treaty Proposal for Peace and Cooperation in Central America concerning security, verification and control.

In addition, these negotiations will entail measures for the disarmament of the irregular forces who are willing to accept the amnesty decrees.

Refugees and Displaced Persons

The Governments of Central America commit themselves to give urgent attention to the groups of refugees and displaced persons brought about by the regional crisis, through protection and assistance, particularly in areas of education, health, work and security, and whenever voluntary and individually expressed, to facilitate in the repatriation, resettlement and relocation [of these persons]. They also commit themselves to request assistance for Central American refugees and displaced persons from the international community, both directly through bilateral or multilateral agreements, as well as through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other organizations and agencies.

Cooperation, Democracy and Freedom for Peace and Development

In the climate of freedom guaranteed by democracy, the Central American countries will adopt agreements permitting for the intensification of development in order to achieve more egalitarian and poverty-free societies. Consolidation of democracy presupposes the creation of a system of economic and social justice and well-being. To achieve these objectives the Governments will jointly seek special economic support from the international community.

International Verification and Follow-Up

International Verification and Follow-Up Commission

An international verification and follow-up commission will be established comprised of the Secretary Generals of the Organization of American States and the United Nations or their representatives, as well as the Foreign Ministers of Central America, of the Contadora Group and the Support Group. This commission will have the duties of verifying and following up the compliance with the commitments undertaken in this document, as well as the support and facilities given to the mechanisms for reconciliation and verification and follow-up. In order to strengthen the efforts of the International Commission of Verification and Follow-Up, the Governments of the five Central American states shall issue declarations of support for [the commission's] work. All nations interested in promoting the cause of freedom, democracy and peace in Central America can adhere to these declarations.

The five Governments shall offer all the necessary facilities for full compliance with the duties of verification and follow-up of the national Reconciliation Commission of each country and of the International Commission of Verification and Follow-Up.

Calendar for the Implementation of Agreements

Within a period of 15 days from the signing of this document, the Foreign Ministers of Central America will meet as the Executive Committee to regulate, promote and make feasible compliance with the agreements contained herein, and to organize the working commissions so that, henceforth, the processes leading to compliance with the contracted commitments may be initiated within the stipulated period by means of consultations, undertakings and other mechanisms deemed necessary. Ninety days from the signing of this document, the commitments pertaining to Amnesty, Cease-Fire, Democratization, Cessation of Assistance to Irregular Forces or Insurrectionist Movements, and the Non-Use of Territory to Invade Other States, will enter into force simultaneously and publicly as defined herein.

One-hundred-twenty days from the signing of this document, the International Commission for Verification and Follow-Up will analyze the progress [made] in the compliance with the agreements provided for herein.

After 150 days, the five Central American Presidents will meet and receive a report from the International Commission of Verification and Follow-Up and they will make the pertinent decisions.

Final Provisions

The points included in this document form part of a harmonious and indivisible whole. The signing of [the document] incurs an obligation, accepted in good faith, to simultaneously comply with the agreement in the established periods.

We, the Presidents of the five States of Central America, with the political will to respond to the longings for peace of our peoples, sign [this document] in the City of Guatemala, on the seventh day of August 1987.

Oscar Arias Sanchez

Jose Napoleon Duarte

Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo

Jose Azcona Hoyo

Daniel Ortega Saavedra