

# WORK BRIGADES TO NICARAGUA!

## An Alliance for a Labor Party

Reagan's re-election, the unprecedented attacks on Nicaragua, and the Democrats complete capitulation to them, show that now more than ever we need to organize working class people against these attacks, to defend the Nicaraguan Revolution with concrete material aid.

There are going to be six work brigades leaving the United States for Nicaragua in the next three months to work shoulder-to-shoulder with Nicaraguans to defend the revolution. We have to make an all-out struggle to build these brigades among working class people, to recruit working class youth, unemployed workers, housewives and unionists to join these brigades, to raise funds to finance these brigades. This can be a first step in a massive campaign for other kinds of material aid to the Nicaraguan Revolution, including a union boycott of supplies to the counterrevolutionaries.

The Nicaraguan people are fighting for the same things we are — jobs, wages, schools, neighborhoods, unions, freedom from imper-

ialist oppression — as many American trade union leaders who have been to Central America testified at the recent Cleveland Conference.

*Their revolution is our revolution.*

Yet Reagan portrays the Nicaraguan people as people incapable of determining their own destiny, as dupes of communists centered in Moscow, as part of a communist plot to steal our freedom.

This is a racist, anti-working class lie. The same thing Reaganites say about fighting Blacks or striking workers — "They don't know what they are doing; they're communist dupes." You do not have to be a communist to realize that communism is not the problem in America today. Communists are not closing factories, laying off workers, cutting wages, busting unions, closing schools, destroying the cities and creating a whole underclass of anti-working class, criminal elements who push drugs, break into houses, rob, beat and shoot people. Imperialist bankers, businessmen, politicians and police are doing this. Imperialism is the problem in America and everywhere.

The problem with the official Communist parties in Moscow and everywhere is that they are not communist in the working class, Marxist sense. "Communists have no interests separate and apart from those of the working class as a whole," said Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Yet the official Communist Parties do not fight on the side of the working class. They are not supplying Nicaragua as they should be. They are using their resources to support imperialist parties like the Democrats in the US and to suppress workers in Poland, Eastern Europe, the USSR and elsewhere.

This is why it is up to us, working class people in America, to defend the Nicaraguan Revolution. We cannot limit ourselves to demanding that the US withdraw, even with the largest demonstrations. The only way to get the US out is to defeat it, drive it out. And this means concrete material aid to defend the revolution now. Build the work brigades, join the work brigades, help finance the work brigades now!  
M.G.

By BARBARA PUTNAM

Reagan's re-election shows the need for an alliance of the unions and workers organizations to build a Labor Party. Reagan won because the working class parties went into the elections divided and failed to present a united front for a strong working class alternative — Labor Candidates and a Labor Party.

In spite of the whoopla about Reagan's "historic" landslide, only 52.3% of the voting population actually voted, little more than half. The Democratic Party admitted early on as the returns came in that the massive turnout of Blacks they were counting on was not materializing. In fact, the turnout dropped slightly.

A poll conducted by the *New York Times* showed that the majority who voted were better off whites. They voted overwhelmingly for Reagan. It also showed that of all Blacks who voted, 90% voted against Reagan as did the majority of Blacks and whites with incomes of less than \$12,500, and the unemployed. In sharp contrast, those with incomes over \$50,000 voted for Reagan by a margin of 63%.

In its majority the working class was left with the "choice" of voting for Mondale or Reagan. And this proved to be no choice for many workers. The responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of the working class parties.

At the Cleveland Conference in October we were able to unite a strong minority who declared themselves for building a Labor Party. Immediately after the Conference, the Socialist Workers Party, one of the largest organizations claiming to be for a Labor Party, denounced the Conference as nothing but a gathering of "sects." The Revolutionary Workers League, who voted with us to fight for a Labor Party at the Conference evaporated right after and now, after the elections are over, have come to the conclusion that the working class had no one to vote for and that the task is to unite for a workers party and a workers government.

As we labored for a working class vote to maximize votes for working class candidates, we found Blacks and the youth very receptive to a Labor Party, concretized in new subscriptions to *Truth* and promises to vote for the candidates of the Socialist Workers Party and other working class candidates. Significantly, new subscribers are almost entirely young Black women.

It was striking to see the difference between what the workers and youth want (struggle) and what they get from the majority of parties who claim to be their leaders (backwardness, hesitancy and timidity).

Increasingly, the only party that can appeal to the vanguard of the working class is a class party, one that is completely unacceptable to the bourgeoisie. That is why rather than draw back from us, Blacks and youth subscribe to *Truth*. That is the kind of party the Labor Party should be, one that can take advantage of the crisis of the Democratic Party and put forward a resolute program and struggle for the working class.

Comments by an average worker who voted for Mondale show that they too are ready for a new leadership. "I still wasn't really sure about Mondale, but I didn't want to vote for Reagan. I still worry because I don't know what's in store for us." (Mike Golden, recently recalled Chrysler worker quoted in the *Detroit Free Press*, November 15).

The Reagan administration is not immune to this search of the American working class for its own party. And the coming months will mark more and more confrontations between his government and the working class. The day after the election Reagan began a "whipsawing" campaign to demoralize the revolutionary struggle in Nicaragua; shortly after a White House spokesman said, "It is the view here that we have to get rid of programs if the deficit is really going to be reduced with domestic spending cuts." (*Detroit Free Press*, November 17).

The Labor Party is the basic key to the entire situation.

# DROP ALL CHARGES!



## Karen Norman - on trial

By MARGARET GUTTSALL  
The Karen Norman Defense Committee is organizing a rally for Karen Norman on December 7 in Detroit, Michigan, three days before her trial for first degree murder.

All working class youth, workers — women and men, Blacks and whites — and their organizations must do everything in their power to make this rally as large as it can possibly be, to mobilize working class people in an open, unified class way to demand that the state drop the charges against Karen Norman and expose the racist, anti-working class oppressors responsible for persecuting her.

Karen Norman killed a man in self-defense, a man who had raped her and threatened to kill her, and now she is being charged with first degree murder and is portrayed and treated like a savage beast and liar (see *Truth* #191).

"It seems as if she stalked the victim and went from room to room and stabbed him," says Magistrate Marion A. Moore.

"... Rather than being a wronged innocent ... she covered up the incident," says Elliott Hall.

Moore even goes so far as to say that any sexual activity must have been voluntary; that because the rapist was drunk, he was incapable of defending himself; that perhaps Karen Norman had set the whole thing up, that her children were not even there.

And when Norman was arrested and taken to the hospital for a medical exam, she was shackled to the examining table and forced to take DES, an anti-pregnancy drug that causes birth defects and cancer in the female offspring, even though she was already pregnant.

These so-called "charges" are nothing but

anti-woman, racist and anti-working-class lies based on the bourgeoisie's nightmares and stereotypes of women, especially, working class Black women. They are not based on one shred of concrete, material evidence (the man's uncle says he saw Karen with the man a year ago, the police say the stabbings took place in several rooms — come on!)

These charges are designed to keep working class women in their places, to pit men against women, whites against Blacks, to divide the working class. Thus they represent an attack on the entire working class. All working class people must solidarize themselves with Karen Norman, demand that the state drop the charges. "An injury to one is an injury to all," must be the cry.

The best possible legal defense in the courtroom is imperative, but it is not enough. Judges, prosecutors, police, do not make decisions in accord with "the law." They are selected and trained to serve the oppressor and they make their decisions in accord with the demands of the oppressors. If the bourgeoisie can get away with imprisoning Karen for life, it will. If the working class makes the price too high, it will not. This is why an all-out working class mobilization is the only way to insure victory for Karen Norman.

For the same reason, working class people can never rest in peace as long as these racist, anti-working class authorities like Moore and Hall remain in power, free to persecute women of our class like Karen Norman. Thus victory in the struggle to free Karen Norman from this persecution must be a first step in a struggle to punish those responsible for it, drive them from office, put them where they belong. All out for Karen Norman December 7!

An injury to one is an injury to all!

## Rally

for Karen Norman

Friday • December 7 • 7:30 pm

First Unitarian Church

Cass and Forest

Detroit, Michigan



# Chicago

## Attack on Goffer Family

By RICHARD TETRAULT

While Harold Washington, Paul Simon and Ed Vrdolyak were celebrating Simon's election to the US Senate in the morning after election day, Spencer Goffer and his family were under siege in their recently rented apartment on the west side of Chicago. At about 2:30 Wednesday morning a group of white men began throwing bottles and bricks through the windows of the apartment that the Goffers had moved into just the Saturday before.

But Alderman Danny Davis, a close ally of Harold Washington, had a quick explanation for the incident. According to Davis, Goffer "didn't know it was an all-white area and rented the apartment from a bank." Davis went on to say, "A group of individuals did this as they were leaving a nearby tavern. Somebody had a little too much to drink."

The problem with this explanation is that it completely denies the truth that the Goffers, a Black family living in a mixed neighborhood which borders on the city of Cicero, were the victims of a racist attack. Why does Danny Davis, a Black man himself, have so much trouble seeing this? Not only are Cook County, Chicago and Cicero officials investigating the attack, but the FBI is investigating to determine whether federal civil rights laws were violated.

Davis, like all capitalist politicians, Democrat and Republican alike, are compelled to conceal the fundamental role of racism in this society. They cannot deny that incidents such as the attack against the Goffers take place, but they attempt to hide the truth with shallow excuses: somebody had a little too much to drink, joblessness, lack of government programs, or making the mistake of moving into a racist neighborhood. The real truth is that this government and this state are based on a policy of racial oppression in a fundamental attack on the entire working class.

The struggle against racism must be seen in this way in order for a real solution to arise. The struggle that we posed around the elections, to build an independent, working class leadership represents the only way to advance. Danny Davis and the rest of the Democratic politicians have shown that they are incapable of leading this fight. But you have seen the militants and class leaders in your neighborhoods, unions and schools. Join with us in a struggle to advance a working class policy against racism and oppression.

## Int'l Women's Day Plans

By SUE FROSCHHEISER

With its first meeting on Sunday, November 11, the Committee for International Womens Day launched preparations for a conference here in Chicago in early March of next year. The meeting was attended by members of the Trotskyist Organization, Socialist Action, Red Rose Collective, the November 29 Coalition as well as several individuals. This initiative is being taken now, given that this year's event was attended by over 200 people and was prepared in less than 3 months.

Over the last twenty years, the struggle for women's liberation has met its stiffest opposition but has also made significant advances. But like the mass movements of the 1960s and 70s and as an important part of these movements, the movement for women's rights was denied a working class leadership. There were two very clear tendencies then as there are now. One says that the rights of women and the liberation of all oppressed peoples depends on the organization of workers, women and the unemployed as a class and our struggle for power. The other tendency says that we aren't ready to be organized as a class and fight for our own power and must therefore rely on the liberal bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois radicals for leadership. The National Organization of Women and the Coalition of Labor Union Women, for example, both endorsed and campaigned for the Mondale-Ferraro ticket in the recent elections. They tell us that the Democrats are better than the Republicans and that should be enough. They try to convince women that this racist and imperialist government can meet their demands in some way.

In the meeting on November 11 some of these questions began to surface. The Trotskyist Organization argued for a working class leadership for women's liberation.

Building a broad and open conference that is truly working class in nature is the right approach. In this way we can openly take up the discussion around the elections, the war in Central America, the oppression of women; all the questions facing working men and women. We call on the Socialist Workers Party and all working class organizations to join us at the next committee meeting on December 9, 1 pm at Roosevelt University. Call Sue at 276-9357 in Chicago for more information.

## An Open Trotskyist Congress to Rebuild the US Section of the 4th International

*A significant number of young people have begun to turn to Trotskyism as the only tendency capable of guiding the working and oppressed masses.*

*Yet there are several organizations that claim to be Trotskyist. Each has its own policy that it calls Trotskyist. And the largest of these, the Socialist Workers Party, appears to be the farthest from basic Trotskyist principles.*

*The Trotskyist Organization of the USA, Sec-*

*tion (Sympathizing) of the Fourth International, was founded in 1975 to overcome this problem, to lead a struggle to clearly differentiate Trotskyism from various centrist or intermediary tendencies that masquerade under its name; to train a new generation of revolutionaries capable of guiding the American working class in the foundation of its own party and the fight for power, in other words, to rebuild the US Section of the*

*Fourth International.*

*We call on youth turning toward Trotskyism, as well as youth and workers fighting for a Labor Party, to join us in this struggle, in particular, in preparing and building an open Trotskyist Congress to bring the struggle to a successful conclusion. This page is especially dedicated to this struggle. It is open to any militant or tendency that wants to contribute to it.*

# Roots of the "New International"

*"What the other countries need from us, above everything else, is one small but good revolution in the United States." (James P. Cannon, Writings and Speeches 1945-47, p. 293)*

By DAVID MARK

For more than two decades after its foundation in 1938, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) represented the best revolutionary traditions of the American working class. And for that matter, it was as proletarian a party as any in the history of the Fourth International. It was a revolutionary leadership.

The leading cadres of this party came from the American workers movement and were a part of its revolutionary development, from the early anarchists of the Industrial Workers of the World who wanted "one big union," through the generation of workers and militants who founded the early American Communist Party. And finally, as if all that were not enough, the pioneer leaders of the SWP were founders of the Trotskyist movement.

Say what you will, the present leadership of the SWP, the leadership of Jack Barnes, does not represent this tradition, even in the slightest degree. Barnes' now infamous statement that in ten years no one would call themselves a Trotskyist only made this simple truth an obvious fact.

### Barnes' Roots

But every leadership comes from some tradition, and every party's militants are to a great extent the product of the period in which they were trained and educated, and of the leadership that trained them. The present leadership of the SWP did not wake up one day and casually put on a new set of clothes — this leadership has roots in the period from which it came, the time of great crisis in the Fourth International and of the beginning of an upsurge among the youth after years of relative isolation. And the Barnes leadership has roots in the method and tradition in which it was trained. Whoever rejects such an approach to the crisis in the SWP, necessarily throws out Marxism in the process.

It is not an academic question. The present factional struggle in the SWP exists because the international situation changed in a drastic way. Everyone — Barnes, the expelled oppositions, every Trotskyist claimant — recognizes

that Iran, Nicaragua, and finally Poland represented a turn, an objective turn in the situation. Barnes' response to that objective situation was to attack the revolutionary traditions of the SWP.

In fact, the factional struggle raises questions that are being debated throughout the workers movement.

These questions are not going to go away — How should revolutionaries respond to the trade union oppositions of secondary leaders? What is the nature of the Sandinista leadership in Nicaragua? What should be the nature of the party organization? — first, because they have been around for more than twenty years and, most importantly, because today these questions are not just debates involving a small circle of militants. They are the immediate and unresolved problems of the workers mobilizations in Central America, in Poland, in the Middle East, in Europe, and yes, in America.

### Tasks of the Opposition

The present opposition, at least the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) and Socialist Action (SA) (Camejo's North Star Network is, in fact, a right opposition to Barnes) has said that the SWP still represents a revolutionary leadership of the American working class, that there is an unbroken continuity between the traditions of Trotsky, Cannon and the traditions in which the Barnes leadership was formed. That isn't true and we have characterized the tradition in which the Barnes leadership developed as centrism, not revolutionism.

More to the point, the opposition to Barnes has not yet attacked the roots of Barnes policies. The factional struggle in the SWP is at least as important for Trotskyism as in 1938 fight with the Shachtmanites, but for the first time in the history of the SWP, the leadership of the party now openly disavows the proletarian traditions of the SWP. The latest issue of the *Bulletin In Defense of Marxism* of the FIT says the August convention of the SWP did not represent a fundamental change in the character of the party — but what then did it represent?

And we are told that the World Congress of the United Secretariat is to be held early in 1985. Will this Congress also leave the factional struggle in limbo? If the SWP chooses to ignore the line of the majority, as it has up to this point, what then will be the task of the faction

— still to reform the SWP?

The documents of the opposition still avoid the central questions in the factional dispute. The platform of the FIT states "... instead of learning from and utilizing the strengths of Castroism ... the SWP central leadership has adapted to that current's weaknesses."

But what are the "strengths" and "weaknesses" of Castroism? If these are so obvious that no explanation is even required, then what is the basis of the oppositions' factional struggle with Barnes?

Barnes can break with Trotskyism while claiming to represent the traditions of the SWP only because he, and the oppositions, avoid the roots of Barnes' policies — in Mandel's theory of new radicalization, in the rejection of the permanent revolution by the theory of "three sectors of the world revolution," and in a fundamentally opportunist role in the American workers movement — to name a few.

### Trotskyism not Centrism

No one can be neutral in this political struggle. Not the oppositions and not us. If Barnes were to win the factional struggle, if the oppositions were dispersed as the Internationalist Tendency was, then it would represent a failure to answer the questions that a new generation of the workers movement is asking today in their mobilization and struggles. The new generation is always formed from the traditions and program of the old. We want to see the triumph of Trotskyist traditions over the traditions of Barnes' centrism.

We are challenging the expelled oppositions to answer the debate that is demanded by the actual situation. We issue this challenge in the spirit of a fraternal struggle between tendencies in the workers movement. As we have proposed, and wherever possible carried out, common struggle for an alliance for the working class party — we also insist on the necessity to carry out the political struggle to define the leadership of the workers party.

At the top of the page we publish a quote from Cannon. We take it on good faith that the SWP oppositionists agree with it. And on this basis we join the debate and the political struggle against Barnes to educate and train the generation of that one small but good revolution!

# Detroit

## Student Interview on Grenada March

Here is an interview with Sharon, a student at a Detroit high school who participated in the march against the US occupation of Grenada and the campaign for working class candidates. Sharon's father worked in a Chrysler auto plant long after he could have retired in order to support her family, including young brothers and sisters who could not find jobs. She has seen family and friends shot and even killed by anti-working class elements involved in drug dealing.

*Question: How do you feel about the situation in the Detroit high schools, the shootings? What do you think should be done?*

*Answer: Well, I sort of wish that the gun had never been invented. But then if we didn't have any guns and Reagan and all those people had all the guns, they might try to take over.*

*Q: Why did you decide to participate in the march against the US occupation of Grenada?*

*A: I was curious. I wanted to see what it would be like.*

*Q: Was there anything special that you liked about the march? Anything special that you learned from it?*

*A: I liked the marching, all the signs, the chants. I really feel sorry for the people in South America and South Africa. I never really*

*knew what was happening there before. Does the US really still have soldiers in Grenada? Does that mean that the people can't go where they want to go?*

*Q: How do you feel now that you have participated in the march and the campaign for working class candidates? If you were old enough to vote on Tuesday, who would you vote for?*

*A: Well, I feel good about it, like I'm doing something to change things. Who would I vote for? Do you mean would I vote for Reagan and Mondale or these people (Mason and Gonzalez)? Why these people, of course.*

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