

FREE KAREN NORMAN!

October 13 Demonstration

By BARBARA PUTNAM

Karen Norman, a young Black woman and mother of two small children who killed a man who tried to rape her is facing trial and the possibility of life imprisonment by a legal system that wants to make an example of her to bring the crushing weight of the bourgeois system down on the backs of Black women. Let the fight to defend Karen Norman be a declaration of war on racism and the point of departure for a working class alliance for a Labor Party!

This case is being used to deepen attacks on women. For defending herself against a vicious rape, the darkest side of the violence and inhumanity of a dying social system. Karen Norman has been charged with *with first degree murder*.

In this society, women are automatically suspect. They have to prove that the rape happened and that they did not "lead on" the rapist.

But another, more profound element is added to the Karen Norman case — racism! She will also have to prove that she is not some kind of subhuman monster. The prosecution is working with the bourgeois press to line up the racists who portray her as a liar, a premeditated killer who stabbed a man to death for no reason.

The *Detroit Free Press* (October 23) ran a front page article entitled "Karen Norman: Victim of Rape or Brutal Killer?" Through innuendo or by presenting certain "facts" as truth, they tried to *prejudice* the reader.



Karen Norman

They quoted Elliot Hall, the prosecutor, and close friend of Mayor Young as saying "... rather than being a wronged innocent" she "covered up the incident" and that her "story of rape... is not supported by medical evidence." But toward the end of the article they contradicted this conclusion by saying that physicians say that in 70% of all rape cases it is impossible to actually see trauma.

Blacks, like Elliot Hall belong to a *different class* than Karen Norman, and therefore look down on working class Blacks. They become the standard bearers of anti-working class and

racist attitudes on behalf of the bourgeois system. Elliot Hall serves the useful function of legitimizing the railroad job on Karen Norman. She refused to be the rapist's victim so now Elliot Hall wants to make her the victim of the bourgeois legal system.

It is well known, at least by Blacks, that they only have equality and rights on paper. Racism is what they get and that is what Karen Norman is getting. Several working class organizations have been defending her, but only in a limited and hesitating way that does not respond deeply enough to the questions posed.

This case demands the greatest cooperation between organizations claiming to represent the working class. Defending Karen Norman involves far more than a simple legal defense. Nor can it be just another victim's cry of outrage against injustice. Fundamental antagonisms of *class, race and sex* are at the bottom of the Karen Norman case. An alliance of working class organizations in her defense must frontally respond to the attacks of the bourgeoisie on women and Blacks.

A Black working class woman who lifted herself out of the Detroit eastside ghetto and who has been pursuing a degree in computer science while raising two small children is a fighter! We who fight to *free* Karen Norman must be as courageous. We must take the offensive and fight the basic cause of her oppression, the bourgeoisie and its chief instrument of class domination, racism!

Drop all charges!

CHICAGO — As the 1984 election campaign draws to a conclusion, we are able to bring out some very important lessons of the living struggle we have led to build the Labor Party. One very concentrated sample of this fight took place in organizing a working class contingent for the October 13 Midwest Freeze Rally in Chicago.

First, it is important to realize that the nuclear freeze and peace movements are real movements that exist out of a fear of imperialist intervention around the world.

In issue #189 of *Truth* we said: "Voting in the elections will not change the bourgeoisie and its system, but it can change the working class. Fighting for a united vote for a Labor Party by voting for working class parties on the ballot can begin to change the working class from a divided class without real leadership, to a united class fighting for power."

On the one hand, it was clear that the rally was orchestrated and dominated by the Democratic Party and a fringe of petty-bourgeois radicals that rely on the Democrats for their own existence. And, on the other hand, there was a significant percentage of the estimated crowd of 15,000 participants that came to this demonstration in search of a leadership and a struggle independent of the Democratic Party and based on the power of the workers and youth. One of the things that this demonstration could not help but reveal is the incredible contradiction that exists between the interests of the working class and the policies of the Democratic Party as a party of the imperialist ruling class. While the youth solidarize themselves with the revolutionary struggles in Nicaragua, Grenada, Lebanon and at home, the Democrats intensify the attacks on these same struggles.

The fundamental problem of the demonstration is identical to that facing the working class as a whole: in the absence of a working class leadership, the Democratic Party is able to pervert all of our struggles.

Although many will agree with this assessment, few have taken the practical steps necessary to advance. Many groups refuse to do anything around the elections. They claim that the elections are unimportant or that to participate in them is to give credibility to the capitalist class. These people delude themselves and deny reality because they had nothing to offer the workers and youth who came to demonstrate on October 13 and fight for their own power.

The Freeze Rally was a good opportunity to carry out the decision of the Cleveland Conference (held September 14-16) for national actions against the war in Central America. The Local Committee of the Trotskyist Organization worked in CHAWC (Chicago Anti-War Coalition) for this objective and a large working class contingent trying to involve other participants of the Cleveland Conference in building the contingent, including the Socialist Workers Party. Although they are on record as being for a Labor Party, they pulled back from any concrete work to build it.

They are running a presidential campaign as well as campaigns for local offices, but have been unable or unwilling to open up these campaigns as a working class offensive.

Socialist Action and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, even though they were present at the demonstration and marched alongside the CHAWC contingent, they did not help to build the contingent nor did they have anything to say about building a working class leadership in these elections, and afterwards.

The Trotskyist Organization did, however.
(Continued on back)

Freedom for Blacks!

By MARGARET GUTTSHALL

The US Immigration and Naturalization Service attacked, beat and arrested Dessima Williams, the Black woman ambassador from the Grenada government that the US overthrew last year. She was giving a speech at a rally against the US occupation of Grenada in Washington, D.C. The INS then charged her with being an "illegal alien" and imprisoned her.

Detroit police arrested a Denby High School student and initiated an investigation of twenty other students because they attempted to register to vote in the 1984 elections.

A Detroit prosecutor, Elliot Hall, charged Karen Norman, a Black, 19-year-old Wayne State University sophomore, with first-degree murder after she defended herself against a man who had raped her and threatened to murder her and her children. He died of the wounds he received.

And the *Detroit Free Press* reported that youth involved in drug dealing shot and killed over 100 other Black youth in a period of 86 days in Detroit. Some of these youth were also involved in drug dealing, others were simply mistaken for someone else.

These may seem like a series of separate and unrelated incidents. In reality, they are part of a *pattern of racist, anti-working class violence* initiated and fostered by the racist, imperialist state that rules this country. These attacks are designed to exhaust and terrorize Black people, isolate them from their class brothers and sisters of other races and nationalities, split the working class on racial lines, and thus strengthen the state and its rule over the oppressed and exploited.

The only way to combat these racist attacks is to mobilize and organize the masses of Black youth, workers and working class militants and organizations against them; build large, open committees and defense guards to wage the struggle, as part of a larger struggle to build a mass Labor Party to fight for political power and bring down this imperialist state. To call for more police protection, to rely on justice in the courts or the liberal bourgeoisie, will only make matters worse.

Racist Propaganda

How can we say that these attacks are part of a pattern of *anti-working class, racist violence*

when in many cases Blacks are involved in these attacks on other Blacks?

Because every one of these attacks has been accompanied by a flurry of thinly-veiled *racist propaganda* and every one has been directed against the positive tendency in working class Blacks to rebel against their oppression. "Teen voter fraud," said the *Detroit News* as if these youth were criminals when they wanted to vote to get rid of Reagan. "Victim of Rape or Brutal Killer," said the *Detroit Free Press* because Karen Norman wanted herself and her children to survive. "Drug dealing — everyone is involved," said another article, as if the poor and working class Blacks of Detroit are responsible for organized crime and recruiting Black youth to deal drugs.

The fact that Blacks are involved in these racist attacks on other Blacks does not negate the racist and class character of these attacks. American exploiters have always used Blacks to oppress Blacks and a certain number have always been willing to collaborate. Slave traders used one tribe to capture and enslave another. Slaveholders used "house slaves" to oppress "field slaves." And today the imperialists use Black Democratic Party mayors like Coleman Young to destroy whole Black neighborhoods, tax Black people to death, give the land and the money to GM and wield a racist police force against working class Blacks who rebel against the resulting oppression, like the Denby students or Karen Norman. The imperialists use drug dealers and pump drugs into working class neighborhoods to divide and demoralize Black people.

Racism is a Class Question

But how can you say that the state initiates and fosters these racist attacks? What does the state have to gain?

American businessmen have always counted on the exploitation and oppression of Black people, on racism and a divided working class to maintain their profits and power. They used the fantastic profits that they reaped through producing cotton with slave labor to industrialize the North. They hired free Blacks and Black slaves as skilled craftsmen in both the North and South at substantially lower wages than their white counterparts. They brought hundreds of Blacks to the North to work on assembly lines and break strikes. And today

they still use Blacks in the ever-growing ghetto as cheap labor and a captive market for overpriced products. They still use racism to justify the miserable conditions in which even the best-paid Black workers are forced to live and to pit white workers against Blacks to cripple the working class and demoralize its will to fight.

American racists and imperialists are *afraid* of the growing working class revolt. They attack Dessima Williams, Denby students, Karen Norman and dozens of Black youth in the streets every day, either openly or through Black agents because Blacks are in the very front lines of this revolt.

Racism is a *class question* and the fight for freedom for Black people *strikes at the very foundation* of American imperialism, capitalism. This is why Black youth and workers cannot turn to the police or the courts to defend them against racist attacks, no matter what color they are. For the police and the courts are *selected and trained* to defend this racist, imperialist state. And this is also why white liberal bourgeois, white petty bourgeois and even Black petty bourgeois, whose interests are tied to those of this capitalist state, have all but abandoned even the pretense of a struggle against racism. The recent Democratic Party convention and Black Congressional Caucus meetings manifested this development when they did not come up with one concrete program to fight racism.

Working Class Methods

The only way to fight these racist attacks is not to turn to the police, the courts, or the liberals, but to turn to the masses of Black youth, workers, working class militants and organizations. Mobilize and organize them, build large, open committees against racism; defense guards to patrol Black neighborhoods and defend Black youth and women. Lead this struggle in the direction of building a mass Labor Party to fight for political power and bring down the imperialist state.

We have to build *class solidarity* among Blacks and whites, isolate the elements that want to collaborate with the state and prey on their class brothers and sisters. We have to draw the lessons of the 60s and 70s, not leave a small number of Blacks in separate parties and organizations to confront the state alone. We need a mass Labor Party to do the job.

Fundraising Concert for Karen Norman

Wayne State University
Student Center Building
2nd Floor Ballroom
7:30 pm — November 16

Our Fight in the Elections

By DAVID MARK

In the last nine months the Trotskyist Organization has fought for an electoral alliance of workers, unions and parties around the demand for a Labor Party. Now it is time to answer for the success or failure of our campaign.

Balance Sheet of Our Fight

Though the results have been modest the campaign for a Labor Party coalition has had its successes. No, we have not built a Labor Party, but we have been able to reach the best of the working class youth and to train and educate them in working class means and methods of struggle. This support is concrete and measurable. We have increased our subscribers in working class neighborhoods in Detroit and Chicago, and though we do not yet have the total votes for working class parties in the precincts in which we concentrated our work, we are certain they will show a solid support for a Labor Party.

At another earlier stage of the campaign, we got hundreds of workers' signatures from two important factories supporting ballot status for the Labor Party Coalition. In addition to these results, we have enlarged the demand for a working class party in several workers actions — the Toledo AP auto workers strike, July 21 march against US intervention in Nicaragua, and several others.

In every case, it has been our conscious struggle for the workers party that has won forces to our side.

Unity of Action

Along this line of development there has been a negative side too. No agreement was reached with other parties or with unions for practical struggle for a party of the working class. This is in one sense incredible given the nature of the period and the common problems which face the working class. How many parties today claim to be in favor of a Labor Party? We can easily name a dozen that make this claim yet who did not lift a finger to realize the demand in the course of the elections. Moreover, there is not the slightest basis for such a hesitant reaction when all the problems of the workers mobilization — unemployment, repression, racism, Reagan's military adventures in Central America, not the least of which is the need for a fighting leadership itself — literally cry out for unity of action against the bosses and their class. And our own experiences have shown us that the demand for the Labor Party is indeed a popular demand with the working class, especially among Black youth.

For all these reasons alone, we are free from any responsibility at all in the matter of other parties and their refusal to put their words into deeds. We assure you, our readers, we do not intend to let any of them off the hook.

October 13 ...

Continued from front page

participate in the CHAWC meetings to build the contingent and called on other groups to do the same. Our members helped produce the CHAWC leaflet, which we distributed at Chicago Vocational School and in the neighborhoods around 112th and State Street. We were also able to combine leafleting with our regular meetings with subscribers and contacts.

We feel our methods are correct, that is an agreement with other groups to do common work towards a specific objective. To those in CHAWC and others, the Trotskyist Organization looks forward to future work and deepening the political struggle.

It is certainly an advantage if one has the correct methods of struggle but still the most important question is politics. We have fought since the very beginning of this election campaign to build the Labor Party by first of all organizing the vote for working class candidates on the ballot. Our policy throughout the elections has been to pursue the tactic of the united front to build the Labor Party and to engage all those forces that have said they are for such a party. It is by this method and this method alone that we will be able to determine who has the right politics to lead the working class. Of course if one continues to abstain from such a struggle for political clarity, nothing gets resolved and working class independence suffers for it.

To the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency we say that this struggle must take place and that the Trotskyist Organization is prepared to engage in any practical activity along these lines.

Richard Tetrault, Organizer
Chicago Local Committee
Trotskyist Organization

SWP Tails

For the unions there is of course a long legacy to support to the Democratic Party to overcome. We do not expect the trade unions and the working class in its entirety to overcome its links to the bourgeois parties overnight. But even more certainly we do not expect them to undergo such a transformation without conscious working class militants raising a struggle to win the masses of workers over. Refusal to consciously prepare the working class for power is what Leninists call "spontaneism," what Lenin called "tailing the masses."

The evolution of the SWP campaign, particularly regarding the Jackson campaign, shows that if a party is not leading a political struggle, if it is not trying to change the minds of the masses, then it ends up being prey to every change in the mood of the masses and every turn in the tempo of events.

When the campaign of Jesse Jackson came to its only possible conclusion, leaving the leadership of Blacks once again in the hands of the Democratic Party, naturally there was a certain amount of confusion and demoralization among his supporters. Up to election day itself there were huge numbers of workers who did not want to have to choose between Reagan and Mondale. A perfect opportunity for putting forward the Labor Party!

But for the SWP, the last days of the elections were spent apologizing for their weak campaign with treatises against "electoralism." We were told it is not the votes in the election that are important (then why participate at all?)

Grenada Solidarity Actions

By FRED VITALE

Nearly 100 people marched through a Black working class neighborhood in Detroit on October 27 protesting the invasion of Grenada and the continued occupation of US troops. This action was part of a nation-wide week of activities on the first anniversary of the invasion.

On October 25, 1983, US troops invaded the island of Grenada (population: 300,000; twice the area of Washington, D.C.). The pretext was a "danger to US medical students."

The real reason was to finish the work of overthrowing the New Jewel government that would not obey US imperialism and as a dry run for the invasion of Nicaragua.

Within one week, Reagan had the complete support of the Democrats. Today, Mondale calls the invasion "the liberation of Grenada."

In fact, the invasion was the single most important act by the US government against the Central American Revolution. And thus, mobilizing against it has exacerbated the growing split in the anti-intervention movement.

The anti-intervention or solidarity movement is splitting into two wings. The first, a working class wing, composed of working class organizations — the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action, Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Internationalist Workers Party, the Trotskyist Organization and a sector of the unions — willing to act against US imperialism. The second is a petty bourgeois wing composed of CISPES, the "solidarity" networks, the Church groups and the "freeze" campaign, subordinated to the Democratic Party.

It is becoming clear that the only kind of solidarity possible is class solidarity. The working class wing must build a class front, a workers front, to defend Nicaragua and Cuba, the most advanced points of the American Revolution.

Grenada Actions

The split in the movement is beneficial to the Central American Revolution. The proof?

The actions on October 27 in Detroit and New York City were more significant than last year's action or even this summer's actions, such as the July 21 demonstration in Detroit.

Demonstrators marched through Black working class neighborhoods. There were significant numbers of Black demonstrators. They received a very friendly reception from people on the streets. Some even joined the demonstration. Thus the movement began to reach out to the single most important source of solidarity in the US — the Black working class.

but it is the mobilization, actions of workers, etc. Finally, on the eve of the elections the SWP edited a leaflet entitled "Can voting stop war, racism and unemployment?"

So in the end, the electoral campaign of the SWP did not succeed either in mobilizations, nor in votes, it resulted only in approving of a massive abstention on the part of the working class.

Trotskyists Were the Active Factor

It is indeed even more incredible that we Trotskyists carried on the fight to support working class candidates, and in this framework the candidates of the SWP, even while the SWP was already in the process of giving up. And as for actions, and mobilizations, we have examples enough which were directly a result of our fight around the elections. We said that the elections might not change the nature of the bourgeoisie or its system, but working class participation in them could serve to strengthen the fight of the working class if the party, the workers party, was at the center of the electoral struggle.

One such example is the recent Emergency National Conference Against US Military Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. The organizers of this Conference did their best not to offend any political tendency, they tried to build a "non-partisan" movement. We, on the other hand, fought to build a "partisan movement" and specifically raised the demand for the Labor Party and a vote for labor candidates in the elections. We were able

to win a strong minority to this fight, more than 40 votes in a Conference of only several hundred.

And there are other such struggles, including the October 27 march in Detroit against US intervention in Grenada, organized for the first time in a working class neighborhood. Here also, we took the initiative.

The Decisive Battle

The struggle of the masses against Reagan has just begun. While for some his re-election will be a demoralizing experience, for those of us who have known all along that only a workers party could lead the working class, Reagan's re-election is only further evidence of the bankruptcy of the Democratic Party. Reagan's second term does not signify a conclusion of the struggle, far from it. The election shows only that the middle class has been temporarily rallied to the stronger of the two capitalist parties. The deciding battle begins when the working class unites its forces and becomes the dominant factor on the political scene with its own party. The dawn of the working class party signals the beginning of the end for Reagan, the bosses, and both of their parties.

THE GLOBAL CONFLICT

CISPES

These actions represent, in this sense, the culmination of events of the past six months. The actions this summer, the Cleveland Conference and now these Grenada demonstrations, all show the abandonment of actual solidarity by CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador). It moved from lukewarm support of the July 21 action to a virtual boycott of the Grenada actions.

CISPES in Detroit endorsed the Grenada action by a very close vote. CISPES activists claim that poor organizational relations caused their abandonment of the march. But "lack of courtesy" is not a political argument.

CISPES was against the demonstration because it is tied more and more to the petty bourgeois Church and pacifist organizations, that is, to the left wing of the Democratic Party.

The presidential elections represent a tremendous pressure on the working class and any movement that claims to be against US imperialism. The mobilization of the working class and the Cleveland Conference precipitated a working class wing that refused to buckle under this pressure. CISPES locally and nationally, chose to support Mondale. Now it finds itself tied almost exclusively to pacifist Church groups.

Working Class Front

To have solidarity with the Nicaraguan and Cuban Revolutions it is necessary to turn our backs on the pacifist petty bourgeois wing, turn our backs on CISPES's policy of capitulation to it. It is necessary to turn toward and penetrate deeper into the working class. We need a class front to defend Nicaragua and Cuba!

Solidarity that crosses class lines between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie simply will not be able to stand up to the pressure of US imperialism that will be 100, 1000 times stronger when it is invades Nicaragua. Petty bourgeois policies will have to be fought like they were in the 60's.

A working class front can defend Nicaragua and Cuba by creating class solidarity. This can take the form of organizing volunteers as a large movement for practical support to the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Second, such a front could launch a campaign of aid to Nicaragua by the trade unions as a first step towards a union boycott of aid to the contras and dictatorships.

A working class front to defend the Nicaraguan and Cuban Revolutions!

Poland

Paramilitary men kidnapped and murdered Father Popieluszko, a popular supporter of the free union, Solidarnosc, to force a large-scale reaction from the working class. They perhaps hope to gain control of the government and use the situation to crush the Polish workers in conditions that are heading toward a second revolutionary upsurge.

Some of the priest's supporters said it was a "good sign" that the government reported it immediately when the body of the priest had been found, but in reality it was only because a coverup would have been impossible given the depths of the crisis of the regime. The government itself relies almost entirely on the police and repression to maintain control and the men who planned and carried out the murder of Popieluszko were high ranking officers in the secret police.

El Salvador

Dragging revolutionary forces into "peace talks" has been a way for the bourgeoisie to make war on working class revolutions. Not everybody is taken in by the ruse of "peace talks" and negotiations.

We have just heard of a new group that formed in El Salvador which "totally rejects" President Duarte's peace talks with the FDR/FMLN (Revolutionary Democratic Front/Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) of El Salvador. This new group calls itself the "Roberto Sibirian Popular Revolutionary Movement" after a revolutionary figure killed in battle in 1980. They call for "popular revolutionary war."

Chile

On October 24 the Pinchet government ordered a news blackout to prohibit newspapers and magazines from reporting mass demonstrations and a planned one day national strike that came off October 30. Youth in working class sections of Santiago manned barricades and fought police through October 31.

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