

Labor Solidarity Against Reagan!

Defend the Pan Am Strike!

March on Washington April 20!



Striking Pan Am workers, JFK airport

By MARGARET GUTTSHALL

The Pan Am workers' strike shows that the labor movement has the power to defeat the bosses and Reagan, but it is not using it.

Five thousand workers, including mechanics, baggage handlers and others, all members of the Transportation Workers Union (TWU) walked out on February 27. They demanded that Pan Am restore their wages to previous levels, as it had already agreed to do in a contract with the union and as a court had ordered it to do. (TWU members, like many other union members, took wage cuts or concessions on the condition that their wages would be restored at a later date.)

Within hours, four other unions representing XX,000 workers — Teamsters, Flight Engineers, Flight Attendants and Air Line Pilots — were drawn into the struggle and Pan Am, one of the largest airlines in the world, was virtually *shut down*.

But now the Air Line Pilots Association is crossing the picket line and the national lead-

ership of the unions — the AFL-CIO — is not lifting a finger in support of the Pan Am workers. Mass picketing has been a one-shot affair, restricted to New York. Nothing has been done to shut down other airlines that are helping Pan Am (which is trying to operate with scab labor) or the terminals as a whole.

An all-out fight in working class schools and unions for solidarity with Pan Am workers, for a Labor Front Against Reagan, to build the March on Washington, April 20, can begin to change this. A large turnout of working class youth and unions of this struggle in Washington on April 20 can begin to change this.

Working class youth and unionists cannot allow Reagan and the bosses to divide and conquer the labor movement as they are attempting to do — PATCO, Phelps Dodge, Greyhound, the British miners! Without the labor movement, the unions, we will *all* be pushed back to the Stone Age, with no rights at all. Nor can we allow the labor movement

to remain dependent on the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party has not lifted a finger for the working class.

Even the most left Democrats like Jesse Jackson, John Conyers or George Crockett have not supported a single working class struggle against Reagan since he was re-elected — the Chrysler Jefferson avenue workers strike, Chicago teachers strike, Dodge Truck workers' strike, Pan Am workers' strike, Mississippi teachers' strike. A Labor Front is necessary to fight for the demands of the working class against Reagan, to unify the labor movement against Reagan here and abroad: to build a Labor Party.

To expand and develop the mobilization and strength of American workers against Reagan, we must defend the struggles of our brothers and sisters in Nicaragua. They are fighting for the same things we are, against the same bankers, businessmen and armed racists that we are.

United we stand, divided we fall!
Solidarity with Pan Am workers!
Solidarity with Nicaragua!
Labor Front Against Reagan!
March on Washington April 20!

Detroit Rally Building April 20 March on Washington

Saturday, March 30, 7:30 pm
Barth Hall, St. Paul's Cathedral
(Woodward at Warren)

For rides, information call 582-9812

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Alliance for a Labor Party!

Resolution of the Secretariat of the Trotskyist Organization, March 9, 1985

Reagan's election, and the evident crisis of the Democratic Party and trade union officialdom, shows the result of years of class collaboration and the policy of concessions by the mass organizations of the working class — the trade unions. The mobilizations which took place before the elections — of miners, auto workers, Blacks — did not (and could not by themselves) result in replacing the treacherous leadership, even in its weakened and decadent state. In these circumstances and in the middle of a new (and fragile) "recovery," Reagan's brand of reactionary "populism," carried the petty bourgeoisie and even more backward sections of the working class. Nevertheless, a sizeable section of the working class and the trade unions, and increasingly, working class youth, are looking for radical solutions to the political and economic crisis of American imperialism. In such circumstances the struggle for a working class party and an action program, in terms of propaganda, tactics, and organization, for class independence of the workers mobilization can provide a real opening for the fight to rebuild the US section of the Fourth International and the workers leadership at another stage of the struggle.

A labor front against Reagan! Build a Labor Party!

The "recovery" and Reagan's re-election are not based on strictly superficial events — although there is an almost frantic atmosphere of speculation surrounding the upturn which even the bourgeois economists do not expect to last long. Even though the unemployment rate has come down somewhat, the working class, especially organized workers and the most oppressed have barely begun to recover anything. Recent figures show that in the years 1980-84 while the civilian labor force grew by 5%, union membership declined by 13%. For the UAW the figures are far worse. For the first time in decades, non-union workers received larger wage increases than union workers! While unemployment is going down for the working class as a whole, it is actually going up for Blacks. This is the legacy of class collaboration.

The working class parties, even those which took an intermediary position in the elections and did not support the Democratic Party such as the SWP, are disoriented and looking for class collaborationist schemes. The national coalition formed after the Cleveland Conference (which was held before the elections) has practically dissolved itself into the wing of the peace movement (the "freeze") closest to the Democratic Party. Despite the failures and the crisis of the Democratic Party, it still continues to have a

strong attraction for the trade unions and the oppressed due to the historical links of the old and betraying leaderships to it.

Leaders like Jesse Jackson in particular continue to play a teasing game between the Democratic Party and the radical sectors of the Black movement and the working class. Nevertheless, there are definite signs that sectors of the working class in all of its organizations are looking for ways to organize a break from the Democratic Party. Even the Stalinist and semi-Stalinist organizations must still pay lip service to class independence.



The experiences of the Trotskyist Organization and of other parties in the elections (the SWP candidate in Cincinnati who received 10,000 votes) shows there is a mass basis for a united front as applied to the construction of the working class party in the United States. Nevertheless, there are strong spontaneist tendencies toward leaders like Jesse Jackson. This takes two forms: an underestimation of the influence of the Jackson campaign on Blacks and Black youth in particular and of its ability to detour them from an independent working class mobilization, and, an overestimation of the ability of the Jackson campaign to awaken the radical and anti-capitalist aspirations of Blacks. In fact, even independent of the Democratic Party, leaders like Jesse Jackson have already shown what they are made of and that they are a roadblock to an independent working class mobilization. His popularity only shows the importance of presenting the workers and their mobilization with a class alternative to the Democratic Party.

Alliance for a Labor Party!

After the elections, Reagan made clear the intentions of American imperialism to crush the revolution in Central America — and first in Nicaragua. But both the working class resistance to a large scale invasion, even if it has a contradictory and pacifist character to it, and the Nicaraguan Revolution itself still

represent a formidable obstacle to US imperialism. Reagan has therefore embarked on a policy of escalation in Nicaragua, similar in many respects to the US intervention in Vietnam.

The policy of barter and negotiation at the point of a gun is intended to compromise the Sandinista leadership, and the Nicaraguan Revolution to the point where the US could militarily intervene on a large scale. The policy of the Stalinists is to subordinate the peace movement to the interests of the Kremlin, in the Western hemisphere giving it away to US imperialism and the Democratic Party. The pacifists have deep illusions as well in the Democratic Party and the force of "public opinion." The trade unions are more fertile ground given the divergences that exist between the reactionary old line bureaucrats and the secondary leaders who are opposed to concessions and US intervention in Central America. Together with the working class parties, such is the leadership that makes up the April 20 national coalition.

It is strongly influenced by Reagan's re-election and deeply disoriented.

In this situation the line of the Trotskyist Organization in the April 20 coalition is:

a) to fight for a workers front against Reagan and his policies in Central America;

b) to bring the largest possible forces of a working class character, trade unions, Black youth, into the building of a working class contingent for the march in Washington and local demonstrations, to enter and work in whatever committees that engage in such work, and to propose committees to do such work;

c) to engage in a patient and systematic polemic against pacifism and the freeze campaign, and against the Democratic Party.

In this work the party remains conscious of the conjunctural character of the present circumstances (in terms of disorientation of other working class parties and their stampede toward the Democratic Party) and the importance which a class line can have in turning the tables.

The Trotskyist Organization advances a campaign for a common candidate with the Socialist Workers Party for mayor of Detroit as a means of giving a mass character to its fight for the Labor Party. However, given the present "turn" of the SWP, it is necessary to be prepared to launch our own campaign and candidates. Preparatory work must begin now, and as of the beginning of May, the party is on a campaign basis. The emphasis of the platform of the campaign will be for "bread and butter" demands of the workers and the Labor Party.

The Democratic Party and April 20

By FRED MICHAELS

Since our last issue, the union support for the April 20 demonstration has grown. There are five major unions that endorse this action including the International Association of Machinists (IAM), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union (ILWU). Together, these unions have over 500,000 members. In addition, in each city major locals have endorsed including UAW Local 1200 in Warren, Michigan and Steelworkers locals in California.

Three important questions have been raised in the last weeks of the mobilization.

1) It must be said that, in all likelihood, not one-tenth of these union members will appear in Washington, D.C. on April 20. Furthermore, while the unions are listed on the national endorsers roster, they are given equal billing with insignificant and in some cases nearly moribund organizations. Why?

2) In February there was some sentiment on the national coalition steering committee to cancel the demonstration altogether. The crisis was so severe that local representatives of city coalitions flew into Washington for a meeting to convince the wavering elements not to cancel. The demonstration was not cancelled after promises of more "help" and money for the Washington work were made. Why was the demonstration almost cancelled?

3) Finally, why is this demonstration not only endorsed by but being built in almost every city largely with the energies of members of working class political organizations — the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action, as well as the Trotskyist Organization, yet *none* of these organizations are listed as endorsers? The reason given at a meeting before the February crisis was "listing political organizations was considered divisive" by the national steering committee. Nearly all these parties sit on the national steering committee. Why did they agree to exclude themselves, or if they didn't why haven't they said so in their newspapers? (Never mind the fact that unity around specific objectives shows a clear *lack* of "divisiveness"!)

The answer to all these questions is the same: the national coalition, and most likely all local coalitions, are dominated by forces who either are directly tied to the Democratic Party or what leads to the same political conclusion, organizations that want to reach some kind of political agreement with the Democratic Party *at the expense of working class independence.*

The Democratic Party is a party of the capitalist class and it is a party in deep trouble. Its candidate and representative of the major-

ity of the party, was whipped soundly in the elections. The neo-liberal wing, composed of people like union-busting Arizona governor Babbitt, and the "left" wing composed of people like Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow Coalition, some union leaders, the Freeze movement people, etc., are vying for control of the Democratic Party. And it is this latter group that politically dominates the April 20 coalition.

To answer the questions we raised at the beginning, it is the left-wing of the Democratic Party that is dictating that union support is equal to every other organization, decreasing the significance of unions and the actual union turnout. It was forces that want to reach an agreement with the left-wing Democrats that wanted to back out because the demonstration would not be big enough to impress the Mondale section and right wing of the Democratic Party. And it is the left-wing of the Democratic Party that wants working class organizations excluded from endorsements in order to better be able to convince the defeated Mondale wing and the right wing to listen to them.

But wait a minute, an attentive reader might say. I thought you said that working class political organizations were largely responsible for organizing the demonstration. Do they support the Democratic Party?

No, not in that way. It is their policy of building a "non-exclusionary, non-partisan" movement that leads the movement to the position it is in today, subordinated to the left-wing of the Democratic Party. This "non-partisan" movement means a multi-class movement in which the working class is subordinated to the ruling class politicians.

Socialist Action in particular has developed this line, initially at the Cleveland Conference which launched the fight for April 20 and repeated in a recent issue of its paper, *Socialist Action* (February, 1985).

First, they use the argument that it worked in the anti-Vietnam war movement. But today is not the same as the early 60s. "Non-exclusionary" was the code word for a political fight in the movement to allow Communist Party members and Trotskyists to function openly without reprisals. It meant a *fight* with those forces closely tied to the Democratic Party. In fact, even as late as the march of 100,000 in New York City in 1967, not a single Democratic Party politician spoke at or even endorsed the march and rally! (*Out Now!*, Fred Halstead, p. 286).

In further defense of a "non-exclusionary" movement, Socialist Action draws a balance sheet of the recent elections. They say in essence: just because people voted for Reagan does not mean they support his position on Central America. Mondale's position was so

bad, they say, that the workers had no real choice. Thus, we need a massive and united display of force. But the point is, the Democratic Party is in a deep crisis. Do we build it back up or do we *continue* the efforts of the workers to break from it, as displayed in the half-hearted support to Mondale, and build working class independence?

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Down with the Nazis raised in Coalition

By FRED MICHAELS

Detroit — At the March 12 meeting of the Detroit Coalition for Peace, Jobs and Justice, the Trotskyist Organization put forward a motion that the slogan "Down with the Nazis" be added to the slogans for the March 30 rally building the demonstration in Washington and that the Coalition take appropriate steps. The motion was defeated, but about one-third of the militants present (15 people) voted with us.

The SS Action Group requested a permit to demonstrate in Detroit on April 20 at a time when all the organizations that would organize opposition to them would be at the march on Washington. It was an obvious attempt to avoid the near-beating they got four years ago in downtown Detroit when over 300 working class militants drove them away.

The Detroit City Council has apparently agreed in principle to allowing the Nazis to demonstrate.

City Council did this because four years ago their general counsel, George Crockett, recommended free speech for the Nazis.

Helen Meyers of the Socialist Workers Party opposed the motion to include "Down with the Nazis" saying it would "jeopardize" the coalition. Yet, not one person in the room defended the right of the Nazis to demonstrate. So who would disapprove?

The "silent partners" — the Detroit City Council, one of whom is scheduled to speak at the Coalition's rally on March 30; another who signed a letter supporting the April 20 march.

But if the Coalition for Peace, Jobs and Justice cannot support the workers and Blacks of Detroit against the Nazis (nearly every Black at the coalition meeting voted for the motion), how could the coalition possibly support the Detroit city workers or even teachers against Mayor Young and the City Council? And if this is not a question of "justice," that is, justice for the working class, what is?

Crime and the Class Struggle

By DAVID MARK

Once again the "crime problem" is splashed across the headlines of the newspapers. The authorities are crying for more police and prisons. The case of Bernhard Goetz has become a rallying point for proponents of "vigilante justice." The city of Detroit has become one of the first major cities to institute weapons shakedown searches in public schools. As many students are beginning to find out, rather than making the schools safe, the police simply treat everyone like criminals.

The authorities want us to believe that crime is caused by anti-social elements who have no respect for the system of law and order. The anti-crime campaign is really nothing more than a code word for anti-youth sentiment and racism. According to this philosophy, the cities (meaning the Black inner city) are the source of all crimes and the young generation is going to pot. The truth is that crime is directly caused by the capitalist system and in some cases, such as with drugs, it is "big business" and is practiced by the same politicians who are screaming their heads off for "justice." Crime is directly linked to the economic crisis of the capitalist system and the moral decadence of the capitalist class.

The first point is made perfectly clear by looking at the statistics offered by the government itself. (Though it should be remembered that the government always tries to make the crime problem look very bad when it is pushing for more police and more repressive laws.) According to the US Statistical Abstract (tables compiled by the FBI), serious crimes have increased almost 300% since 1960. Admitting for the moment that the rate of crime has actually gone up 300% since 1960, what do you suppose could account for this? Would it surprise anyone that a society that is less able to feed its people (there are 20 million going hungry in America), that is less able to provide for economic equality and opportunity would also have a higher crime rate?

The answer is, of course, no. And therefore it should be no surprise that the average unemployment rate for the years 1965-67 was about 3.5%, whereas, in the years 1982-83, the average unemployment rate was about 9.5%. (And we know that the government has underestimated unemployment in recent years.) In other words, the crime rate has increased at about the same rate as the rate of impoverishment of the working class over the last two and one half decades.

It should also be no surprise that the ghettos of many major American cities have infant mortality rates as high as some of the poorest countries in the world. (Sections of Detroit have infant mortality rates as high as Honduras.)



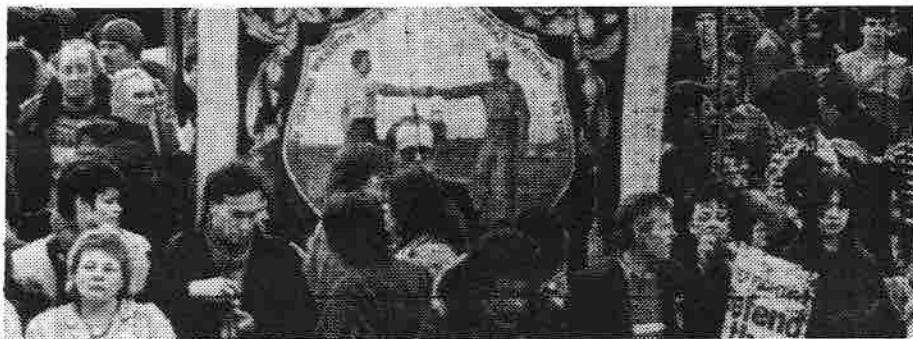
Ruling Class Morality

What do you suppose the ratio of prison inmates with poor and working class backgrounds is to those with families in the upper class? Ridiculous right? Everyone knows that if you have any money you don't go to prison.

And when sections of the working class are driven below the level that is required for subsistence for generations, a sub-working class is created that becomes a burden and a

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Global Conflict



London rally during miners' strike.

British Miners' Strike

"The past had challenged the present and lost. Old values of community and mutuality had made their forlorn stand against the new values of market economics. The once crack troops of organized labor, the Brigade of Guards of the working class, had made their last stand. The struggle was futile and thus tragic. The miners' strike was the ending, not the beginning, of something." (Peter Jenkins of *The Guardian*, London, "Thatcher I, Miners 0," quoted in *The New York Times*, March 18).

Such is the funeral dirge sung on the British coal miners' strike by its betrayers. The coal miners' strike was not "futile" nor "forlorn," it was *abandoned* by the would-be union leaders of the Trades Union Congress, and by the British Labor Party heads who place their faith in the "new values of market economics" instead of the working class and its striving for true communism.

The British Labor Party faces a real dilemma. The Thatcher government sees that workers are losing their belief in such a gutless party and is passing a bill so that unions will have to hold a secret ballot of its members to see if they want to continue to support contributions of the unions to the Labor Party political fund. The political activity of the Labor Party has always been financed (80%) by the unions, an unfavorable vote would end this financing and thus the Labor Party would die, yet another victory for the Thatcher government and its efforts to weaken and uproot the proletarian strongholds.

Thatcher, Reagan, the dictators in Latin America, the Stalinist bureaucrats of Poland and the USSR — all hoping for a tragic end to the struggle of the working class, yet they will face the dark armies of the proletariat again and again, those who draw the chief lesson of the miners' strike — "If we are to win, we must fight for power as a united class, we must defeat those who betray our struggle from within." The cry the miners' strike has sent out to the slaves everywhere is: "Workers of the World, Unite!" We hear you, our brothers and sisters — and it is only the beginning!

General Strike, South Africa

In South Africa, the situation continues to be highly explosive and dominated by the revolutionary struggle of Black workers against the Botha apartheid regime. On Monday, March 11, Black workers organized a general strike in Port Elizabeth, the country's large auto production center, against government price increases of bus fares, fuel and other consumer goods. Strike organizers and even the police admit the "Black weekend" Saturday and Sunday was 100% successful. Tens of thousands of Blacks stayed in their townships refusing to go to work in the white business sections.

100% unsuccessful is the quibbling going on in Washington between liberal and conservative lawmakers over the possibility of calling for sanctions against South Africa. The liberals who want sanctions (a dubious method of "helping" the South African masses anyway) against apartheid are totally dependent on what the conservatives do. "Even if sanctions legislation passed both houses, the liberals needed the conservatives to pressure the White House to sign the bill. Otherwise, Reagan could veto it with little fear of being overridden." (*Detroit Free Press*, March 19, 1985). Clearly, support for the South African Revolution in the US must be *independent* if it is to be effective. For example, a union boycott of all aid and assistance to the apartheid regime would be an effective way to help the Black workers of South Africa, not conciliatory pieces of legislation worth less than the paper they are printed on.

General Strike, Bolivia

La Paz — After 11 days, the general strike in Bolivia shows no signs of abating. The central demands of the strike are a sliding scale of wages ("index-linked wages," *New York Times*, March 19) stable food supplies and price controls. Union leaders scoffed at government offers to raise the minimum wage from \$20.70 to \$68.80 a month saying it would only mean more deductions and taxes. Instead they threatened that the unions would organize power cuts and an escalation of the general strike.

April 20 . . .

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The strongest proof of the inability to build a "non-exclusionary" movement is the *exclusion* of working class political organizations from the endorsers list. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition — part of the Democratic Party — can be announced, but not the working class political parties that have fought for April 20 and built it since day one.

In the current political situation, the Democratic Party will attempt to use April 20 to rebuild itself and, to the extent that the workers do mobilize, their energies will be dissipated unless those energies find a political expression.

Socialist Action states that in the 1960s the struggle in the anti-war movement was between the policy of "mass, peaceful, street demonstrations" and "electoral politics, civil disobedience and 'confrontation.'"

But these are all tactics. This is not a class analysis of the conflicts and therefore does not get to the root of the policies in the anti-war movement in the 60s.

The policy of the Socialist Workers Party in the 1960s (the leadership of Socialist Action were members at that time) was an opportunist policy. It did not struggle to build an independent working class movement.

The SWP allowed the political *direction* of the anti-war movement to be dictated by the Democratic Party left-wing. Not by taking their "orders," but by wanting political agreement with them *more* than an independent working class movement.

Thus, the most powerful proof of the *incorrect strategy* of the SWP was the fact that *no independent working class political expression* emerged in the US from those 15 years of mobilization. Instead, the working class forces, the newly awakened generation were by and large dissipated.

Building an independent working class movement with the forces mobilized for April 20 — the working class parties and the unions — this is the objective for this demonstration and others to come.

And, this independent working class policy is counterposed to turning the movement over to the Democrats — that is, the bourgeoisie — through any tactics whether they be demonstrations, electoral politics, civil disobedience, or "confrontation."

The choice is clear: a partisan movement for the *workers*, or a partisan movement for the *bourgeoisie*. Like every other fundamental question, it is a class question. Join with us in building April 20 as an expression of working class independence.

10 Years of Struggle for a Working Class Party Part 2

In the last issue of Truth (No. 197) we printed the first part of a speech by David Mark, our National Secretary, to a public meeting on the anniversary of the founding of the Trotskyist Organization ten years ago. Part 1 covered a period of our existence marked by vigorous struggle in the unions for the leadership of the American workers, particularly during the strike wave of 1976-1977. He pointed out the passivity and inaction of the would-be socialists leading the Socialist Workers Party and said what we were building with all our strength was a fighting party because a fighting party is what the working class needs. If you would like the first part of this speech, write to us at Truth, P.O. Box 32546, Detroit, MI 48232.

It was about that period and in fact it wasn't very long after we had joined the International League, that a freeze began to set in in the class struggle internationally. As everyone now knows there wasn't a revolution in Spain, the European Revolution was set back. And in fact what there was sort of brings us to the second period of struggle of the Trotskyist Organization.

There were a lot of illusions being plowed around about democracy, frankly, around 1976. The capitalist class all around the world was trying to put a brake on the revolution. By passing off this grand term which we all learn in school called "democracy" they tried to organize other parties that were ready to collaborate, the old Socialist and so-called "Euro-Communist" parties in particular, in putting a brake on a real revolutionary struggle.

That happened certainly in Portugal and Spain. They got a farce of democracy. A complete farce. In Spain they set up Juan Carlos to be king, a "constitutional" king, a "democratic" king and left the fascist apparatus in place. That was enough for some centrist parties. Fortunately we didn't do that. It wasn't an easy period for us, it certainly wasn't a very easy time for the working class as a whole. But we learned something.

Remember Carter and human rights. That was a part of this whole farce.

Jimmy Carter's human rights was fundamentally designed to put a human face on dictatorships in South America and to compromise the developing movement in Eastern Europe which later developed into the Polish Revolution.

One event that stuck out in my mind when I was going through this second period was a meeting at Wayne State University. A prominent dissident from the USSR, Leonid Plyusch, was invited to speak at this meeting. This meeting had a lot of famous people from Detroit — Mayor Young sent his greetings, Carl Levin, who was a city councilman then, not a US senator and many prominent lib-

erals from the city of Detroit. It was a big conference. And there were working class parties.

I bring up this kind of meeting because it typifies the kind of situation we got into in this period. It was a situation where you didn't really want to get up and speak to this audience because you don't really like talking to liberals and representatives of the capitalist parties. But you had to do it because there were the working class organizations right there together with capitalist organizations and it was our job to do something about it. And this was one of those meetings.

I looked through *Truth* and I found that one of our own comrades intervened in this meeting. He was addressing Plyusch and he said, "There is a contradiction between the struggle for democratic and political rights of the workers of Eastern Europe and the USSR, and the presence and support at this meeting of such representatives of the US ruling class such as Carl Levin ... Mayor Young ... who in their own way have contributed to repression against young workers and unemployed in Detroit."

This comrade of ours wasn't saying democratic rights stink. But he was saying look who fights for democratic rights. Not Mayor Young, not Carl Levin, because they are part of the capitalist class. Well, even a little more interesting is Plyusch's answer. Because he didn't just ignore us, he answered us.

His answer was "the world revolution is a very long, long way off." This man was a prominent dissident from the USSR and he should have been familiar with the working class struggle of the USSR and Eastern Europe. But he made a statement like that and not three years later there was a movement of ten million strong in Poland. A political revolution in Poland. Three years is not a "long, long way off."

Other parties completely lost their bearings in that period. For example, in Spain in this period, a period when all revolutionaries were relatively isolated, this class collaboration took a very strong form. The former fascist apparatus of Generalissimo Franco set up the constitutional monarchy of Juan Carlos — Franco's hand-picked successor. A democratic fascist king! The sister party of the American Socialist Workers Party signed a written agreement giving up all pretense to the fight for socialism. It was a betrayal of the Spanish working class.

So that was the second important period in the struggle of the Trotskyist Organization. And this period, our struggle against "human rights" as a cover for the dictatorships, armed us up until the recent period. For example, the whole campaign for a workers candidate for Mayor of Detroit was a real acquisition of

this period when we were relatively isolated. When we ran for mayor of the city of Detroit it was not an easy situation. Young still retained the aura of a progressive in many sectors of the Black community.

We didn't fool around and try to pretend that we weren't even there like some of the other parties of that time who ran "educational" campaigns. We had a real campaign for a workers candidate, offered a common alliance to other parties in Detroit and said "look, let's put forward a working class program." There were strikes of city workers in Detroit at that time. And we said, "look, this campaign can be a spark to win this strike."

"We want a fighting party and that is the difference between us and other political organizations claiming the support of the workers. The difference ... does not arise just because we declare for the final revolution and they do not, nor because we are willing to hold before the workers the final goal and all of these others are not, but because, upon the basis of the class struggle, on questions of bread and butter, on housing, on labor organization, wages and hours, they are afraid to fight, and the Workers Party says it will fight on every single one of these issues." (James P. Cannon, *Speeches for Socialism*).

We learned something in these difficult years and it helped us when the situation turned. Fortunately that period of intense class collaboration didn't last forever. And this brings us up to the present time. We are not now in a period where we are fighting against the stream. In fact there is a real upsurge internationally in the class struggle. There was the Iranian Revolution and the Nicaraguan Revolution — two of the worst dictators in the whole world were overthrown. These were two butchers who didn't even deserve to be called human beings. It was a real gain to get rid of them. And there was the Polish Revolution, which, even if it has been set back, hasn't fundamentally been defeated.

Well this brings us to one of the current most important lessons that we have learned. We learned that you have to take a side. And we learned that if you didn't take a side, you had no room to criticize anybody. You can't say, "I don't like your policy," if you are not on the barricades.

By the time that the Polish Revolution had arrived we had really fought this question through. And we realized that the situation all over the world between the classes had changed fundamentally. Now there was no

longer any guesswork about when the revolution might arrive, we knew that it was here and that it was developing. The question is who is going to win.

That is why Reagan was elected in this country. He was elected because the capitalist class wanted to attack the revolution. That is one of the things that you learn as a Marxist. Everything doesn't go as it appears on the surface. There is an upsurge internationally. But in 1980 when that revolution was in full swing on a world scale Ronald Reagan got elected in this country and leveled an unprecedented attack on the working class.

In this last period we really developed our fight for the party, for the working class party. What you see so much of today in *Truth* — the fight for the Labor Party, this is where we really conquered this question.

You read in *Truth* that there was an Emergency National Conference to end US intervention in Central America in Cleveland. The Trotskyist Organization went there with its resolution to win the whole Conference to a Labor Party and received 40 to 50 votes out of 600.

We are beginning to really see a reflection of our fight in the working class.

We are in a period now where we have a chance to really prepare the conditions under which you will be living and fighting and struggling tomorrow. We don't always get that chance, but we have the possibility and we can only do that through building a party, an organization of workers. Realizing that objective that we set out to realize when we founded the Trotskyist Organization.

These are the things that we would say to anybody else that is now looking for some kind of alternative. We would give you very simple advice. First we would tell you to find a fighting party. Find a party that is in the streets and in the demonstrations and is in the thick of the action. If that party ceases to become a fighting party find another one.

And the second thing is to always stay independent of the capitalist class. There are two classes in this society — don't ever forget that. The Democratic Party is a capitalist party. There are a lot of things that we can fight for that even liberals are fighting for, but you have to maintain your independence, your working class independence.

And the last thing, and that is the most important, that is what you have to do today and that is to take a side. Because there is a struggle going on right now. You have to be a part of it. You can't judge and you can't offer advice if you are not part of the struggle.

We are ready to join with anyone right now who wants to rebuild a fighting workers party in this country. We understood in 1975 when we founded the Trotskyist Organization that a program was really worth nothing without a class-conscious fighting party; without material cadre. Those of you in this room who aren't old hands, who are looking for a party, who are looking for some kind of alternative — you are going to be the ones who learn the lessons of the next generation.

Crime . . .

Continued from page 4

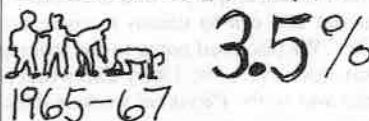
parasite on the rest of the working class. This is the first point to get straight — crime is a product of the capitalist system and its decay, and it is the working class as a whole that is the victim. After all, who feels the brunt of murders, rapes, and robberies the most — the affluent or the poor? The answer is obvious.

Does that mean we should glorify criminals? Not on your life. Because the fact is that crime, drugs and the rest are all an attack on the working class and its ability to fight back!

But while the capitalist class decries the loss of morals of the youth, it glorifies the worst criminals, the most murderous lot of humanity every day. The government spends literally billions of dollars to prop up dictators like Marcos and Pinochet. It props up the racist apartheid regime of South Africa. It literally bankrolls butchers. Is this the moral example that they would have today's youth follow?

The issue of "crime" is also being used to level an attack on working people in the US. This is made clear by two recent cases. One, Bernhard Goetz, a rich white and admitted racist who shot four Black youth point blank and became a hero of the press and the authorities. The other, Karen Norman in Detroit, a young Black woman who was raped in her home, defended herself and in the process killed her attacker. She was put on trial for murder. (Her case must now be tried again after the jury was unable to reach a verdict.)

UNEMPLOYMENT



3.5%



9.5%

But crime is not the cause of the attack on the rights of Blacks and other oppressed sectors of the population — it is the expression of it. Crime is part of the miserable condition that Blacks and working people in general are forced to live in under the decline of the capitalist system.

The anti-crime crusade is being used to strengthen the repressive nature of the capitalist government. More prisons and more police have not, will not, and in the last analysis are not intended to accomplish any more security for the working class. The anti-crime campaign is being used to impose anti-working class solutions.

What are these solutions? They fall into two categories — change the laws to give more

repressive power to the state, and increase the police powers of the state by hiring more police, public and private, an building more prisons. This process has in fact been going on for more than twenty years, and as we have seen it has not touched the crime rate according to the government's own statistics. Moreover, the new laws have been used to attack the working class in other ways. It is much more difficult to go on strike and it is practically impossible to engage in mass picketing without a confrontation with the police. The right of youth and working people to demonstrate has been curtailed sharply, and the right of working class organizations to distribute their press has become vastly more difficult.

And what is going to happen when youth begin organizing against the real cause of crime — the system. If they demonstrate against the unemployment or decry the intervention of the US in Central America, then they will have to face these same police — just as the youth of the 60's did.

Racist Killers: What to do?



Bernhard Goetz

In *Truth* No. 196, we called for the death penalty for racist killers like Goetz. We did so because we think racist killers represent a serious danger to the lives and freedom of working class people, especially Blacks and their supporters, and must be eliminated.

But the only way to do this is to organize defense guards, arm them, and provide military training for working class youth. And it is necessary to make a fight for this today, especially in the unions.

We have concluded that calling for the death penalty is not a good idea because it suggests that we should pressure the capitalist state to carry out this task. This is a mistake. Workers must rely on their own forces. They must oppose the capitalist state and its use of the death penalty. It uses the death penalty only against the working class and it cannot do otherwise.

M.C.

Chicago Women's Day Conference

By SUE FROSCHHEISER

International Women's Day 1985: Which Way Forward for Women? This was the theme for the conference held here in Chicago at Roosevelt University on March 9.

Over 250 people participated in the day-long event. The morning started off with a panel discussion with speakers from Puerto Rico, El Salvador, and the ANC (African National Congress - women's section) mixed in with speakers from VOICE (Victims of Incest Can Emerge) and from WROC (Women Organize for Reproductive Rights Coalition).

Workshops were set up for the afternoon to continue the discussions from the panel discussions, and to find concrete ways to oppose attacks on women. One popular discussion was on the bombing of abortion clinics.

There were nine different workshops. One of the workshops the Trotskyist Organization and several other working class militants prepared was on women in the labor movement, both working and unemployed. Barbara Putnam, a member of the Trotskyist Organization and Local 2071 of the UAW/Staff Association at Wayne State University in Detroit was the main speaker. Shelia Silverstein, another speaker from Jobs or Income Now (JOIN) was unable to attend but her report was read at the workshop.

Barbara Putnam began by pointing out that 50% of all women work and that the relative independence of mind and action that results from having one's own income and from working in common with many others undermines the very basis of capitalist society, the nuclear family. Large and increasing numbers of women in the workforce account for the escalating attacks on women in recent years, attacks designed to roll back the wheels of history and send women scurrying back to the home and domestic servitude. It accounts for the vicious anti-abortion movement, the slanders against working women that would have them believe their children will be ruined if they work.

Secondly, she said that only 13% of all women workers are organized into unions underlining the bankruptcy of the current union officials, but also pointing to a central task for working class militants — to organize the unorganized!

A lively discussion broke out at this point over how best to fight in the unions. One militant from a union said she had proposed a child care center at her workplace but was frustrated by the local bureaucrats. Barbara responded by saying that she would defend the workers demand for a daycare center if they brought it up and would do all possible to raise their level of consciousness and expand the struggle, but that what we, as working class militants should focus on is building a united front against Reagan and the bosses, against concessions, the war and plant closures.

She said the Playskool workers should think about what will really save their jobs in face of the possibility of closure next November. In Detroit when Stroh's closed its brewery and threw hundreds of workers in the streets, she said the Trotskyist Organization proposed a united fight in the unions to keep it open and an occupation of the brewery by the workers. When an individual employer fears our organized strength, when he sees he could lose everything, then we will get our childcare center for keeps.

A resolution came out of the workshop signed by seven women who attended. It read: "We in the Women in the Labor Movement: Working and Unemployed Workshop want to organize union support in building the April 20 march in Washington and build it as a working class march against the war in Central America. We call on other working men and women, employed and unemployed to organize and call to unions to come out April 20." We discussed going to the striking Pan Am workers, to the Libby Can workers on strike and to the Playskool workers (60% women) as a way to develop the mobilization.

Later in the day two working women came to our table from the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU). They explained that they found the workshop they attended on Puerto Rican political prisoners to be "unfulfilling." They found an issue of *Truth* that said "Class Unity Against Reagan" and said *that* is what should be going on. One of them said that they did not think workers would really fight for small things anymore, that they will "only fight for big things or not at all."

It was interesting to us that they had both voted for Harold Washington but were quickly disillusioned with the way he handled

the teachers strike after he took office and the recent strike. Both of them immediately subscribed to *Truth* and said they wanted to help organize and build April 20 in their union.

In all we gained 7 new subscribers and sold 15 copies of our paper. We learned that only a small (but important) minority at the Conference were interested in an active struggle to mobilize the working class against Reagan as the way to break the oppression of women. In spite of the fact that a number of organizations claiming to be socialist built the Conference, it had the predominant characteristic of being a forum for radical feminists to rehash the oppression of women without putting forward a concrete perspective. The resolution from the workshop on working women was the only resolution on what to do coming out of the entire Conference.

Youth Wage Cut

The Reagan administration has mounted an all-out campaign to lower the minimum wage for teenagers (16 to 19 years) from \$3.35 an hour to \$2.50 an hour. Black mayors and ministers are coming around to Reagan's point of view on this question. Black Mayor, Tom Bradley of Los Angeles has vowed to make his city a pilot site for the program.

In 1983 and 1984 Congress took no action on similar anti-worker legislation from Reagan because of vigorous opposition from Black legislators and the unions. Now an about face is taking place because many Black leaders' (falsely) believe that Reagan is too strong to fight and has a mandate from the American people. Jesse Jackson seems to be hedging his bets on the question and says, "Getting fast food jobs at subminimum wages is not any vision of the future for these youth" but offers no meaningful form of resistance in deeds.

Similarly, the unions oppose the change of minimum wage but are not doing anything to stop it from happening. Real opposition must come from the union ranks, from Black youth, from working class parties and organizations in a united mobilization against Reagan to uphold and raise the standard of living of the working class.

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