

# 35,000 Peace Activists March to Stop Reagan

By Steve Cole

Despite a persistent rain, 35,000 peace activists from throughout the Midwest marched down the Magnificent Mile and rallied in Grant Park October 13 sending the nation a determined message: Ronald Reagan presents a danger to the human race, and has to be replaced November 6.

Signs, banners, and chants of contingents, from as far away as Minneapolis, St. Louis, and Ohio; and speaker after speaker at the Rally carried the three main themes of the march and rally—Nuclear Freeze Now, Meet Human Needs, and No More Vietnams.

The marchers spanned the generations and included toddlers pushed in strollers by their parents, high school and university students, veterans of several wars and veterans of countless peace marches. Unlike Chicago anti-war marches and rallies of the late sixties, this rally was welcomed to Chicago by Mayor Harold Washington.

In fact it was the Mayor who set the tone, for the several distinguished peace movement leaders who followed, including Randall Forestberg, founder of the Nuclear Freeze Movement; Dr. Helen Caldicott of the Physicians for Social Responsibility; Guadalupe Gonzalez, representing the Farubundo Marti Liberation Front of El Salvador; Ron Kovic, of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War; and Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"Ronald Reagan would have us believe there is no choice but to surrender or fight a nuclear war," said the Mayor, "This is arrogance and dangerous nonsense."

Citing statistics of the Chicago Peace Council, Mayor Washington presented the cost of the arms race in terms relevant to the cities. "The \$1 billion, 382 million it costs for one Trident Submarine would fund 80 percent of the cost of operating the public school system (in Chicago) for one year. One B-1 bomber, costing \$530 million, would pay the entire budget of the Chicago Transit Authority.

Randall Forestberg, founder of the Nuclear Freeze Movement, echoed the Mayor's call to "Send the California cowboy packing." Forestberg had no trouble answering the media claim that the nuclear freeze movement had peaked in 1982 and 1983, "Yes, we've been quiet in 1984, quietly organizing — leafletting, canvassing, register-



Over 35,000 people marched October 13 to protest Reagan's policies of promoting war.

ing people to vote. We will turn out the biggest vote yet for peace, freedom, justice and survival."

Survival of the human race, was also the message of the world reknown Australian pediatrician, Dr. Helen Caldicott, who now devotes all of her life to the peace movement. Dr. Caldicott chillingly told the thousands assembled at Grant Park of her meeting with Reagan. "He doesn't understand what he is doing. He told me that submarine missiles didn't carry nuclear weapons, but 27 per cent of our arsenal is cruise missiles."

Beckoning the peace activists not to let up until Reagan is defeated, Dr. Caldicott read a telegram from Walter Mondale, committing his administration to the program of the nuclear freeze, including a challenge to the Soviet Union for a freeze on space weapons and a comprehensive test ban treaty of all nuclear weapons.

Guadalupe Gonzalez said that Vice-President Bush's "slip of the tongue" reference in last week's debate to the use of nuclear weapons in the context of Central America reminded her that the U.S. was the first country to use nuclear weapons. "Since World War II, there have been 102 wars, all in the Third World. It is possible a nuclear war will not effect either the United States or the Soviet Union first, but the Third World. It could come from an escalation of a conventional war."

With the next two speakers, the spirit of the rally rose to a crescendo. Rev. Jesse Jackson covered the rainbow coalition issues; civil rights, human rights, women's rights, peace. His proclamation that the next president should immediately institute "a one-year moratorium of the production and deployment of nuclear weapons — whether the



otherside agrees or not," received a thunderous ovation.

Jackson called on the peace movement to "rise above racism, and to rise above sexism," in order to have the "moral authority" to challenge apartheid in South Africa, U.S. intervention in Central America, or poverty in the U.S.

"By the end of the year, 41 million people in the United States will be living in poverty, 24 million white. The poor are mostly white and we have to learn to reach out. The ERA is not a woman's issue. It's a family issue when 70 percent of all households in poverty are headed by women," he said.

Following Jackson, Ron Kovic, the disabled Vietnam Veteran and author of "Born on the Fourth of July," moved people perhaps as no other speaker did. "Twenty years ago, [when he joined the Marines] I was lied to by the government. I have given to my country most of my body, but today I stand taller than I ever have. None of the young men who have been born since I joined the marines should have to fight another Vietnam War. There should be no monument in Washington for Nicaragua or El Salvador."