

Young Communists, RSU rally against contra aid

By ERIN ABBEY
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Chants of "money for tuition and not for ammunition" sounded yesterday on the steps of the Student Union Building as about 150 students rallied against sending aid to Nicaraguan rebel forces.

The rally was sponsored by the Young Communist League, the Radical Student Union, Central America Solidarity Association, Faculty and Staff for Peace in Central America Students for Jackson.

Jason Rabinowitz, the master of ceremonies for the rally, said the rally was to demonstrate student opinion before Congress votes on the issue tomorrow and Thursday.

Congress will vote on giving the contras 36.25 million dollars in economic aid, 3.6 million of which wouldn't be given as military aid until March and would depend upon the success of the Central American Peace Plan.

"Two thirds of the American people oppose contra aid," Rabinowitz said. "We believe that even more students oppose it."

The onlookers could sign cards to support a "no" vote in Congress. The ralliers also encouraged calling representatives in Congress, especially those in states that have representatives that are undecided.

Dawn Hamel, who went to Nicaragua with a group from the New Institute of Central America between Jan. 9 and 30, said she had seen the poverty, hardship and United States economic blockade in Nicaragua.

"The Contras are killing non-military targets. Contra aid will destroy any chance for peace," Hamel said.

Judy Lieberman, who also visited Nicaragua, said the people she lived with want the truth told that Nicaragua wants peace. Their slogan, she said, is "free country or death."

"It is a true participatory democracy," Lieberman said, adding that they had free elections in 1984 and that 11 different political parties were represented in the

government according to the number of votes received.

"That's communist propaganda," said Michael D. Ross, a member of the Board of Governors. "There's no democracy in there. I hope the student body hears the other side of it tomorrow at our rally."

He said churches have been burnt, people have lost the right to pray, and newspapers have been eliminated.

At the rally slogans such as "1,2,3,4 money for school and not for war" were shouted and counter demonstrators called "Commee, Commee."

Steve Dupilisa, who spent a year painting murals in Nicaragua, said, "I saw the terror and destruction by the contra's. Two of my friends are no longer alive. This is Reagan's idea of justice and democracy."

He asked when Reagan would be prepared to send Americans in uniforms.

Claudia Coolidge, who recently returned from Nicaragua, said she tried to meet with telecommunication workers who wanted to form a union but were prohibited by America's policy in Nicaragua.

"The military would not allow us to go in, so the workers came out," she said. A worker was reaching for her, she said, because a sniper was aiming at him from the roof of the building.

"These contras are the terrorists we are funding for democracy. This is not an isolated incident," she said.

Ross said he does not believe the issue is about people dying. "Freedom fighters are dying too. Does America support a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship?" he asked.

Rabinowitz said, "I think Nicaraguan society can build a very good society for its people." He said a good society is one that provides for its people through health care, education, housing and jobs.

Rabinowitz announced at the rally that Rep. Silvio Conte (R) has said that he will vote against giving the contra's aid.

"We want this money spent on programs in the US," Rabinowitz said, "starting with students and education and then going on to jobs."



Collegian photo by Nick Sokoloff

OOOOH YEAH! — Member of the Republican Club pushes past Joella Costella at an anti-contra aid rally yesterday on the steps of the Student Union Building.

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