

# OBREROS EN MARCHA

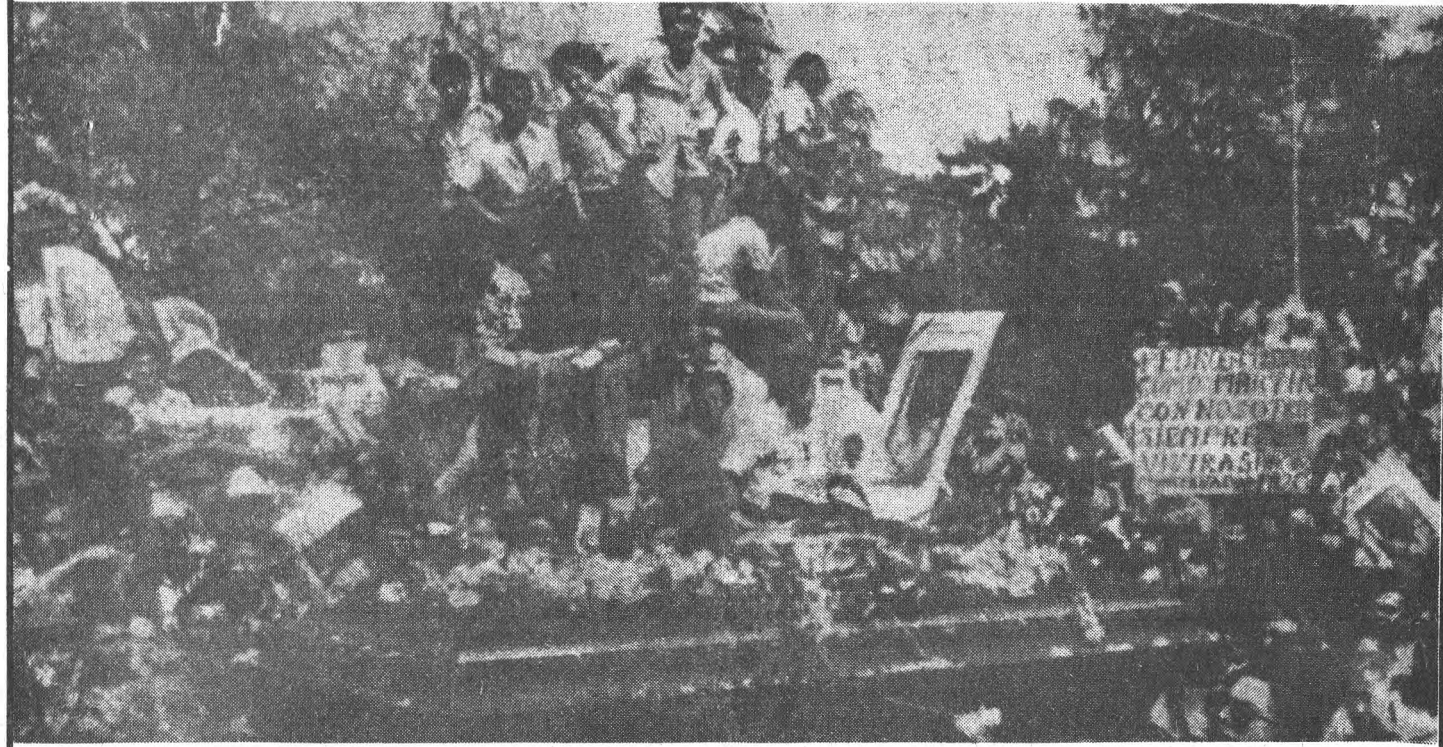
POLITICAL ORGAN OF EL COMITE M.I.N.P.

VOL. 3 NUM. 2

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Nicaragua:

## FIRST GENERAL STRIKE SHAKES COUNTRY pg.8



Thousands demonstrate at funeral of assassinated editor of the newspaper La Prensa, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro.

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# EDITORIAL

## O.E.M. : A Year of Progress

1978 marks the beginning of the 4th year of publication of our political organ, Obreros En Marcha (OEM). Our organization began to publish OEM during the period that preceded the transformation of El Comité, a local community organization with roots among the Puerto Rican national minority community, into El Comité-M.I.N.P. (Puerto Rican National Left Movement), a Marxist-Leninist formation whose fundamental objective is to contribute to the overthrow of U.S. imperialism and the establishment of a socialist society. This transformation was completed at our Formative Assembly in January 1975. At that Assembly, the organization agreed upon its central tasks for the next period. Among those tasks, the development of OEM was high on the list of priorities.

### WEAKNESSES IN THE FIRST YEARS

A year ago we evaluated OEM's first two years and posed that the paper reflected the limited ideological, political and organizational development of El Comité-M.I.N.P. since its Formative Assembly. Despite its limitations, however, the paper attempted to avoid two errors we felt were common among the revolutionary left. On the one hand, we struggled against becoming a "Leftist" paper, interested only in abstract ideological questions, ignoring the concrete problems of the masses. On the other hand, we tried to avoid the opposite error of presenting news without analysis. This perspective reflects a very paternalistic attitude toward the working class and oppressed minorities by giving them information but not a scientific analysis, thereby leaving them unequipped to understand and transform their reality.

While we were aware of and struggled against both these errors, we were not always successful. In particular, articles often remained at the level of generalities, instead of providing scientific analysis of concrete situations. This was due to our limited ideological consolidation. In addition, we were limited by a lack of technical skills and experience, resulting from the class composition of our organization, predominantly working class Puerto Ricans. This negatively affected the form of OEM.

### QUALITATIVE CHANGES

Looking at our publication today, one year since our first evaluation, we can see that the paper has developed qualitatively, both in its form and content. This positive development is based fundamentally on the ideological consolidation over a year's time of our cadres and our organization. Through our scientific study of the foundation of Marxism-Leninism—dialectical materialism—we have developed a solid understanding of the method of analysis that we must master in order to transform society. This method uses the general laws of the motion of matter (which explain why and how things change) to evaluate and analyze specific situations. Based on this firm understanding—which we must have if we are to develop as dialectical materialist cadre—our organization has begun its study of the other components of Marxism-Leninism, i.e. historical

materialism and political economy.

This is not to say that we have no weaknesses in this area, or that we have total mastery of the laws of dialectical materialism. But we have taken significant steps as a developing Marxist-Leninist organization.

Within OEM, this growth reflects itself by the level of analysis and the range of issues addressed in its pages. This has included struggles for democratic rights (services, housing, education, affirmative action); solidarity work, in particular around Puerto Rico and Latin America; the struggle against racism, the principal division within the working class, etc.

In general, our articles provide a consistent scientific analysis of the many issues confronting the working class and oppressed masses, nationally and internationally. But it is in the area of concrete alternatives that our paper still reflects weaknesses. Often articles are concluded by generalities that do not provide people a concrete direction in which to move forward in the immediate future.

We are inconsistent in our development of alternatives: our present inability results from weaknesses in our ideological formation. However, as our cadre deepen their understanding of the fundamentals of Marxism and mature politically through social practice, our paper will more accurately address the concrete tasks to be taken up.

Technically OEM has improved substantially. The paper is laid out more creatively and systematically. More than before, graphics and photographs add to the political content of the articles, rather than just fill up space. This has contributed to the propagandistic effectiveness of OEM. On the other hand, although many of our cadre are Latin, the Spanish section of OEM continues to manifest serious weaknesses. Often translations are literal, word for word from the English. This often means that the content of the articles suffer. The fact that we do not have command of the language weakens our ability to translate. This ability is a skill based on the sound grasp of a language and not merely on the ability to speak that language. Like all skills, however, it can be learned through scientific study.

Many of our cadres—particularly those that are Latin—have not taken the study of Spanish seriously. We must begin to rectify this error. Those of our cadre presently in high schools and universities must begin to acquire an understanding and knowledge of Spanish as well as improve their command of the English language. Moreover, a similar process must be generated among the cadre that are not students so that we can improve our propaganda work among the masses.

We would like to express our gratitude to the many friends and comrades that have sent to us criticisms and comments. Those comments and criticisms have helped us to address our shortcomings. The process of developing dialectical-materialist cadre, building an organization, and raising the level of consciousness of the working class are difficult tasks. We stand committed, with the aid of our friends and comrades that study our publication, to continue to overcome our shortcomings and make our propaganda organ a more effective instrument of ideological struggle.

## U.M.W. Rank And File Rejects Sellout

The longest strike in the history of the United Mine Workers (UMW) continues as the coal operators and the government step up their efforts to destroy the growing militancy of the union's rank and file.

The Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA), representing the mine owners, together with government officials and the media, have waged a persistent campaign to discredit the workers and undermine their demands. The coal operators have engaged armed guards, along with local police forces, at pickets and non-union mines. Workers have been arrested in Alabama and West Virginia where they were attempting to shut down non-union mines and draw support from unorganized workers. As of February 1st, the BCOA stopped pension checks to over 80,000 retired miners, claiming that since no coal was produced in January, they couldn't afford to pay the pensions. Yet each year, these companies make millions of dollars in profits through the exploitation of the miners' labor.

State governments, particularly in Indiana and West Virginia, have announced "energy emergencies." They have threatened to close down schools and plants, thereby ejecting thousands of workers from their jobs. Acting in the interests of the mine owners, the government has ignored the refusal of the BCOA to meet the legitimate demands of the miners. Government propaganda portrays

the miners as greedy and stubborn, unconcerned about the "welfare of citizens."

State officials and federal mediators have appealed to the rank and file to sign a contract which would retract basic gains won previously (particularly in the area of health and retirement benefits); more importantly, however, they are pushing for a contract that would seriously weaken the union by imposing severe penalties for wildcat strikes—the union's strongest weapon against companies and union leadership who seek to increase production and profits by denying workers their right to job benefits and safe working conditions.

But the attacks and divisive tactics of the coal operators and the government have thus far failed. Retired miners have continued to support the strike. Roving pickets of rank and file miners still comb the mine sites, keeping out scabs and insuring that the mines remain shut.

The conciliatory role of the union leadership has been an even greater danger to the miners than the violence of the BCOA. The union leadership opposed the strike from its beginnings. In December, they attempted to implement a sellout agreement, which they were forced to pull back from due to swift and angry opposition from the rank and file. Since then, union negotiators (headed by UMW president Arnold Miller) have been forced to take a firmer position in refusing

the companies' demands to impose penalties for participation in wildcat strikes and to severely limit health benefits.

Even so, a tentative agreement was worked out in February by Miller and the BCOA which basically betrays the interests of the



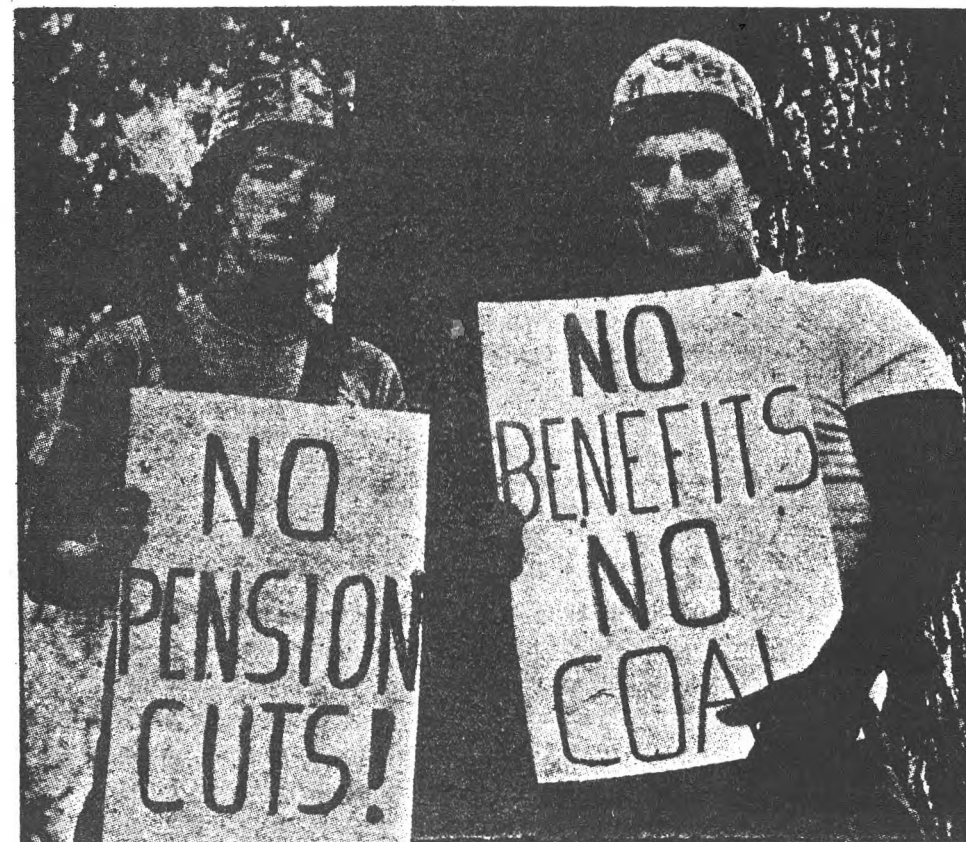
UMW president Arnold Miller

miners. On the crucial issue of wildcats, Miller agreed to the policy that a worker could be fired if he were suspended three times for "unauthorized absentees" (i.e., when out on a strike). The miners reacted quickly to the agreement. As Obreros En Marcha goes to press, already 52 out of the 53 unions in Ohio and West Virginia have voted "no" to the sellout and miners angrily and militantly picketed union headquarters in Washington, shouting that the contract must be rejected. Several days later, the 39-member bargaining council of the UMW—which has to approve the contract before it goes to the entire membership for final ratification—resoundingly voted down the contract by a vote of 33 to 6.

Although President Carter has yet to impose the Taft-Hartley law (which says that workers have to return to work for 80 days while negotiations go on), government officials are talking about bringing in the National Guard to reopen the mines. This raises the possibility of a very serious confrontation for the striking miners.

As we posed in our last edition of Obreros En Marcha, we have an essential responsibility to educate workers, students, and all progressive forces about the critical nature of the strike and its implication for workers everywhere, particularly in the struggles to build rank and file movements within unions. Already several progressive trade unions, community groups and students have begun to give support to the strike by passing resolutions and holding fundraising activities. We must help to broaden the base of support for the miners. This becomes particularly crucial at this time as the government gears up its military units to crush the strike by force.

IN UNITY THERE IS STRENGTH  
IN THE WORKER LIES THE POWER



# OBREROS EN MARCHA

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## LONG ISLAND

NATIVE AMERICAN CONFRONTS  
RACIST SCHOOL SYSTEM

In September 1975, a Native American Blackfoot woman, Jeanne Baum, decided to withdraw her thirteen year old daughter, Siba, from her seventh grade class at Seldon Junior High School, in Seldon, Long Island. This action was the culmination of Jeanne Baum's experiences in fighting the institutionalized racism in her daughter's school. The case of Jeanne and Siba Baum began when Siba wrote a report for her English class on the book *Geronimo*. She wrote:

"Geronimo, as other Indians, is seen as a bloodthirsty savage. He and his people were trying to defend their lands and their way of life from invaders, who are pictured as heroes, settlers and explorers. When the Indians fought back, he was the villain. And it still goes on now."

Siba's English teacher, Carol Duarte, returned the report with her written comments: "I agree with your feelings of anger. However, I have an uncle who is a Wamponoag Indian, and his point of view in the Indians got what they deserved." When Siba asked for an explanation, the teacher continued, "some Indians are lazy" and "there are some Indians who should be ashamed of themselves"; she stated further that Siba had a "right to be proud" because her mother "is not on a reservation."

As a result of the teacher's overtly racist remarks, Jeanne Baum immediately attempted to get an apology from the school, but to no avail.

Their attitude was that such comments were not racist and that the teacher was merely "playing devil's advocate" for the purposes of educating. At one of the many meetings with the administration, agreement was finally reached that Jeanne Baum would choose a Native American to address the class and give the children a true picture of American Indians in this country and their history. But four months later, when no action had been taken either to acknowledge or correct the racist remarks, Jeanne Baum

withdrew Siba from the junior high school.

The school district brought a law suit against her, charging that she "without just cause or valid reason, withheld her child" from school. Family Court Judge Arthur J. Abrams ruled that the teacher's remarks did not constitute racism and that unless Jeanne returned her daughter to school, she would lose custody of her child. Jeanne Baum was forced to send Siba into hiding for fear of her safety. The court's ruling accused Jeanne of being an unfit mother because she kept her daughter out of school.

## INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

The case of Jeanne Baum is only one of many examples of the institutionalized racism that pervades the educational system in the U.S. The racism is reflected not only by the comments of the teacher, but also by the reaction of the school administration and the Board of Education which legitimize such comments by allowing them to go unchallenged. The implications of the case go beyond the actual events that took place in the classroom. The case represents the struggle of a people to regain their national and cultural heritage. It also represents a struggle for the right of parents to have a voice in determining their children's education.

Racism is an institution of capitalist society that divides people from each other, and places millions of people—both in the U.S. and throughout the world—in a position of exploitation and oppression. Racism is perpetuated through a system of ideas that constitutes the education process in this country. By dividing the masses of people, in particular the working class, racism provides one of the conditions necessary for the continuation of the present exploitative social system.

Our organization, El Comité-M.I.N.P., has participated in the support generated around Jeanne's case in Long Island. We also have a long history of participation in the struggles of Hispanic parents throughout Long Island for bilingual/bicultural education. These two struggles are different aspects of the same issue: the struggle for equal and quality education. Within the struggle for equal and quality education, we must combat all forms of racism as they manifest themselves.

We call on all truly concerned individuals to support the right of children to a non-racist education and the right of parents to protect their children from racist education.

## SUPPORT

Jeanne Baum's conviction of child neglect was affirmed in court and her appeal denied by the Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court. She has applied to appeal her case before a higher court, but they can refuse to hear the suit. We urge you to write and demand that Jeanne Baum's conviction be overturned: N.Y. State Court of Appeals, Albany, New York.

STOP RACIST SCHOOLS  
SUPPORT EQUAL AND QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL  
THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED



Jeanne Baum welcomed by supporters February 5.

## Puerto Rico Informa

GOVERNMENT PLOTS  
AGAINST LABOR MOVEMENT

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

We welcome the birth of *Pensamiento Critico*, a new theoretical journal in Puerto Rico. P.C. proposes to fill the theoretical vacuum that exists within the Puerto Rican National Liberation Movement. It is a journal that aims to provide a forum for debate in an atmosphere of comradely struggle, devoid of personal attacks. In this manner, it hopes to contribute towards the unification of the revolutionary forces.

The journal is published by a group of dedicated revolutionaries with a history of involvement in different political organizations, such as the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, The Puerto Rican Independence Party and El Comité-MINP. The editor of P.C. is Angel Agosto, a former member of the Political Commission of the PSP.

The first edition of P.C. was published last month. Its first issue shows that the journal will be characterized by quality in both its content and form as well as ideological integrity.

The contributions that P.C. could make are not limited to the Revolutionary process in Puerto Rico. It could also contribute towards deepening the knowledge and understanding of Puerto Rican reality of progressive and revolutionary forces in this country—particularly those engaged in solidarity work with Puerto Rico. For that reason, until a team can be organized to translate the entire publication, OEM will translate the most important articles of P.C. for the benefit of our readers. We urge all revolutionary and progressive forces in this country to subscribe to P.C. You may get copies of P.C. through El Comité-MINP.

The following is an article from P.C.

The recent events in Puerto Rico are signaling the emergence of a political situation that transcends in importance the immediate effects of the strikes by the electrical (UTIER) and metropolitan bus workers (TUAMA). The regime seems to have chosen this time to strike out at the most conscious sectors of the worker's movement, including members of the left.

Several factors demonstrate this. The strike of the Water Resources Authority (AFF) by the electrical workers was provoked by the colonial administration. It was even confirmed by the president of the committee chosen by the governor himself to study the strike and positions of the UTIER and the AFF that this corporation was financially capable of meeting the salary demands of the workers.

Romero Barcelo's administration has taken advantage of the occasion to incite hysteria in some of the popular sectors in the country with the clear objective of molding public opinion in support of his repressive plans against the workers' movement. In order to back up this scheme attempts have been made to associate some of the honest union leadership with the gangsters and criminals. (See P.R. update, pp. 6-7. Ed.) Coupled with this, the newspapers, radio, and television have all fully covered Romero Barcelo's "brigadier" actions in his meetings with the top police officials. And so by the 25th day of the AFF

strike, the governor was personally leading the attack of the bosses.

Meanwhile the administration tried to establish communication links with the Popular Democratic Party (PPD) who, alongside the main party in power, the New Progressive Party (PNP), controls some areas of governments. As a matter of fact, when this issue was going to press it was revealed that a meeting between the superintendent of police, Torres Gonzales, and the president of the PPD, Hernandez Colon, had taken place somewhere in the capital. It is logical that Barcelo would use the superintendent for this purpose since he was the only executive functionary of the PNP administration who was totally endorsed by the PPD. Was this perhaps the concretization of the united anti-communist front so heartily called for by Popular senator Johnny Maldonado?

With this move the party differences were transcended as the bourgeoisie began to build a homogenous block against the workers' movement.

All of this has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not Romero Barcelo has fallen victim to a state of anti-communist paranoia and his right-wing obsessions have blinded him to the point of losing his senses. On the contrary, the governor and his administration seem to be complying with a carefully elaborated master plan. And in reality, the colonial administration is calmly acting out, step by step, its own part of the plan.

"Let the people themselves pressure us enough so that we may crack down on the workers' movement, while the workers' movement wears itself down in defensive activity" seems to be the reasoning which is inspiring the escalation of the plan.

In terms of the AFF strike, hysteria within certain sectors of the population has been stimulated by the government while at the same time some sectors of the press have been efficiently playing their part in discrediting the leadership of the workers.

Then, step by step, the administration will begin to substitute scabs for the strikers. This has already been done in part by using the UITICE (another union in the AFF, composed mainly of repair workers. Their leadership is conciliatory, opposes the UTIER strike and has already reached a contract agreement with the AFF.--Ed.) This will of course necessitate more violent confrontations and at the precise moment—yet another step in the plan—there will be nothing to do but to mobilize the national guard! And of course before this, the press, radio and television will all have been pushing the supposed "popular demand" for giving the workers the punishment they deserve.

On the other hand, the UTIER has remained consolidated in this struggle. This was clearly seen during the regional assemblies held right before the end of the first month of the strike in which the workers unanimously reaffirmed their support for the strike and its leadership.

The enemy's plans could not be otherwise. The workers' movement represents a threat to the imperialist interests here. Many of the global imperialist interests coincide with the specific political objectives of PNP, particularly their annexationist projections.

Although the workers' movement is somewhat divided, and therefore incapable of fully expressing its power, it nonetheless does constitute an ever-growing thorn in the



side of the regime. Furthermore, situations have arisen which were not foreseen by the imperialist strategists, such as the execution of an individual (Alan H. Randall) considered to be a top level functionary in the yankee intelligence service; the development of new working class leaders of the caliber of Luis Lausell; the new inter-trade union attempts with joint participation of the national leaders, the intermediate levels and the base of many unions; and finally, the fact that some unions have solidly closed ranks in defense of their base and their organizational integrity—as in the case of the Teamsters, an example of valor and firm commitment.

The regime is very clear regarding the weight Puerto Rico carries within the plans of the imperialists. If the Caribbean is a strategic area for imperialism, then within this strategy Puerto Rico is of key importance politically, militarily and economically.

And within the deficit in the balance of payments resulting from the increasing costs of importing oil, the factors of unilateral control and exploitation of our resources are of prime importance. Just this past January, the governor himself revealed that in the three inland areas studied, resources amounted to at least 4 billion barrels of oil valued at approximately 50 billion dollars.

These are the conditions that have produced the principal points of unity between the political, economic and military interests of imperialism and the particular political interests of the PNP. For both—although we know that imperialism has other alternatives as well—statehood is an objective. Some of the most influential imperialist and colonial strategists understand that if Puerto Rico becomes a state they will definitely and permanently control the island with all its numerous resources.

To attain this, it is crucial for the bourgeoisie to weaken and then control our organizations of struggle. Today the growing consciousness of our workers' movement is an obstacle to this attack.

The present situation demands the unity of the most militant sectors of the working class over any and all sectarianism. This is the least that the historical moment demands of us in order to steel ourselves for the necessary counter-offensive.



Luis Lausell, president of UTIER addresses



meeting in front of Capitol building.

## Puerto Rican Trade Unionists Tour U.S.

A delegation from the Inter-Trade Union Committee organized to support the strikes of the Electrical and Irrigation Workers Union (UTIER) and the United Workers of the Metropolitan Bus Authority (TUAMA) visited various cities in the United States from the 3rd to the 9th of February. Gil Rios, president of the San Juan chapter of the UTIER and Miguel Cabrera, a Teamster organizer, addressed public meetings and met with trade unionists in New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Detroit. Their tour—sponsored by the U.S. Trade Union Committee Against Repression in Puerto Rico (U.S. TUCAR) and Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU)—is part of a campaign to broaden support for the striking workers on the island.

Recently in Puerto Rico, the Inter-Trade Union Committee was formed by the 26 unions that made up the Trade Union Committee Against Repression and several new ones, approximately 30 of the strongest and most important unions on the island. It represents another effort on the part of progressive and revolutionary forces within the labor movement to develop a strong and united labor movement. The Inter-Trade Union Committee involves the participation of intermediate union leadership (such as

organizers and shop stewards) and rank and filers as well as top level union leaders. Presently the Inter-Trade Union Committee is leading the efforts to develop organized support for the UTIER and TUAMA strikers. In addition, it is making preparations to aid in the defense of labor leaders against criminal cases which have been fabricated as in the case of Miguel Cabrera (OEM, Vol. 3 No. 1).

### PRESENTATION BY RIOS

In New York City where the tour began, the representatives from the Inter-Trade Union Committee spoke before an audience of over 300 people. Gil Rios explained in his presentation that this present period "is characterized by a bosses' offensive directed by the colonial government in Puerto Rico." The strategy developed by U.S. intelligence agencies is intended to "isolate the combative and revolutionary sectors and individuals of the working class as well as to destroy the most important unions in the country." "Lashing out in many directions", he continued "and unleashing their force, they (ed., U.S. and colonial

history." Moreover, armed actions have not been limited to left forces, but have also involved workers who once supported the present colonial administration. Workers are becoming more and more convinced that in their struggle against the bosses they must use all means necessary.

### SOLIDARITY BETWEEN WORKERS IN U.S. AND PUERTO RICO

After New York, the delegation went to Pittsburgh where they spoke before an audience of 150 people at a fund-raising activity for the United Mine Workers organized by the Committee of Concerned Unionists. At this activity, they expressed their support for the striking mine workers and called for class solidarity between workers in the U.S. and those in Puerto Rico. In Chicago, Cabrera and Rios addressed over 150 people in an activity organized by the Chicago chapter of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee and a meeting of Steelworkers Fightback. From there they went to Detroit to meet with a group of Teamster rank and file workers, members of Teamsters for a Democratic Union. After their return to New York, they were scheduled to address a picket in front of the Commonwealth office of Puerto Rico, organized by TUCAR, but they were unable to attend because an emergency developed in Puerto Rico that required their immediate attention. Nevertheless, the picket took place with the participation of over 200 people.

Everywhere they went, the labor leaders from Puerto Rico emphasized the need to support the UTIER and TUAMA strikes. In addition, they raised the need to prepare the ground work for the defense of union leaders that will face criminal frame-ups such as Miguel Cabrera himself.

### FRAME-UP AGAINST CABRERA

Miguel Cabrera is being charged, along with two other persons, for the execution of corporate lawyer Alan H. Randall. The state's star witness is public enemy number 1, Angel M. Hernandez Tanco (El Negro Tanco), who had escaped from jail a few months ago. He then turned himself into the police a few weeks after the escape. The "death squad", organized within the island's police force, threatened to kill him if he refused to testify against the Teamsters. In exchange for his testimony the state is offering to reduce four 1st degree murder charges against him to second degree. This move could put him back on the streets in ten years as opposed to life imprisonment. It is also believed that the government has two other "witnesses" that are expected to testify in court. These witnesses are suspected to be two Northamerican students, also being protected by the police.

The state alleges that Cabrera's fingerprints were found on Randall's briefcase. This version was later contradicted when it was stated that the prints were found on the message sent by the group that executed Randall. It is clear that the case against Miguel Cabrera has been fabricated by the colonial authorities in order to divert attention from the serious accusations made by the Teamsters Union in the assassination of Juan Rafael Caballero by the police death squad.

Overall, the tour of the two representatives from the Inter-Trade Union Committee was very productive. We salute the efforts of TUCAR in this endeavor. We call on all workers and progressive sectors in this country to support the UTIER and TUAMA strikes. This support can take the form of money for the strike fund, resolutions, letters to the colonial governor, pickets, rallies, etc. We urge all those interested to join the TUCAR and help its efforts of building support in the U.S. for the Puerto Rican labor movement.



## NICARAGUA

# FIRST GENERAL STRIKE - A SOCIAL EARTHQUAKE

At 8:00 A.M. on January 10, 1978, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro was driving to work when a man intercepted his car and riddled Chamorro's body with 30 bullets. Pedro J. Chamorro, owner and editor of the chief opposition newspaper, *La Prensa*, had been jailed and exiled several times because of his opposition to the Somoza regime, the family that has ruled Nicaragua with an iron hand for more than forty years. Investigations by the National Guard led to the arrest of 4 individuals, who confessed that they had been paid \$15,000 by Pedro Ramos, a Cuban exile, to carry out the murder.

Evidence of Anastasio Somoza's involvement in the assassination is overwhelming. Self-appointed president of Nicaragua since 1967, Somoza is co-owner, along with Pedro Ramos, of Plasmaferesis, a company that exports blood to the U.S. Just prior to Chamorro's assassination, a meeting took place between Somoza and Ramos, which Somoza denied. Once the 4 captured individuals had confessed, the investigation was closed. Somoza made no effort to have Ramos extradited from the United States, where he was located when Chamorro was murdered.

The murder and its coverup were the catalysts that produced an eruption of social tensions which had been building up in Nicaragua for the past several years. In Managua, the capital, people took to the streets and began burning and looting. The first building to be burned housed the offices of Plasmaferesis. The crowd of 10,000 people then began to burn other buildings belonging to Somoza. Cars, buses, and trucks were overturned and lit up. When the police and firemen arrived they were met with a barrage of rocks. Throughout the night the crowd chanted, "Who killed Chamorro? Somoza!" In the next days, the riots spread to other cities and towns of Nicaragua. The agitation of the workers and peasants was so persistent that on the eve of Chamorro's burial, the established forces of opposition met to

discuss how they could harness this agitation for their own ends.

The Democratic Union for Liberation (UDEL), a coalition of seven political parties and two labor federations, decided to call for a general strike to demand that a complete investigation be made of the assassination. The UDEL, which includes the communist party of Nicaragua (PSN), is controlled by progressive bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements. From its inception in 1974, its aim has been to overthrow Somoza and establish a more democratic regime. To do this it has carried out boycotts of elections and has campaigned to put international pressure on Somoza. Its call for a general strike was immediately supported by the Conservative Party—the official party in opposition—and by the Private Enterprise Association (COSIP). COSIP, which includes many of the powerful business owners in Nicaragua, promised to pay the wages of those workers who joined the strike. As the strike picked up momentum, UDEL, COSIP and the Conservative Party decided to call for Somoza's resignation.

By its fifth day, the strike was 80 to 90 percent effective in the major cities and towns. Most gas stations had closed. Those that were opened had been forced to do so by the National Guard. University students in Managua set up pickets to prevent the National Guard from taking over the university and street battles ensued for control of the university. In the following days doctors walked out of the hospitals and joined the strike; agricultural workers put down their tools and also joined the strike. The bishops of Nicaragua issued a statement supporting the strike. Public employees defied orders from their superiors and joined the strike. The Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (Sandinist Front for National Liberation, FSNL) distributed leaflets in working class areas urging all workers to participate in the strike. It also carried out several attacks against National Guard posts.

Street demonstrations were frequent. Burning and looting continued.



Anastasio Somoza, Jr.

Somoza's government declared a national emergency and imposed a censorship on radio and television. It also threatened to expropriate those businesses that were participating in the strike.

After 17 days, the strike ended. Somoza remained in power and the investigation into Chamorro's murder has not been undertaken. However, the different sectors of Nicaraguan society have achieved an important level of unity which allowed them to defy and weaken Somoza's hold on the country. They are still on the offensive.

Within this, the role of the revolutionary left and the development of a working class party to both lead the struggle and take it beyond the overthrow of the Somoza regime assumes primary importance. However, in order to understand the nature of the left and the present situation in Nicaragua, we must understand the historical development of the country.

## THE U.S. HELPS TO MANUFACTURE A DYNASTY

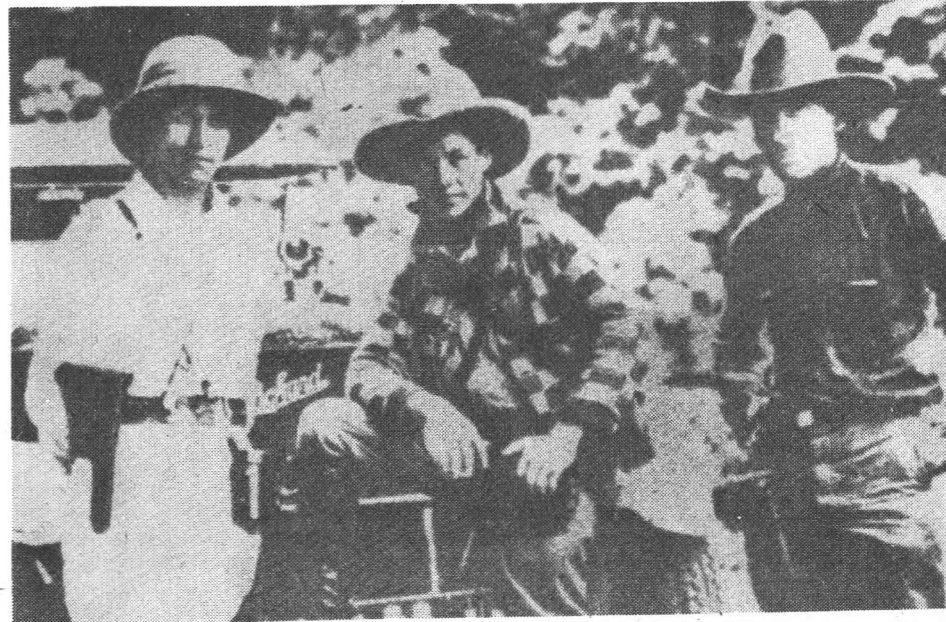
In 1926, the United States invaded Nicaragua for the eighth time since the beginning of the century. In the civil war that followed, and the subsequent military occupation by the U.S. which lasted until 1933, a man named Anastasio Somoza, Sr., became very prominent by serving as an advisor to the generals of the invading army. In order to protect its business interests after it retired its troops, the United States trained and armed a National Guard. The U.S. embassy in Nicaragua picked its faithful lackey, Somoza, to head this servile army. In 1936, Somoza staged a coup and, with U.S. support, named himself president.

From the very beginning, Somoza used his

position as head of the National Guard to increase his power. Using persuasion, embezzlement, manipulation, intimidation and assassination, he and his family amassed a fortune which rivals that of the other two sectors of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, the Bank of America group and the Nicaraguan Bank group. At the same time, of course, Somoza was consolidating his political power. By 1956, when Somoza Sr. was assassinated by a lone gunman, his political and economic power was so great that his two sons were able to succeed him without a problem. Luis, the eldest, took the presidency and Anastasio, Jr. became head of the National Guard. In 1967, Luis died, and Anastasio Jr. took over both posts. Since 1936, different sectors of Nicaraguan society have made at least 16 attempts to overthrow the Somoza dynasty. An important factor in these failures has been the total support which the United States government has given to the Somoza dynasty.

## AUGUSTO CESAR SANDINO AND HIS LEGACY

The 1926 invasion of Nicaragua is significant not only because it created the Somoza dynasty, but also because it produced one of the first and most glorious examples of Latin American resistance to U.S. imperialism. When the U.S. called for a truce in the civil war in 1927 and proposed elections and the surrender of all arms, all the warring generals accepted the proposal with the exception of Augusto Cesar Sandino. Motivated by strong and sincere patriotic feelings, Sandino recruited an army of peasants and rural proletariat, which took the name of the Army for the Defense of Nicaragua's National Sovereignty. Its program called for national sovereignty, self-determination, reestablishment of the constitution and agrarian reform.



Jose de Paredes from Mexico, Augusto C. Sandino from Nicaragua and Agustin Farabundo Marti from El Salvador.

For seven years this people's army carried out guerrilla warfare against the foreign invaders who at one point numbered 4,600 men, in addition to the support of an air force. The successes of Sandino's popular army and the creation of a strong non-intervention movement in the U.S. by forces in solidarity with the oppressed peoples of Nicaragua, forced the U.S. government to change its policies and pull out its troops in 1933.

The victory, however, was short-lived. After the marines pulled out, Sandino and his advisors made a fatal error by agreeing to surrender almost all of their arms. A year later, during negotiations with the then-president Sacasa, Sandino was murdered by order of the young director of the National Guard, Anastasio Somoza Sr. Immediately afterwards, Sandino's army was completely wiped out by government forces.

## THE LEFT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION

The Communist Party of Nicaragua, the PSN, was founded in 1944. It suffered a major defeat in 1947 when Somoza Sr. carried out one of his periodic waves of repression. The PSN has never recovered from that attack. Today, its politics consist of tailing the most progressive bourgeois elements. Its only stated goal is the overthrow of the Somozas and the establishment of a democratic bourgeois republic. In other words, it has no differences with the goals of the progressive bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the PSN envisions the overthrow of Somoza as a peaceful matter. Because it fails to express the most fundamental interests of Nicaragua's workers and peasants and because it denies the centrality of armed struggle in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the PSN is clearly a bankrupt force in the Nicaraguan Revolution.

However, the seeds planted by Sandino's



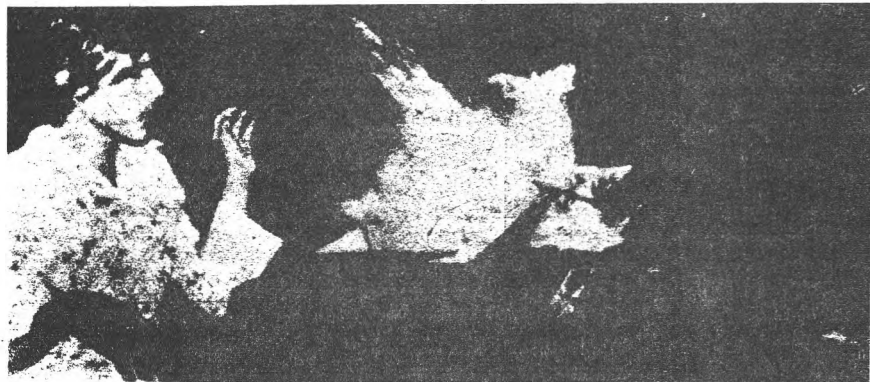
FSLN fighter

popular army sprouted again in the 1960's with the creation of the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN). The FSLN was one of the many guerrilla groups established in Latin America after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. For more than a decade, its growth and significance was minimal due mostly to ideological weaknesses. It attempted unity with the PSN but was alienated by the PSN's revisionism. It then decided to further develop its roots among the peasantry and workers. This integration into the working and peasant classes proved to be very fruitful. Its military attacks grew more and more fearless. The National Guard was forced to use Vietnam-type tactics against the FSLN, i.e., relocation or massacre of whole towns, widespread use of torture, blanket bombings, etc. Today, a whole section of the country in the north is controlled by the FSLN.

In its development the FSLN has produced a strategy of prolonged popular war in which the enemy is recognized as the national bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialism. Within this conception of the struggle, the overthrow of Somoza is seen as merely a step in the growth of the revolution. All methods of struggle are used, but armed struggle is recognized as fundamental. Because the FSLN sees land ownership as the principal contradiction, the principal base of the revolutionary forces is the peasants and rural proletariat.

Recently, the FSLN split into three factions. This split merits the serious study of Marxist-Leninist forces in this country. As we deepen our analysis of the situation in Nicaragua, we will present our views in future editions of *Obreros en Marcha*.

However, according to our understanding of the development of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America, the success of a socialist revolution is only guaranteed by a strategy of prolonged people's war which is based on the alliance of workers and peasants and the leading role of the proletariat. Only when the consolidation of revolutionary leadership among the workers and peasants is firmly achieved, will the leadership of the anti-Somoza movement pass to the revolutionary forces.



Demonstrator setting fire to Somoza family property.



# CHILDREN OF EXILES RETURN TO CUBA

Contribution by two members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade.

Following the triumph of the Cuban Revolution on January 1, 1959 a great number of Cubans abandoned their country of origin. Today the number of emigrants has reached approximately 700,000 while the present population of Cuba numbers 9½ million. The majority of Cubans who left during the first years following the Revolution were from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois extraction. Later on people came to this country in search of the fulfillment of the promises of abundance propagated by imperialist propaganda during the years in which the U.S. blockade was severely weakening the Cuban economy. It is the sons and daughters of some of these emigrant families who formed part of the First Contingent of the Antonio Maceo Brigade (Antonio Maceo was a military leader of the Cuban war for independence toward the end of the 19th century and an anti-imperialist

## THE ANTONIO MACEO BRIGADE

The Brigade, composed of 55 young people (the average age being 26 years), was the first group of Cubans to return to their country since the triumph of the Revolution. Having come from New York, New Jersey, Miami, Boston, San Francisco and other U.S. cities as well as Puerto Rico, the group travelled throughout Cuba during their 23-day stay.

Not only was this Brigade the first group of Cubans to return, but it also represented the first encounter and reunion of the Cuban people with a part of that migration which for economic, political and ideological reasons, rejected the Revolution. The Brigade however represented precisely a part of the sector of the migration which does not maintain a hostile attitude toward Cuba—a sector which is open to learning about the achievements of the Revolution and its problems, that supports the normalization of relations with the United States, as well as an end to the blockade. These are the ideas and sentiments that united the group that, because of its heterogeneous nature, included those who clearly sympathize with the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution.

The existence of the Antonio Maceo Brigade has been seen as a defeat for the imperialist strategy which attempted from the beginning to utilize Cuban "exiles" as anti-communist mouthpieces.

A very important factor which contributed to fomenting and giving impulse to that migration was the aggressive campaign launched by the United States and directed toward accomplishing two clear objectives: 1) to utilize this mass of Cubans as active elements in the struggle to destroy the revolution; and 2) to utilize them as fierce anti-communist propagandists in Latin communities within the working class, before North American public opinion in general and more particularly within its colony Puerto Rico. This campaign also contributed greatly to the exodus of Cuban professionals, technicians and skilled workers which led to great difficulties for the Revolution.

In addition to the propaganda regarding the "horrors" of communism, many left Cuba convinced that their children would be taken away from them and "sent to Russia"—the

imperialists instituted the so-called "Freedom Flights" or the air bridge between Cuba and Miami. They instituted "special" welfare for Cubans in which the U.S. government had invested 1.2 billion dollars up until 1976, and readily granted asylum.

Nineteen years have passed since the beginning of the migration. The majority of these Cubans continue to be anti-communist, but their attitudes toward the revolution have begun to change throughout the years. Principally it has been a sector of the youth which has realized that the "American dream" is not what they thought it was, nor is socialism in Cuba as onerous as was depicted by their parents. Based on this, some of these young people, strongly motivated by a desire to return to their homeland and to know the achievements of the Revolution, became part of the Brigade.

## IN CUBA

Having arrived in Cuba, we were greatly moved by the warm and fraternal welcome we received from the people everywhere we visited. A taxi driver, for example, said to us that he felt very proud of us because we were able to understand and appreciate the achievements of the Revolution, in spite of the ideas which our parents had engrained in us. For us, this extraordinary journey reached its maximum expression and meaning in our meeting with Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro. Fidel spoke to us of the problems facing the development of Cuba; he asked us about the Cuban communities in the United States, the situation in Puerto Rico, during a discussion which he ended by saying, "Our homeland has grown!"—referring to the path which our return to Cuba has opened for many other Cuban youths.

Continued on page 12



Members of the Pioneer Organization in Cuba.

# KOCH TO HIT CITY WITH MORE SERVICE CUTS

Now that Edward Koch has become New York City's 105th mayor, those who control our city are orchestrating the next phase of the "budget crisis". It is the major banking institutions and big business together with the federal government who are playing the major roles in this developing scenario, while Koch, Governor Carey and municipal union leadership are the minor players being dictated their assigned roles.

The sometimes heated contradictions that have frequently erupted among the various parties are nothing but the jockeying for a favorable political and/or economic position. What remains clear through all this maneuvering though is their unanimous agreement on one point; whatever means are used to "balance the budget", it will be the working people of New York who will continue to be painfully affected by the results.

## THE BUDGET CRISIS-HOAX ON WORKING CLASS

Mayor Koch has informed the city's constituents that the budget gap—the difference between funds the city receives in revenues and its expenses—for the coming fiscal year 1979 will be \$457 million, over \$200 million more than Mayor Beame's last budget gap. This already represents a budget that has had vital services cut by millions of dollars and a municipal labor force reduced by 61,000 since 1975. Yet despite all these cutbacks and layoffs and those still to come, Koch conservatively estimates a \$704 million gap for the following fiscal year, \$903 million in fiscal year 1981, and \$954 million in 1982! The consequences of these figures are almost too much to comprehend.

But, if millions more dollars in services and jobs are cut—and Koch has promised that these cuts are to come—where does the ever swelling budget gap come from? Tax-free, high interest bonds (catering to banks, corporations and wealthy individuals), millions in no-interest bank accounts, patronage, bureaucratic graft and corruption. These have become the inherent features of our city's budget.

Koch gave us a perfect example. While one side of his face was emphatically stating that there were absolutely no funds for city employees wage hikes, the other side was graciously rewarding 1,900 middle management and upper level city bureaucrats with wage increases of up to \$6000 each. Yet even this glaring contradiction is justified by City Hall. The fact is that the more disastrous a budget is for the working class, the more profitable it becomes for the ruling class and its functionaries.

Nothing illustrates the city's ever increasing debt and dependence on bond holders for its functioning more than New York City's single largest expense—the debt service. In fiscal year 1975 this debt service represented 16.9% of the city's fiscal budget. In 1976 it rose to 17.6% and last year it was up to 19.3% of a \$13 billion budget. The future holds even more astronomical debts.

These facts and figures begin to lay bare the real function of this "budget gap". It is but so much mystified book-keeping meant to justify the continued deterioration of our standard of living. The farce of it all is exposed when one day we are told that we are \$427 million in debt and the next day, we're informed of a "cash balance" of \$524 million having been miraculously discovered. Then it just as "miraculously" disappears leaving us still in debt!

We must not accept that this budgetary hoax be posed

as our problem. We must demand that government officials carry out their mandate to maintain our vital services and an acceptable standard of living. How they do it is not our concern but we cannot continue to bear the brunt when the capitalists continue to increase their profits.

Yet we are told that the workers have a responsibility to assist a city administration in balancing its budget, which means we are expected to continue sacrificing. This reasoning is what has been swallowed hook, line and sinker by those who should be at the forefront of the defense of the city's workers, the municipal union leadership.

## UNION MISLEADERS— CONFRONTATION OR CONCILIATION?

1978 is a critical year for the city's municipal employees. It will prove to be a test for the persuasive and manipulative powers of the Koch administration. At the same time it will further expose the impotency and self-imposed limitations of the unions' bureaucratic leadership. About a quarter of a million workers who provide services to the city will be having their leadership at the negotiation table in the next few months. The Transit Workers Union (TWU), representing 45,000 bus and subway workers, will be negotiating a new contract with the Transit Authority (TA) before the expiration date of March 31. Although the TA comes under the auspices of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), a state agency, these are key negotiations for the city because they traditionally set the tone for the municipal contract talks that come later in the year.

On June 30 the contracts of the entire municipal work force, both uniformed and civilian will expire. This means that the unions representing an additional 200,000 workers will be renegotiating their contracts and September 1 marks the end of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) contract with the city.

The ruling class and their city agents have made their position clear. The business-oriented and influential Citizens Budget Commission whose chairman, Rexford E. Thompkins, is president of the Dry Dock Savings Bank, emphasizes that the city must pursue "zero growth" in labor costs. Another such organization, the Economic Development Council, has stressed that the city "must recover past giveaways" from the TWU.

Koch is priming his team and they are ready. His position is that he will reduce the labor force by at least another 20,000 during his term and any wage increases must be offset by "increased productivity and sacrifice of existing benefits." In other words they are giving nothing and expecting much.

The union leaders have responded by stating their intentions to enter into "coalition bargaining" with the city. This supposedly progressive move has not fazed Koch. He is aware that in spite of their militant rhetoric these misleaders still function within the confined limits of "business unionism" and will eventually conciliate to big business. Their practice during the past three years bears this out; such as their sacrifice of the workers' pension funds to pay back the banks.

In the process they do not only betray the interests of the hundreds of thousands of workers they represent, but become accomplices to the attacks on the living standards of all the city's workers and poor.



Aside from thousands of additional layoffs, the upcoming budget cuts will further reduce the municipal health services, try to hike the transit fare, and further reduce the working class population at the City University among numerous others. It becomes clear that the struggle of the municipal workers against the city is closely linked to the fight of the working class as a whole to protect their overall standard of living. But it is just as clear that attempts at a militant city wide working class

will never be initiated by the bureaucratic city union misleaders.

There is growing rank and file discontent with the bureaucrats' functioning during this crisis as well as the latent fury within the communities ready to explode as these attacks intensify. The demand to maintain and improve the standard of living of the city's working class and poor can be a real rallying call to initiate unity where disunity has existed.

## CUBA continued

Our trip afforded us the opportunity to work for four days alongside a mini-brigade of Cuban workers on the construction of houses. We visited the sugar refineries, technologically-advanced industries, schools, pioneer camps (mass organizations of children), etc. At each of these places we found that workers, students and children were anxious to speak with us. In our discussions throughout the country, we were moved by the salient optimism, certainty and sureness, and the ability of each person to identify with the revolutionary process and place themselves within it. These discussions reflected an attitude of being part of the Revolution, builders of socialism, and protagonists of history.



Construction workers in La Habana

At the George Washington Sugar Refinery, each worker is able to explain not only the process of refining sugar, but the role that their industry plays in the national economy; at the schools even the youngest children saw in their studies a future contribution to the development of their country.

To visit Cuba more than anything else is to see a people in action, confronting and resolving successfully and collectively the economic and social problems which have been the legacy of underdevelopment which is characteristic of a colonial and neo-colonial past. Armed with the confidence of being able to confront these problems, the Cuban people are proud of the achievements reached in a mere 19 years: guaranteed employment for all, the right to a decent education, medical care, cultural development, etc. However, the majority of the people, both at the leadership and mass level, in speaking of the advancements made, always speak about the errors, the limitations, the problems, etc., emphasizing that the Revolution cannot be idealized. Rather, that it is based on an understanding of reality that one is able to work and move forward. Guided and stimulated by the practice of their vanguard and mass organizations, the Cuban people have developed an analytical and critical spirit that has been transformed into an integral part of their every day life. A 9-year-old pioneer was explaining to us that as the

person in charge of the studies in her class, she had to be critical with the other children when they did not meet their responsibilities, thus helping them to grow while at the same time, she had to be self-critical of her own work in order to "be able to set an example."

Another of the many things which greatly impressed us was the internationalist spirit that is present everywhere. The Cubans feel that it is their responsibility and duty to help all peoples in struggle for national liberation in the same manner in which they understand the important role that aid from socialist countries, in particular the Soviet Union, played in the survival of the Revolution.

The internationalist aid that Cuba has rendered to other countries has not been limited to military support but has included doctors, engineers, teachers, builders, etc. This has meant that the Cuban people have had to do without some of the needed human resources to struggle against their own underdevelopment.

However, for Cubans internationalism is not just to be understood and explained—it is something they feel deeply at heart.

A peasant farmer who we met in the Sierra Maestra mountains spoke with great pride of his son in Angola when we asked if he wasn't worried that something would happen to him. The elderly peasant responded to our question very firmly that, as a father, clearly he was worried, but that as a revolutionary he was very proud that this son was struggling side by side with Angolan peasants so that they could have what the Revolution had given him: learning to read and write, schools for his children, electric light, medical and dental care, and other things that he had never dreamed he would have. He added that if his son were to die in Angola he would have done so for the most just cause that could exist—the revolutionary advancement of humanity.

At a personal level, the return to Cuba meant a reunion, sought for a long time, with the land where we lived our first years of life. Many of us reunited with our families (for some, mothers, fathers and brothers) whom we hadn't seen for many years. The return to Cuba filled a void, reaffirmed a link which was broken at some point in our lives and helped us to recognize a part of ourselves within the Cuban culture.

Perhaps one of the most important things of the trip was to have the opportunity to prove that the image of Cuba that was presented to us by our parents and imperialist propaganda is a distortion that is in complete contradiction with Cuban reality.

We hope that our experiences as the First Contingent of the Antonio Maceo Brigade can be shared and in the future experienced by other Cuban young people in following contingents. Only in this way can we contribute, as Cubans here, toward smashing the myth of an "enslaved" Cuba that exists in communities in the United States, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and other countries of Latin America; a myth which has caused so much harm to the development of a revolutionary consciousness among the workers influenced by the anachronistic propaganda of the Cuban Migration.