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MSP/PSR Forum

Puerto Rico and the Present State of the Revolutionary Movement

Editorial:

On the Durkin Acquittal

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On the Durkin Acquittal

On August 2, a Bronx Supreme Court jury acquitted killer cop Kevin Durkin of the double murders of Domingo Morales and Manuel Martinez. Durkin shot the two men last February during a pool game in a bar in the South Bronx. Durkin, who was off duty at the time, had been drinking all day. He got into an argument with Morales and Martinez, drew his gun, and as the men turned to leave, pulled the trigger. Witnesses testified that the two men made no threatening gestures. Both were unarmed.

Durkin's trial stands out as a crude miscarriage of justice, punctuated by racist slurs against blacks and Puerto Ricans by both Durkin and the presiding judge, John Welsh. In his defense, Durkin presented no concrete evidence to justify his action, other than suspicion. He said that he felt his life was in danger in the bar because the two men, whom he knew from the neighborhood for a long time but who didn't know each other, "seemed to him" to be members of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN). In short, Durkin's defense was that he "felt" his life was threatened and that in self-defense he had to shoot Martinez and Morales.

The Durkin acquittal clearly implies that a policeman is justified in committing murder if he "senses" a threat to his life or "feels" that his life is in jeopardy. In other words, individual perceptions and prejudices that a given policeman might have against racial and national groups have become acceptable replacements for concrete evidence. In essence, Judge Welsh and the jury have given free reign to any policeman to act out his or her racism and frustrations.

Most decisions of this type have been made by all white juries. However, the jury in the Durkin case was composed of 7 white North Americans, 4 blacks and one Hispanic. The fact that the five minority members also voted for acquittal reflects the degree to which oppressed peoples accept the values and distortions of bourgeois law—either because of fear, false consciousness or their

own class interests. This highlights the need to raise the level of class-consciousness of working people and organize them around their concrete social and economic interests. Furthermore, we must demonstrate the need for united militant action to defend these interests.

The implications of the Durkin case go beyond racism and national chauvinism. Durkin's main point of defense—that he "thought" the men were part of the FALN—has extremely wide-sweeping political implications. The court's decision implies that any Puerto Rican or Latin may be brutalized and killed by a policeman—simply because they are Latin—since all are potential "terrorists." This provides another basis for increased political harassment of the Puerto Rican community, whether through increased police brutality, subpoenas before a Grand Jury, or illegal police surveillance. Such harassment is easily applied to other minority groups and any group fighting for its democratic rights.

In the past year, the cases of police beatings, harassment and brutality in minority communities in New York City have increased. This rise in the misuse of police authority has been overwhelmingly directed against blacks, Puerto Ricans and other Latins.

This pattern is repeating itself nationwide. The shooting of Morales and Martinez is yet another example in the emerging wave of racist attacks against minorities being carried out by those who supposedly are there to protect people—the police. As the country continues its move to the right in this period of economic crisis, there will be many more incidents like these occurring. In the last few months alone, there are numerous examples of this trend. In addition to the murder of Arthur McDuffie in Miami and the subsequent acquittal of the 4 policemen who killed him, there is:

—In July, in Boston, Mass., the murder of 14-year old black youth, Levi Hart by policeman Richard W. Bourque. Hart had been arrested on charges of car theft. Bourque was acquitted.

—In August, in Philadelphia, Pa., a black teenager, 17-year old William Green was stopped by police for running a red light, he was handcuffed, pistol-whipped and then shot. He died later the same day. The police said that the gun went off by accident.

—Several weeks ago, Native American Rita Silk-Nauni was sentenced to 150 years for shooting a policeman in self-defense after an assault on herself and her son in Oklahoma City. Silk-Nauni had been arrested for "suspicion of littering."

This phenomenon of police brutality or "legal lynching" is certainly not new. The current increase comes during this period of economic crisis when crime is on the rise. As a response to this, "law and order" has become the cry of the mass media, right-wing groups, liberal and conservative politicians, and unfortunately, many working people. "Law and order" is a code phrase for keeping blacks and Latins in their place. The slogan is a smokescreen raised by the rich who profit from the misery and exploitation of the working class and in particular, the oppressed minorities. But the real cause of crime and its devastating effect on working people is never addressed.

These same forces also raise the cry of "law and order" in response to people demanding their rights to jobs, housing, healthcare, and better pay and working conditions. Police roaming the streets with a license to kill are meant to terrorize people into accepting their place in society. The struggle to punish these killer cops and keep them in check is essential to the struggle for democratic rights and a decent standard of living. □

Metropolitan Hospital:

A Summary of our Experiences

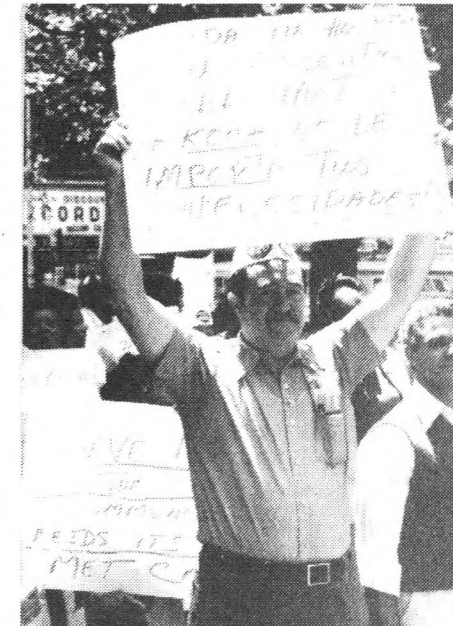
The struggle to keep Metropolitan Hospital open and maintain it as an effective, full-service hospital for the East Harlem community has proven to be a rich experience for our organization, M.I.N.P.—El Comité. For the past one and a half years we have participated within the Community Coalition to Save Metropolitan and have deepened our contact with the East Harlem community. Since the beginning of our involvement we have periodically covered different aspects of the struggle in the pages of Obreros en Marcha. Our articles have ranged from analyses of the political forces involved to interviews with leading activists in the struggle.

At present, the struggle to save Metropolitan is at a crucial stage. In June, the city and federal governments agreed upon a "Metropolitan Rescue Plan." We discuss this latest development within the context of the relationship that developed between M.I.N.P. and the Coalition and some of the lessons learned by both in the course of the struggle.

The present stage of the struggle opened with the June 20th declaration in the commercial press that there was a \$77 million agreement worked out by city, state and federal officials to "save" Metropolitan. This Metropolitan Rescue Plan calls for two basic actions. First of all, Sydenham Hospital, another municipal hospital in Harlem, also slated for closing is to be turned into a drug and alcoholism unit. Such a solution negates the reality of a community in great need of a full-service hospital, furthermore it feeds the racist myth that Harlem is mostly composed of drug addicts and alcoholics.

The second aspect of the "solution" is that Metropolitan will remain open as a full service hospital under a five-year demonstration project. This project calls for the enrollment of 17,000 East Harlem residents who have no medical insurance in a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) which would provide health care without a fee. While on the surface this sounds like a very positive action on the part of the government, the weaknesses in the plan are very real.

It is important to note that of the 150 HMO's set up throughout the country, only 13 have been successful. Of these, none were located in poor, minority communities such as East Harlem. HMO's have proven to be successful only in neighborhoods where there is a solid basis of knowledge and experience with preventive medicine.



"From the onset we as M.I.N.P. spoke of the attack on Metropolitan within the context of the city's attacks on the standard of living of poor and working class people, as the solution to New York's 'fiscal crisis'."

This is not the case in poorer neighborhoods where there are unusually high percentages of people with serious illnesses at advanced stages; in addition, easily prevented illnesses run rampant both because people are ignorant of basic preventative measures, and also because affordable healthcare is not available.

Another major pitfall in the HMO scheme is that it has only been successful in hospitals where vast amounts of money have been poured in over an extended period prior to the plan's beginning. In contrast to this is Metropolitan, barely surviving after years of official neglect, with the last two years consisting of a conscious, vicious campaign to destroy and close the hospital. Metropolitan Hospital today is badly in need of renovations, dangerously understaffed, poorly equipped with outdated and even missing equipment, and serving an extremely sick population, many of whom have been denied access to healthcare for years. This is the hospital chosen as a candidate for an HMO. Obviously the rescue plan has many problems.

Some Background to the Fightback

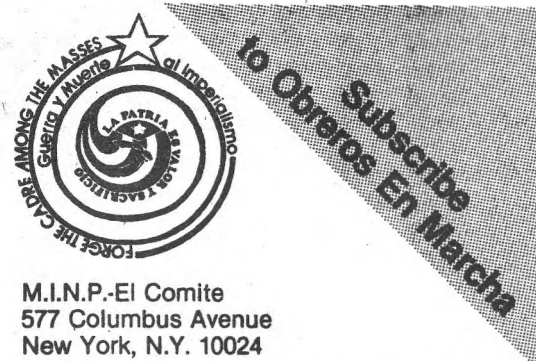
The impact which this plan has had on the work of the Community Coalition to Save Metropolitan is better understood

when viewed within the process of the struggle.

When Metropolitan's closing became imminent almost two years ago, a small group of employees representing all levels of staff, together with a few members of the hospital's Community Advisory Board (CAB) contacted several community groups and together formed the Community Coalition to Save Metropolitan. Our organization, M.I.N.P.—El Comité, was part of this initial grouping.

Because of their past experiences with local politicians and with the leadership of the hospital workers' union, D.C. 37, the initial founding group saw the need to create an independent organization. The first principle which united the Coalition was the need to keep Metropolitan open as a full-service hospital.

From the onset we as M.I.N.P. spoke of the attack on Metropolitan within the context of the city's attacks on the standard of living of poor and working people as the solution to New York's "fiscal crisis". This led to the Coalition adopting a perspective which held that the city's long-range plan was to slowly dismantle the municipal health system and eventually turn the best city hospitals over to the powerful private hospitals—strong supporters of Mayor Koch. The Coalition responded favorably when we began to raise the concept of



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"planned shrinkage" (see OEM editorial, Aug/1979). When we targeted the banks and the Financial Control Board (FCB) as the forces behind these anti-worker and racist policies, the idea was picked up by the other members of the Coalition and utilized in their own leaflets, newsletters and other literature. This initial positive development of the Coalition was bound to, and did bring us into confrontation with the dominant political force in East Harlem, the minority politicians or "politiqueros".

The Politicians Respond

For years the role of the minority politicians in East Harlem, like in many other minority communities, has been to act as a buffer to people's growing discontent stemming from their conditions of oppression and exploitation. Despite their posture as defenders of the peoples' interest, politiqueros have functioned to maintain "order" in the community. Their reward has been control over local anti-poverty monies and organizations and other related fringe benefits.

At this time the main politiquero in East Harlem is Councilman Robert Rodriguez, his family, and political cronies. He is the front line for justifying, imposing, and smoothing the way for Mayor Koch's policies in East Harlem.

The Coalition's views drew sharp attacks from these politiqueros and also from hospital administrators. They attempted to divide the Coalition and isolate M.I.N.P.'s position by saying that to protest the cuts and not make political deals would only bring more cuts to the community. In addition, they began accusing the Coalition of being communist-dominated because of the prominence of M.I.N.P. within it. This was not the first or last time that we were red-baited. Harlem's senior politician, Congressman Charles Rangel, after feeling the pressure of the Coalition, warned the community that the Coalition could not be trusted because its leadership was emotional, irresponsible, communist and detrimental to the needs of the people of East Harlem. Despite these attacks on the Coalition, and on M.I.N.P. in particular, the Coalition increased its ability to educate around the situation and form a plan of action. Thus more community groups including churches, youth programs and others and increasing numbers of employees began to listen to and join the Coalition's activities.

Coalition Challenges Union Leadership

Since the onset of the fiscal crisis, and even before, the rank and file of District Council 37 were not used to getting much from their union leadership. While sprouting militant rhetoric, the leaders allowed hiring freezes and attrition to gradually eat away at jobs and create deteriorating working conditions. Cynicism

about the unions' top leaders was growing among the rank and file. This was true for many of the workers at Metropolitan.

The creation of an Employees' Subcommittee within the Coalition was an important aspect of the effort to organize the hospital workers. In addition, the subcommittee attempted to function as a rank and file caucus within the union. This attempt was not too successful because of the group's lack of experience, but within the hospital it played an important organizing role.

Dishonest elements both at the local and top leadership levels of D.C. 37 worked overtime trying to discredit the Coalition in the eyes of the hospital workers. They spread many lies about the Coalition, and M.I.N.P. in particular, being anti-union and anti-black. They too accused the Coalition of being communist-dominated.

From the very beginning M.I.N.P. had raised the importance of building close ties between the hospital's workers and the users of the hospital's services, i.e., the people of East Harlem. However, this idea was never made concrete. It is now seen that the Employee's Subcommittee could be used as the basis upon which to develop these ties. The concretization of this idea will be key to the development of the struggle in the coming period.

The Movement Grows

As the struggle progressed, the principles of unity of the Coalition broadened. Soon they included opposition to the budget cuts in general and to the attacks on the city's minorities in particular. As the principles of unity broadened, so did the scope of work of the Coalition. It began to educate and organize around the concept of a comprehensive, community-developed health plan for all of East Harlem. Metropolitan was a crucial, but now only one, aspect of this plan.

By spring 1980 city officials were beginning to present plans to "save Metropolitan", the earliest of which were rejected as little more than outright destruction of the hospital. Then the present HMO plan was developed by a joint government effort. While the plan offers some concessions at this time, our analysis is that it still forms part of the intent of Koch to dismantle the municipal hospital system.

In addition to the serious disadvantages we discussed earlier, the new Metropolitan HMO will be administered by a board set up by Koch and the Health and Hospitals Corporation—the same forces which set out to destroy the hospital. The Community Advisory Board and the Coalition have been excluded from the planning and implementation process and the local politicians have been allowed to maintain control over hiring.

Within the Coalition and the community the announcement of the government plan caused much confusion. Immediately the

politicians proclaimed it as their victory and organized celebrations. While some of the problems of the new plan were evident from the start, the Coalition was at a loss as to how to respond. The Coalition agreed that federal funds could not be rejected. But at the same time, the transformation of Metropolitan into a five-year demonstration project was no substitute for the comprehensive health plan East Harlem desperately needed. How to begin raising this idea in the community was a difficult tactical question. Some Coalition members became demoralized; they felt that with all the meetings and mobilizations for over a year and a half, the Coalition should have been able to win a complete victory. These views in the Coalition reflected a lack of understanding of the strength of the political forces the group was up against. They also reflected a shortsighted view of the struggle, i.e., not seeing the necessity for a long-term effort. In order to win more than concessions and decisively confront the politicians and city administration, the Coalition needs to build a larger, stronger and more consolidated base in the community. This means a long struggle.

Compounding these weaknesses was the inability of M.I.N.P. to successfully challenge them. As a Marxist-Leninist organization, it is not enough for us to function only within the Coalition itself. We also have the responsibility to present through our own independent propaganda and activities the kind of analyses that would enable people to see why a prolonged struggle would be needed, the power of the forces the Coalition was up against, why the gains, although limited, represented strengths of the Coalition and not weaknesses, etc. This is a key area that we must begin to rectify in the coming period.

One of the main lessons that the Coalition has learned is the need to be consistent in educating and bringing its analysis to the community. When the Coalition limited its discussions to members of the coordinating committee and did not discuss with or inform community supporters about a plan of action, we left ourselves open to attacks from the politicians and hospital administrators and for misinformation to be disseminated. The need to maintain close and consistent contact with your base in the community is fundamental.

As the struggle for healthcare in East Harlem enters a new phase, we must learn from our past weaknesses and strengthen the participation of M.I.N.P. and our allies. An educated and organized rank and file within the hospital and an intensification of work within the community will be fundamental. Trying to work within the context of this new HMO will not be an easy task, but the need to further educate and organize around a community-developed health plan responding to the particular needs of Harlem will be the major task for the Coalition to undertake in the next period. □

On the Military Draft

The following is the first of a two-part article on the military draft. In this first part we point out some of the general features of this draft, the context in which it occurs and some of the elements to consider when looking at the relationship between the draft and North American youth, in particular those from the oppressed minorities. In the second part of the article we will look at the new anti-draft movement the sectors that make it up, its strategy and the need to give this movement an anti-imperialist character because of the increasing possibility of U.S. intervention in the Caribbean and Central America.

Starting on June 21st and for two successive weeks over four million North American youths between the ages of 19 and 20 received orders to go before the Selective Service System. Thus the plans that Carter had announced on January of this year became a reality. On July 20th the Supreme Court approved this plan to reestablish military conscription.

This draft registration is taking place at a time when the foreign policy strategists are at a loss on how to effectively control the rapid social changes taking place internationally. From the loss of Iran as a principal ally, to the consolidation of a progressive government in Grenada, the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, the ever growing strength of the Cuban Revolution in spite of U.S. destabilization efforts, the resurgence of mass movements in El Salvador and Guatemala, all point to a loss of initiative by imperialism in areas usually considered key for its strategy of domination: Latin America and the Middle East. With the ever increasing crisis of the world capitalist system simultaneous cycles of inflation and unemployment, the U.S. balance of payments deficit, the high cost of energy and the world monetary crisis—areas such as Latin America and the Caribbean become even more important as centers for raw materials and sources of cheap labor for the U.S. bourgeoisie. Within this context the bourgeoisie and particularly its right-wing and militaristic sector have pressured to achieve a more aggressive foreign policy. Thus Carter announced the creation of a Caribbean Task Force, a Rapid Deployment Force (to be used in the Persian Gulf) and unleashed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as ways of regaining the lost initiative. The military budget proposed by the ruling circles reinforced these policies and underlined the real possibility of a U.S. intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean. For the next



Military draft: an element of the U.S. bourgeoisie's moves to the right

five years Carter has proposed a military budget which totals a trillion dollars. And the Republican presidential candidate—Ronald Reagan—has promised that, if elected, he will spend even more. Within this general shift to the right by the U.S. bourgeoisie the call for a draft registration is made as one more element in the policy of increasing its military capacity as a means of insuring its interests.

The Character of the Actual Draft

It is clear that the current draft registration is not of an emergency character; rather its purpose is to investigate. It serves to let the bourgeoisie know the level of cooperation or resistance that it will face from political and civic organizations (churches, universities etc) in the country. To a certain extent this helps the dominant class determine how aggressive its foreign policy can be.

Another aspect of the current draft registration, related to the former, is that of surveillance. The registration of millions of youths gives the federal government information on the location of the different sectors of youth and their levels of education. As the economic crisis worsens this type of information becomes more necessary for

the government. With this type of information the government will be able to decide where to channel funds: to those areas most affected by the economic crisis and thus most likely to be centers of "social disturbances". The goal of this selective disbursement of funds would be to pacify protests and channel any popular discontent into forms that will not endanger its interests.

As the crisis of capitalism deepens, the standard of life of the masses here and abroad worsens. In the U.S. the shift to the right has been accompanied by an increase in repression and racist attacks against the working class and the oppressed minorities. These conditions have contributed to the resurgence of social movements that struggle against these attacks. The organization and strength of the social forces that struggle against U.S. intervention abroad and in defense of democratic rights of workers and oppressed minorities here are key elements in the development of the struggle. Thus we recognize the importance of linking anti-draft work with anti-imperialist work and of examining the sectors that make up the anti-draft movement, its political conceptions and strategy.

This will be covered in the second part of the article. □

Statement at the U.N. Decolonization Committee

This past August the United Nations Decolonization Committee passed a resolution reaffirming its support for the independence of Puerto Rico. This marked the fifth time since 1972 that the committee has passed such a resolution. In addition to the support for Puerto Rico's independence the committee called for a complete transfer of powers held by the U.S. to the Puerto Rican people. Of key importance this year was the denunciation of the repression against the independence forces and the use of Vieques as a target for military practice. The resolution also demanded a halt to all military activities in the island by the United States.

The United Nations and other international institutions are important arenas which both the independence movement in Puerto Rico and the solidarity forces in the U.S. can utilize to propagandize the colonial status of Puerto Rico and raise the call for independence. But this and other international work must consistently be placed in a correct context. We must recognize that it is fundamentally the struggle of the people of Puerto Rico, particularly its working class and vanguard organizations, who will play the determinant role in bringing an end to colonialism in the island. In consistently raising this perspective we can dispel some of the illusions and bourgeois legalism that represent potential pitfalls in work in the international arena for the genuine anti-imperialist and revolutionaries both here and in Puerto Rico.

In this year's hearings, for the first time the Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee (PRSC) made a presentation before the Decolonization Committee. In previous years the PRSC had been present through the People's Delegation but had not made its own presentation as the PRSC. Below we reprint its presentation which had the endorsement of many progressive individuals and organizations including the People's Delegation. We consider it to be one of the clearer statements made by the PRSC within the framework of its international work.

My name is Judith Berkan, I am a member of the National Board of the Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee, an attorney, and a law professor. I am also one of the Vieques 21, a group of protesters arrested in Puerto Rico on federal trespass charges in May of 1979, in the fight to free the Puerto Rican island of Vieques from the occupation and bombardment of the U.S. Navy. I am currently free on bail, waiting to serve the six months in jail to which I have been sentenced for my participation as both an attorney and an activist in Vieques.

I speak to you in behalf of the Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee, a national organization committed to developing support for and solidarity with the Puerto Rican struggle for self-determination and independence and for the endorsers of the U.S. People's Delegation.

This is the fifth time that we have brought a U.S. people's delegation to present our views on Puerto Rico's colonial status to this committee. We represent a broad spectrum of people in almost all walks of life. Almost, but not quite all:

There are not among us any directors of the corporations which exploit Puerto Rican labor, control her markets or eye her

mineral resources.

There are no generals or admirals among us who want to continue using Puerto Rico as a military base and Vieques as a target for bombing and shelling practice until it sinks into the sea.

There are no slumlords or sweatshop owners among us who benefit from the poverty, forced migration and racist segregation of Puerto Ricans in the United States.

There are no police officers who earn their living by systematic repression of the Puerto Rican people or who are free to express their racist hatreds and fears in capricious brutality against Puerto Ricans selected at random.

There are no detached researchers among us for whom Puerto Rico is a laboratory, and Puerto Rican women convenient guinea pigs for testing bright new ideas of population control.

But with these and similar exceptions we include people in all sections of the nation united in our opposition to U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico.

We see this colonialism not only as an injustice to the Puerto Rican people but also as

degrading the quality of our own lives and threatening the peoples of the world:

Colonialism gives the United States government a stake in countries beyond its borders—an excuse to extend its military presence into the Caribbean, Latin America and elsewhere; an opportunity to build bases and weapons; to think in the cynical idiom of geopolitics; and prepare with growing military budgets and the new draft for renewed foreign adventure.

Colonialism is racist, and when people from the colony are forced to migrate to the United States they encounter this racism in their daily lives. The racism already present from a long history of oppression and genocide against Native American, black, Asian and Chicano peoples is turned on the Puerto Ricans as well, and is reinforced thereby. This tradition of racism in turn is partly responsible for the especially brutal and violent quality of life in the United States.

Colonialism enables employers to divide workers against each other, leaving the United States they encounter this racism in union organization of the industrial countries.

The case of Puerto Rico first came to the attention of the United Nations at its founding convention in San Francisco in 1945 when a delegation of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party was granted observer status. In the euphoria of the victory over fascism and the spirit of liberation, millions of people looked forward to the twilight of colonialism. And indeed many of the countries represented here now won their independence in the following decades. But colonialism has had a very prolonged, Arctic twilight even in the tropics. The youth of that optimistic time when the United Nations was founded are grandparents now—and Puerto Rico is still a colony.

Puerto Rico has been studied more than any other island in the world, debates have been held or evaded and resolutions passed or tabled, reflecting changes in the composition of the United Nations, fluctuations in the courage and freedom of action of the members of this committee in the face of U.S. pressure, reflecting the ebb and flow of the non-aligned movement and of the cold war and the effectiveness of U.S. diplomatic maneuvers.

Wars were fought and Puerto Ricans were drafted into the U.S. Army for service in Korea and Viet Nam. Its forests were used to test the weapons of defoliation and to train "special forces," its island munic-

pality was used, and continues to be used as a military depot and firing range. Now a new draft threatens Puerto Ricans into new military adventures, for Puerto Rico is still a colony.

The U.S. economy has gone through several cycles of boom and bust, dragging Puerto Rico with it, but with a difference: the booms in a colony never reach the levels of employment or prosperity of the deepest recessions of Europe or North America.

New economic programs were proclaimed, introduced, and abandoned, each one leaving Puerto Rico's economy more completely subordinated to that of the United States for whom Puerto Rico is its most profitable field for investment, its best trading partner, its most docile dump for environmental contamination. The economy has evolved from a classical sugar island to a sweatshop for light industry to a stinking cauldron of chemicals and petrochemicals. The changing balance of costs and benefits have shifted investments, but leaves constant the concentration of costs in Puerto Rico and the accumulation of benefits in the United States: for Puerto Rico remains a colony and each new development only serves to increase that dependence which is used to justify continued colonial status.

The four Nationalist prisoners have been released, only to be replaced by the Evanston eleven, who, like the four Na-

tionalists before them, proclaim and defend their people's right to independence and self-determination against the violence of 80 years of colonialism. Only last November, Vieques protestor, Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, was murdered in his jail cell in Tallahassee Florida. Angel was one of the 21 protestors, including myself, who were arrested for trespassing on land rightfully belonging to the Puerto Rican people. As we speak today, Carlos Rosario Pantojas sits in a maximum security jail in Puerto Rico for refusing to cooperate with a federal Grand Jury conducting a broad scale investigation into the independence movement. In July of 1978, independentistas Arnaldo Dario Rosado and Carlos Soto Arriivi were lured to their deaths in a police ambush at Cerro Maravilla. In October 1977, trade unionist Juan Rafael Caballero was kidnapped, tortured and murdered by a police death squad. As the regime experiments with new approaches to repression, Navy lieutenant Alex de la Zorda, who used Navy explosives to bomb and terrorize the Vieques protestors, was exonerated just one month ago by a U.S. federal court in Puerto Rico.

Legal administrative structures have been decorated and redecored: each new model has been introduced with flutes, drums, and crepe paper; our attention is drawn to the shining tailfins and reinforced muffler while, in the dazzling light of flashbulbs,

the manufacturers and salesmen exchange praise and self-praise. But it is the same old tin can: one uprising, two plebiscites and seven elections later—Puerto Rico is still a colony.

In many ways Puerto Rico is a classical colony. It is governed under U.S. legislation, the Jones Act of 1917 and subsequent amendments. The Puerto Rican government is a local administration without real powers which belong to Washington. And federal agencies operate freely in Puerto Rico without reference to the wishes of the Puerto Rican people.

But in addition to the classical features of colonialism Puerto Rico has some special characteristics:

1. Environmental imperialism: the export to the colony of industrial and military activities which destroy and pollute the environment and endanger the health of the people. In a small country such as Puerto Rico this can develop very quickly, leaving a unique combination of the miseries of underdevelopment and exploitative overdevelopment. Environmental destruction as an accidental by-product of exploitation is supplemented here by the deliberate destruction of land and vegetation in the military target island of Vieques. The deliberate nature of the destruction, the callous cynicism of the military command, the viciousness of the repression and the heroism and ingenuity of the people's



MSP/PSR Forum:

Puerto Rico and the Present State of the Revolutionary Movement

On July 25th M.I.N.P.-El Comité sponsored a public forum at which the Popular Socialist Movement (MSP) and the Revolutionary Socialist Party, (PSR) both of Puerto Rico, gave their analysis of that country's current situation. The two organizations made a brief presentation since the emphasis of the forum was on questions and discussion with the audience. Below we reprint excerpts from both the presentation and the questions and answers. In the near future we will publish a full edited version of the forum in pamphlet form.

MSP/PSR: We think that it is important to make as our starting point the economic situation in Puerto Rico and to discuss some of its implications. In the past, we have stated that Puerto Rico is undergoing a very profound economic crisis in which its productive apparatus has completely stagnated. However, the masses have not felt the full weight of this crisis because of the methods of crisis control that the U.S. has been using in P.R. These controls have taken the form of food stamps, transfers of federal funds, etc. These have been the basic elements of U.S. domination throughout this economic crisis... This does not mean that the Puerto Rican masses have not suffered from the crisis, but only that they have not suffered from it with all its weight.

These mechanisms of control have served to control the class struggle in that they have created and deepened our people's ideological and material dependence on U.S. imperialism. But given the present reality of the U.S. economy and the U.S. politics, there may be a decrease in this type of help for Puerto Rico. We have already begun to see the weakening of the food stamp program. From May to October, we lived a short crisis when there was the threat that we would have no more food stamps. Politicians in Puerto Rico almost committed suicide thinking of the implications of this threat in an election year...

We also want to discuss the implications of the Krepps Report which analyzes the economic crisis in Puerto Rico and makes recommendations on how to resolve it. Barceló's administration asked Washington to make this report because they thought it would strengthen their arguments for the viability of statehood. On the contrary however, Krepps report has been a big blow to the New Progressive Party (PNP) strategy. The report even presented certain recommendations that were made by the

Popular Democratic Party (PPD). These are two points regarding the economic crisis that we think have very important implications for the revolutionary movement in Puerto Rico.

Another point that we would like to discuss is the statehood offensive of the PNP. There is disagreement among the left forces as to the U.S. strategy regarding the solution to the status question. Our position is that although we see that there is an important sector that is pushing statehood for Puerto Rico, there continues to be a debate among the imperialist bourgeoisie and that as of yet they have not taken up a definite position on this question. There are sectors that favor neo-colonial independence, others that favor a modified commonwealth and others that favor statehood.

Originally the left forces thought that the PNP was going to win the elections in Puerto Rico by a wide margin which would reinforce their ability to push their strategy for statehood. But now we see, because of very concrete political mobilizations, demonstrations, the primaries, etc. that the Popular Party was not dead and that they did an impressive job with the Democratic primaries almost beating Barceló and the PNP in the Carter-Kennedy confrontation in Puerto Rico.

This series of elements indicate that the PNP is not as strong as it was a year before and that the PNP is not as weak as we had thought. At this moment, our organization, and I believe, many sectors of the left in Puerto Rico would say that the 1980 elections are a toss-up. This has serious implications for what has been put forward in terms of the 1980 plebiscite for statehood. It also has big implications for the Puerto Rican Independence Party's (PIP) outcome in the elections. PIP has been saying that they are going to come out of the process as the second political force confronting the PNP in 1984.

We also want to address the issue of the state of the left and of the revolutionary movement in Puerto Rico. Everytime someone comes to the U.S., they say that the left is weak and divided. This is basically true. There has been a period of fragmentation of the left forces since 1976. However, we should analyze what are the bases for these differences. Our organization understands these differences to reflect a struggle between the tendencies of Marxism-Leninism and those petty-bourgeois nationalist forces who have historically given leadership to Puerto Rico's independence struggle. In an-



Carlos Pabón, *Movimiento Socialista Popular*

alyzing this division, we ask these questions: Is this a permanent type of division or is it just a manifestation of the left's inability to achieve unity? Is there in fact a class struggle inside the left, a struggle reflecting two different ideological and political perspectives? Has a crisis of leadership of the petty-bourgeois nationalist forces created a vacuum that the Marxist-Leninist forces, because of their lack of consolidation and development, have not been able to fill? We believe we should discuss these questions because they address a serious debate among the forces that do solidarity work with Puerto Rico...

Question: I don't know much about the decrease in food stamps that you mentioned before. could you discuss that in more detail?

Answer: There is a real possibility that cuts in the food stamp program will take place in early 1981. Actually, the debate in Congress raised the possibility of cutting the funds not only in Puerto Rico but in other states of the union as well.

Overall, with the rise of the conservative

resistance has made Vieques a symbol of the struggle for the defense of Puerto Rico's environment.

2. The massive migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States. As in the previous cases of Koreans in Japan and Algerians in France the Puerto Ricans are exploited both in their homeland and in the imperialist metropolis where, together with the blacks, Asians, Native Americans and other Hispanic peoples they are the reserves of cheap labor, alternately attracted into and expelled from the labor market and are rewarded with the highest infant mortality, lowest wages, highest unemployment, worst housing and most widespread police harassment.

3. The colony of Puerto Rico has been used as a base for U.S. military, economic, and intellectual intervention in other areas of Latin America, and Puerto Ricans have been recruited as agents of this process.

4. Puerto Rico has been subjected to the most intricate and pervasive system of colonial control the world has ever seen. The familiar organs of repression are of course present: the anomalous political status of Puerto Rico as being both in and outside of the U.S. allows the operation of both the F.B.I. (charged with domestic suppression) and the C.I.A. (restricted to foreign intervention). These are assisted by military and naval intelligence and local political police. In addition the American Way allowed for free enterprise in repression. Private commercially operated detective agencies spy on workers, independentistas, or anyone who may spoil the investors' paradise. Gangs of Cuban emigres, unable to confront the revolution in their homeland, provide some of the strong arm terrorism for the regime. But long before young Puerto Ricans can begin to think about fighting colonialism they are subjected to a school system which emphasizes the achievements and virtues of the United States, denigrates Puerto Rican culture, hails as heroes only those Puerto Ricans

most willing to accept the U.S. invasion which is labeled "the change of sovereignty" in official literature. They are bombarded with the news selected by U.S. press services and newspaper chains and kept isolated from the currents of thought in the rest of Latin America. They are forced to learn English by administrative compulsion and economic necessity. They are fed and clothed and entertained with products from the North. And when part of the fruits of their labor returns to them disguised as food stamps or welfare they are told that they could not live without the U.S. They are told that they have no natural or human resources of their own. They are taught to see themselves as the recipients of history made elsewhere, to doubt their capacity to control their own destiny, and to learn the tricks of acquiescence. U.S. corporations and Puerto Rican institutions alike fire them for challenging the system; U.S. trade unions help employers and government to destroy national independent labor organizations. And those who nevertheless stand up for Puerto Rican nationhood are harassed, assaulted, sometimes killed, or flattered and cajoled into lucrative collaboration.

Yet despite the massive effort of the U.S. over eighty years to destroy the Puerto Rican nation, it has survived and resisted, built movements and fought back with the limited resources available.

We in the Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee support and defend that resistance.

Thus the case of Puerto Rico, colony, refuses to disappear. This has been an embarrassment for the United States government. It has sought over several decades to look for formulas which would allow for continued economic exploitation and military and political control while creating the illusion of self-determination. They have invented the term "commonwealth" and toyed with schemes for cosmetic

changes in present forms. They have considered the possibilities of spurious republics and keep a file of potential Estrada Palmas, Trujillos, or Somozas. They endorse and support movements for statehood.

It is not surprising that a country with democratic traditions prefers to impose and maintain its tyranny through the forms of freedom: economic domination is effected through the "free" market; wages of misery are enforced through collective bargaining between unequals; and the final annexation may be attempted next year by means of a plebiscite.

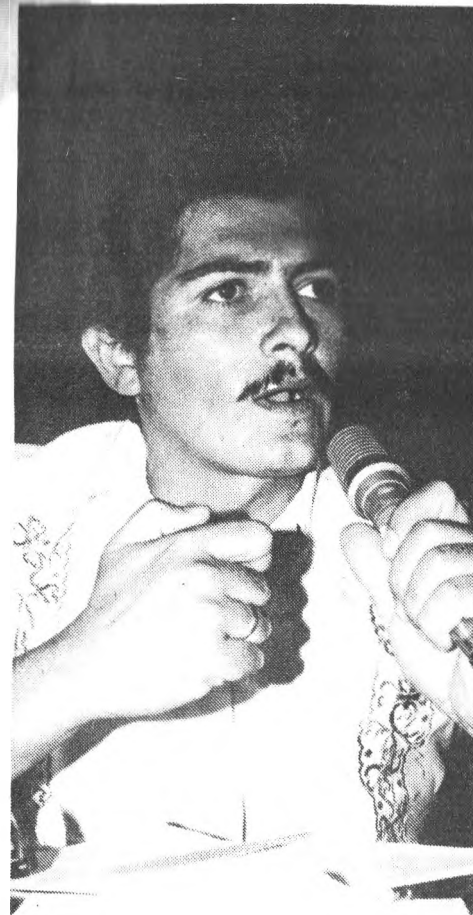
But a plebiscite or election, which in its form and rhetoric seems to be the embodiment of free choice and self-determination, is clearly an illusion in the colonial situation. The world community has seen ample evidence of this in the recent history of Zimbabwe. In the last colonial election in that country there were foreign observers to certify that the election was "free." The votes were counted and the intended result was announced. But later events demonstrated the fraudulent nature of the whole charade.

The manipulation of votes has become a science in modern times. When the archives of the State Department and the C.I.A. are opened for inspection, when we can examine the curricula for training their specialists in democracy, we will find courses on destabilization, misinformation, intimidation, on where to invest funds and when to announce policies or break news, the theory and practice of rumors, how to split a union or bomb a newspaper or silence a priest. While we await these details we know the central reality: there can be no self-determination without sovereignty. Colonial plebiscites do not allow free choice. And the case of colonialism in Puerto Rico will remain on your agenda and on ours until the Puerto Rican nation can determine freely its relations with all other nations. □

Partial list of endorsers:

- Americo Badillo Veiga, *Editor, Puerto Rico Libre!*
- Ella Baker, *Civil Rights Activist*
- Judith Berkan, *Vieques 21 Defendant*
- Jane Benedict, *Metropolitan Council on Housing*
- Marta Benevides
- Mary Boger, *New York Committee for Education*
- Josephine Butler, *D.C. Statehood Party*
- Robert Cohen, *Coordinator, National Lawyers Guild Puerto Rico Project*
- David Dellinger, *Institute for New Communications*
- James Early
- Robert Gabriner
- Rev. David Garcia, *St. Marks Church*
- Chokie Goddard, *Director, American Indian Center*
- Victor Goode, *National Conference on Black Lawyers*
- James Haughton, *Fight Back*
- Robert High, *Non-Intervention in Chile*
- Paul Horowitz, *North American Congress on Latin America*
- Irving Kaplan, *Economist*
- Arthur Kinoy, Esq., *Center for Constitutional Rights*
- Rudolpho Lozano, *CASA*
- William Kunstler, Esq., *Center for Constitutional Rights*
- Dr. Richard Levins, *Harvard University*

- Don Luce, *Clergy and Laity Concerned*
 - Rev. Paul Mayer, *Religious Task Force, Mobilization for Survival*
 - Dave McReynolds, *War Resisters League*
 - Eli Messinger, *New York Committee for Education*
 - Liz Mestres, *Graphic Designer*
 - Michael Myerson, *U.S. Peace Council*
 - Clay Newlin
 - Mayor Eugene (Gus) Newport
 - Bobbye Ortiz, *Monthly Review*
 - Luis A. Prado, *Hunter College*
 - J. Benton Rhodes, *Agricultural Mission, National Council of Churches*
 - Dr. Annette T. Rubinstein, *Historian and writer*
 - Digna Sanchez, *Puerto Rican Socialist Party*
 - Morton Sobell
 - Annie Stein
 - Olivia Taylor
 - Dr. Lucius Walker, *Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations*
 - Frank Vergara, *M.I.N.P.-El Comité*
 - Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee National Board Member*
- organizations listed for identification only



Alfredo Fernández, Partido Socialista Revolucionario.

ceptions of the petty-bourgeois nationalist forces. To address this question, we should try to make a brief analysis of how we see the situation in Puerto Rico, and what is the basis for this fragmentation and lack of unity.

Basically, the left in Puerto Rico is going through a transition which has to do with the crisis of the major petty-bourgeois forces. We are talking of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP). In 1976, this party had a big crisis acknowledged both by themselves and other forces in the left. Although up until 1976, our struggle gave the impression of being in a flow going from victory to victory, in 1976, this impression exploded like a big balloon. As a result of this failure there has been a tendency by the forces like the PSP to move further toward reformist electoral politics as a way of advancing the struggle, as opposed to grass roots organizing or inserting themselves in the mass struggle.

At the same time, we believe that another sector which has some of the same political and ideological conceptions would say that the problem of the independence movement was that its leadership was basically reformist in character. These groups, which the compañero referred to as the underground, have differences between themselves but do basically agree on one point that defines their politics—that armed struggle is a fundamental way of struggling in Puerto Rico at this stage. According to them, those in favor of their conceptions are revolutionaries, and those who are not in favor are reformists.

To our knowledge, these groups have not stated their strategy for Revolution in Puerto Rico nor their tactics for the movement. They have not put forth their politics of alliances nor have they defined the character of the revolution. They have not defined which is the principal class, the leading force in the process. They believe that Puerto Ricans in the U.S. are a nation and don't have the conception of national minorities being part of the U.S. working class. We believe that although there are important differences among these groups, they generally reflect a petty-bourgeois nationalist tendency of the left in opposition to a petty-bourgeois nationalist tendency of the right which is represented by the P.S.P.

There is a class struggle and a political and ideological struggle within the revolutionary left that we define as a struggle between the Marxist-Leninist forces and the petty-bourgeois nationalist forces. We believe that the underground organizations have arisen and multiplied in Puerto Rico in reaction of a sector of the petty-bourgeois nationalists who do not understand the reasons for the present stagnation of the struggle nor do they have a long-range perspective of the slow process of developing of mass work. They do not understand the conception of linking with the working class, forging cadres, and building a party that can give leadership to that process.

and right forces in the U.S., there has been a general tendency developing to cut back on all social service programs. This is not only a problem of Democrats or Republicans. It's not a Carter vs. Reagan issue. It reflects a general tendency of how to deal with the economic crisis of U.S. capitalism.

We believe that the U.S. is not in an economic position to sustain or increase Puerto Rico's dependency on food stamps. Either they cut hospitals, schools, and social services in New York, Detroit, and Chicago in order to maintain the level of aid to Puerto Rico or they start cutting in Puerto Rico. Either way, they are going to have problems. . . .

Question: You spoke of the crisis in the left in terms of its fragmentation. Why is this happening? Could you also speak on the crisis of the petty-bourgeois nationalists that you referred to and the effect of the underground movement on Puerto Rico?

Answer: I would like to clarify that I did not state that there is a crisis in the left in Puerto Rico but rather, a crisis in the leadership and the political and ideological con-

They think that the basic problem of the left is its inability to strike at imperialism and to create a revolutionary force. They are seeking a short path towards revolution in Puerto Rico. We believe, however, that insofar as the conditions and development of the mass struggle start to change, these forces will have to adjust their strategies so that they may insert themselves in the mass struggle and give it leadership based upon a clear class perspective. Otherwise, they will be doomed to disappear.

This is the situation of the left as we see it. These are three basic tendencies. We see two as major deviations in the left and the third as a Marxist-Leninist tendency that is slowly developing. Marxist-Leninist forces are a minority in the revolutionary movement because petty-bourgeois nationalism is still the predominant force. However, our historical perspective plus our practice in the last few years demonstrates to us that the Marxist-Leninist tendency is rising slowly but surely.

Question: Could you talk about the concrete and immediate tasks of the left now in Puerto Rico . . . ?

Answer: We define three major tasks in our central perspective: first, to link ourselves with the most advanced sectors of the working class and insert ourselves in the strategic sectors of the economy; secondly, to consolidate the theoretical formation of our cadres as a practical as well as theoretical task; and thirdly, to push forward the ideological debate by clarifying the political lines and platforms, programs and conceptions of the revolutionary left. Concretely, this would mean work in trade unions to create rank and file committees and study circles. It would mean developing the most advanced sectors of the working class and recruiting them to our organization or to what we call workers' commissions. These commissions would not only be rank and file commissions in the sense of trade union work, but would function as political organizations of the working class in the factories which would give direction to the workers' struggles.

This means that we have to develop propaganda to workers in the factories. We are beginning to take Marxist ideas some very concretely defined sectors of the working class that we understand as strategic sectors of our economy—pharmaceuticals, electronics, the big unions, workers of the public sector like the water resource company, the electrical energy company, the telephone company, etc. Therefore, when we talk about linking ourselves to the strategic sectors, this means engaging in daily work of propaganda, education, and organization among the masses. We don't speak of inserting ourselves in the struggle because at present, there is no such struggle of the masses taking place in Puerto Rico, but we have to develop the conditions to push that struggle forward. . . .

Guatemala: A New Challenge to Imperialism

The following article is a contribution by the Committee of Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, a group working in New York City.

The victory of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua and the revolutionary struggle of the people of El Salvador against the U.S.-backed junta have forced the U.S. government to focus more of its attention on Central America. Developments in Guatemala, El Salvador's neighbor to the northwest, have increased U.S. concerns. Like El Salvador, Guatemala is rapidly approaching a political crisis. Drawing on the experiences of generations of their own struggles and deriving inspiration from the struggles of Nicaragua and El Salvador, the Guatemalan people are combatively confronting one of the most brutal and corrupt military dictatorships in Latin America.

The people of Guatemala are struggling for their liberation from an economic, social and political system that not only obstructs their development as a nation, but also threatens their very physical survival. Economic dependence on U.S. business and exploitation at the hands of transnational corporations, the local landowning bourgeoisie and the military has spelled extreme misery for the vast majority of Guatemalans.

In a country where almost three fourths of the population are peasants, a mere 2% of the population owns over 70% of the productive lands. This leaves most peasants landless or without sufficient land to provide even a subsistence level of existence. Between 1958 and 1976 the cost of living rose by 76.6%. Salaries went up by only 1.7%, thus reducing workers' wages to below a subsistence level. Over 50% of the economically active population is unemployed or underemployed.

More than 80% of Guatemalan children are malnourished and 65% of the children die before reaching the age of 5. The infant mortality rate of 16% is one of the highest in the world. The illiteracy rate is 74%. Basic services such as hospitals, clinics, sewers and safe running water are either totally inadequate, nonexistent or too expensive for the huge majority of Guatemalans.

Repression: The Backbone of the System

The system of exploitation which has engendered the hunger and poverty suffered by the people of Guatemala is maintained by means of brutal repression. Since 1954—the year that saw the initiation of a

series of military or military-dominated governments unbroken up to the present day—more than 30,000 Guatemalans have been killed by government security forces and government-controlled paramilitary squads.

Under the present government of General Romeo Lucas García, installed through rigged elections in 1978, union and peasant leaders, students, university professors, school teachers, priests and democratic politicians have all become targets for government repression. The massacre at the Spanish Embassy on January 31 of this year of 22 Indian peasants occupying the embassy, their supporters and Spanish personnel, burned alive by government forces, has become the most well-known symbol of the Guatemalan government's reign of terror.

Revolution and Counterrevolution

In the past thirty-five years the Guatemalan people have lived through a revolutionary period and a subsequent counterrevolution. In 1944, a coalition of the petit bourgeoisie (small shop owners), the small local commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, workers and peasants over-

threw the dictatorship of Jorge Ubico. They initiated a democratic and nationalist period, in which the government attempted to create a modern capitalist economy both in the agricultural and industrial sectors, through the consolidation and growth of an internal market.

The character of the Revolution of October 1944, as it is known in Guatemala, became clearly defined under the administration of Colonel Jacobo Arbenz, who was elected to office in 1951. On the one hand, as a condition for developing an internal market and the rise of a strong nationally-owned industrial sector, Arbenz signed into law an Agrarian Reform program which permitted the expropriation of unused land. Almost 500,000 hectares belonging to the United Fruit company, one of the largest, most powerful and most exploitative U.S.-based companies in Guatemala were expropriated.

At the same time, the Arbenz government permitted and encouraged the development of trade unions and peasant leagues. By 1954, the National Federation of Guatemalan Peasants (CNCG) had 1,700 affiliated bodies with 250,000 members; the General Confederation of Guatemalan



"In Guatemala where almost three fourths of the population are peasants, a mere 2% of the population owns over 70% of the productive lands. This leaves most peasants landless or without sufficient land to provide even a subsistence level of existence."

Workers (CGTG) had 500 affiliated unions and over 100,000 members.

In 1954, afraid of the independent character of the Arbenz government, the progressive nature of its policies and the growth of the popular movement, the U.S. government sponsored an armed invasion of Guatemala to install a regime that would represent the interests of U.S. business and the landed oligarchy. Although peasants and workers pleaded for arms to defend the revolution, Arbenz stepped down, and the counterrevolution took place. Its results were devastating: the destruction of virtually all popular gains of the Revolution of October 1944 including the Agrarian Reform and the destruction of the popular organizations, and the beginning of more than 25 years of brutally repressive military regimes.

• The People's Response: Organized Resistance

The 1954 coup marked the end of a stage of the revolutionary process in Guatemala. The people's struggle for the right to determine their own destiny and to equally share in the fruits of their labor suffered a bitter setback in 1954. It suffered a second blow with the massive repression that incapacitated the insurgent guerrilla movements of the late 60's and early 70's. Yet their struggle for true national and social liberation was never completely destroyed. It continued to develop, based on the experience of battles lost and gained.

Perhaps the most significant lesson of the counterrevolution was the necessity of the workers and peasants to build independent organizations to defend their interests and put forward their demands, and eventually lead the struggle to gain state power.

In the past few years, overcoming the brutal and repressive tactics of successive military regimes, the Guatemalan people have made significant advances in building a mass movement. A major step in the consolidation of a unified labor movement was taken in March 1976, with the formation of the National Committee for Trade Union Unity (CNUS). The CNUS is a coordinating body of all the major trade union federations and locals, representing 96% of organized labor in Guatemala. While only a small percentage of industrial workers are organized, CNUS has played a key role in the struggles of all working people in Guatemala.

Another major step for the popular movement was the formation of the Committee of Peasant Unity (CUC) in April 1978. CUC represents the small farmers and agricultural workers of Guatemala. Its incorporation into the CNUS marked a qualitative advance in the development of a national worker-peasant alliance.

The most broad-based and unitary organization of the Guatemalan people is

the Democratic Front Against Repression (FDCR). Formed in February 1979, the FDCR is made up of 160 organizations of workers, peasants, slum-dwellers, teachers, students, Christians and professionals, as well as two social-democratic political parties. Its main objectives are to denounce the repression nationally and internationally, and to fight for the democratic rights of the Guatemalan people. The FDCR represents a broad alliance of social forces built on a strong spirit of unity and respect for the rights of the distinct social bodies that compose the front. But it is important to point out that the FDCR was formed upon the initiative of CNUS, and it is the militant popular organizations which have given the FDCR its direction.

Perhaps the most significant advance of the popular movement in 1980 has been the massive incorporation of Indian peasants into the struggle on a national level, and the further strengthening of the worker-peasant alliance. The majority of Guatemalans are Indian farmers and agricultural workers from more than 20 distinct ethnic groups. While supposedly equal under the law with Guatemala's non-Indian "ladino" population, in practice the Indian peoples are the most exploited sector of the population, and are discriminated against in virtually every facet of their lives.

In the beginning of March, over 70,000 permanent and migrant agricultural workers, both Indians and ladinos, initiated a strike paralyzing production in more than 100 large cotton and sugar plantations and sugar mills. The strike was organized by CUC, supported by CNUS and the FDCR, and accompanied by work stoppages in solidarity in several urban factories. The agricultural workers, armed with machetes and poles, also took over several sugar mills and invaded dozens of plantations. In the face of this massive strike action, the government was forced to raise the minimum wage for agricultural workers from \$1.12 per day to \$3.20 per day, provoking protests from the landed oligarchy, and the sharpening of contradictions within the bourgeoisie.

After being virtually wiped out in the late 60's and early 70's, armed guerrilla organizations have gained unprecedented strength throughout the country. Unlike the 60's, their main base of support is among the peasantry; Indian peasants, especially women, make up the bulk of their combatants. The four main revolutionary organizations—the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), the Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), the Armed Rebel Forces (FAR) and the Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT)—are coordinating their actions, and they recently announced their commitment to unite their forces. They have taken over dozens of towns and held meetings with the inhabitants, ambushed government troops, killed persons responsi-

ble for the repression and carried out massive distributions of propaganda. In spite of counterinsurgency efforts that have included the bombing of civilian populations and military occupation of most of the country, the government has been unable to stop the actions or detain the growth of the guerrilla organizations.

Stop U.S. Intervention in Central America

Since the 1954 counterrevolution, the U.S. government has been the principal backer of the Guatemalan military regimes through economic aid, military training and military sales and assistance. Between 1950 and 1981, the U.S. will have provided Guatemala with \$65.9 million in military assistance and sales. In 1977, as a result of Carter's human rights policy, direct military assistance to Guatemala was cut off, and rightist Guatemalan politicians accused the State Department of communism. Yet, thousands of dollars of military equipment used to massacre the Guatemalan people continue to be received every year from the U.S. through government and private sales. In addition, U.S. ally Israel is Guatemala's main supplier of arms.

Despite the extent and importance of U.S. economic interest in Guatemala, especially in oil and nickel production, U.S. interests in Guatemala are principally political. U.S. imperialism wishes to maintain Guatemala as a bastion of "anti-communism" in Central America, and stop the swift revolutionary advances both within that country and in the region.

Guatemala has become a center of reaction in Central America. Right-wing Nicaraguan "somocista" forces have regrouped in Guatemala, as well as in Honduras, and former members of Somoza's National Guard are training and aiding Guatemala's repressive forces throughout the country.

The ability of the Guatemalan military to intervene in El Salvador is severely limited by the struggle at home. As the struggles of the Salvadorean and Guatemalan people advance and U.S. foreign policy becomes more aggressive, the Central Americanization of reactionary forces in Guatemala will most likely be reinforced with renewed U.S. military aid and training, as in El Salvador.

The threat of direct U.S. military intervention continues to loom over the region. Our solidarity efforts here in the U.S. must focus on stopping U.S. economic, diplomatic and above all, military intervention in Central America. □

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