

# OBREROS EN MARCHA

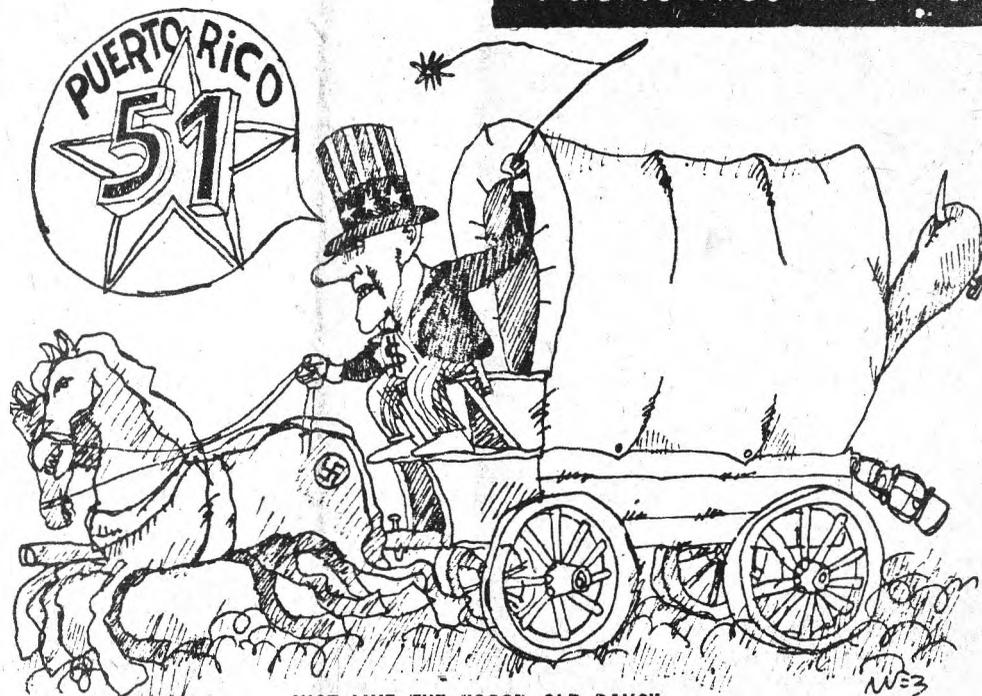
POLITICAL ORGAN OF EL COMITE M.I.N.P.

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# EDITORIAL

## N.Y. - BANKS, WAGES AND RACISM

For two years, the pages of OEM have covered the orchestrated attacks on the standard of living and working conditions of the working class and poor of New York. Recently, there have been two new actions by the banks of New York—Citibank (\$56 billions in assets), Chase Manhattan (\$42 billion in assets), Morgan Guaranty and Bankers Trust (\$20 billion in assets respectively)—that mark a qualitative change in their attempts to establish absolute control over public finances and create a favorable climate for further industrial and financial profits: First, the bankers have proposed the creation of an appointed body to oversee the city's finances for the next 20 years which would replace the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB) when its term expires. Secondly, they have called for the dismantling of Affirmative Action programs that require written commitments from city contractors to equitably allot a share of jobs to members of minority groups and women.

By these actions, the bankers would make elected city officials ceremonial figures and rubber stamps, and drastically set back the struggles of minorities for equal job opportunities. What has provided the pretext for the banks has been the ruling of the state Court of Appeals which ruled illegal the moratorium the city imposed on the payment of nearly \$1 billion in short term notes. In its ruling, the court set Feb. 3rd as the deadline for payment. Utilizing this situation, the banks have made any aid to the city contingent on the acceptance of their aforementioned proposals.

This latest attempt by the banks to control outright the finances of New York City is the culmination of a process begun in 1975 with the establishment of the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC) and the EFCB. Both these agencies, with significant financial and business involvement, were given control and direction of the city budget. According to the banks, these agencies have limitations which have led to the bid for their outright control. Among these limitations, is the limited life of these agencies—particularly of the EFCB which is due to expire next year—and the composition of these agencies, which though containing financial and industrial representatives, are to a certain extent dominated by elected officials. In addition, the bankers are preoccupied that in the upcoming city elections a new mayor might be elected that will, under popular pressure, put an end to the cuts and even restore some services after the 3 year financial plan and the EFCB expire. Therefore, they have made the decision to act now.

Throughout these two years of financial crisis, the preoccupation of the banks has been solely to protect their interests. As a result, they have maneuvered the city government, that has willingly collaborated, to make drastic cuts in social services deteriorating public education, health services and daycare. Hypocritically, the banks have made the call for these cuts under a supposed "fiscal responsibility", but fundamentally, the fiscal responsibility that has concerned banks is payment of the city's debt service which presently accounts for 19% of the city's budget. All along, the concern of the bankers on the problem of city "bankruptcy" has been the impact of such an occurrence on payment of the debt service. This has led the bankers to trample over the myth that this government is one of the people, for the people, and by the people; and established clearly that this is a government of the capitalist, for the capitalist and by the capitalist.

In this regard, another thrust of the bankers to create a "stable, healthy economy" has been to couple their attacks on social services with a concerted attack on the city's wage structure and affirmative action programs.

### City's wage structure undermined

In a recent New York Times article, Leonard C. Yassen, who heads Fantus Co., which advises industries where to relocate outside of New York, clearly outlined how the wage structure in NYC has been undermined:

"In 1950, labor costs for industrial production workers in New York were 9% above the national average. By 1970, they were even with the nation. Now they are 2% below the national average."

(NY Times 11/24/76)

Furthermore, Yassen went on to point out:

"... labor cost differentials are becoming even more advantageous in specific industries; as much as 20% in the manufacture of instruments, converted paper products, machinery and toys, rubber, plastics, and fabricated metal products."

(NY Times, ibid)

### Racism and affirmative action

Now that big business has effectively undermined the city's wage structure, it has set its sites on eliminating Affirmative Action programs. The latest proposals by the bankers is consistent with these efforts. Although there has been a tendency to identify indiscriminately many attacks by the ruling class as essentially racist, when, in fact, they are attacks against the class spearheaded by a thrust against minorities, this is not the case with affirmative action. This blow is a direct racist attack against minority workers and part of the overall racist wave of actions that the ruling class has unleashed against the gains of minority workers and in the process the entire class. In this regard, the ruling class is aware that the inroads the minority workers have made undermines their efforts to undercut wages, increase productivity and maintain the class divided.

Confronted with this situation the repudiation of these divisionist and racist efforts is an immediate task. It is the responsibility of the fragmented left and progressive sectors in NYC to unite in one common thrust against the latest attempts by the bourgeoisie to divide even further the working class and the oppressed. The non-existence of one organization capable of giving direction to the whole working class demands discussions and planning among the different groups that up to now have waged separate struggles against the collective attacks of the city government and the banks. Those of us seriously committed to defending the interests of the working people of New York must in organized form say no to racism and exploitation.



## INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

On March 8, women and men throughout the world will commemorate International Working Women's Day, a historic date long ignored until recently in the United States.

International Working Women's Day celebrates the heroic struggles waged by Northamerican working class women in defense of their rights to jobs, safe and healthy working conditions, a living wage, etc. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, working women, particularly in the textile and garment industries (one of the few industries open to women), fought in the shop and in the streets against their miserable job situations: long and back-breaking work hours, freezing cold or boiling hot rooms, foul and stagnant air, and starvation wages. Women fought against child labor exploitation and for the right to vote.

In honor of these struggles and of the progressive struggles of women everywhere, March 8th was designated by an International Women's Socialist Conference, held in 1910, as a day of unity of working women from all parts of the world in the struggle for democracy, peace and socialism.

### The Oppression of Women in Capitalist Society

Since 1910, women in this country have achieved many victories. Through their militant battles, they have forced the institution of many reforms; but the fundamental exploitative and demeaning conditions that determine women's role in capitalist society still remain.

Under capitalism, women are both maintainer and reproducer of the family and also part of the labor force or its reserve. Throughout the history of class society (through the centuries of slavery, feudalism, and the early stages of capitalism), most women's position in society was to stay in the home. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century and the development of capitalism, the female worker emerged, the first massiye

incorporation of women into the labor market. On the one hand, this process set the basis for the ultimate emancipation of women in that their struggle would no longer be an individualized one taking place between man and woman within the narrow confines of the family, but rather that as part of the production process, as workers, women could now participate in the social confrontation between the workers and the bosses (the owners of the big industries and corporations) in the struggle against the exploitative conditions of capitalism. On the other hand, the emergence of the woman worker also brought with it manifestations of the historical condition of division of labor based on sex. The jobs that were open to women (both then and now)—the clothing and textile industries, the food and drug industries, the service industries of health, education and secretarial positions, and domestic workers in private homes—are fundamentally the projection into the public sphere of the tasks women fulfill within the family.

### The Second Shift

In addition, although women advanced tremendously by their integration into the work force, this new development did not end their historical responsibilities as nourishers of the family. Women were forced to take on a double or second shift in their new capacity as workers. They would labor all day in the factory, hospital, or office, and then go home to put in another 6 or 7 hours of work.

The maintenance of this second shift insures that women will continue to play a subordinate role in the labor force and society. Not only will they continue to participate primarily in marginal industries or services, but by maintaining the division of labor within the family, women continue to carry the responsibility of domestic labor at the home.

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# OBREROS EN MARCHA

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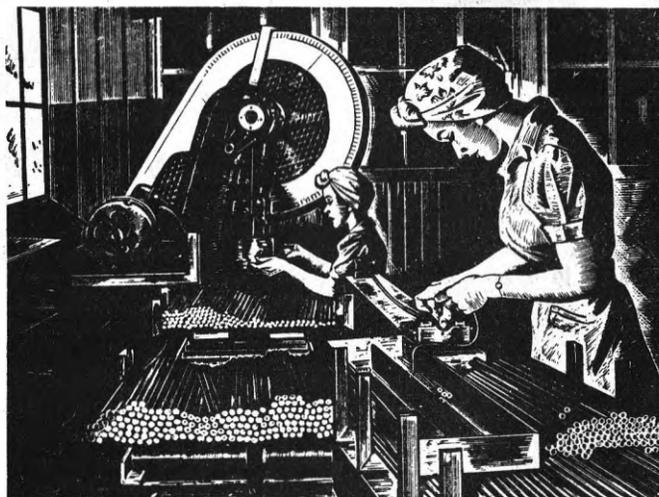
## WORKING WOMEN DAY (cont.)

In general, women have been systematically kept out of the heavy industries except during wartime, when women are needed to replace men in the factories. World War II provides an excellent example of this. As men went off to war, hundreds of thousands of women went to work in the defense plants. In order for women to fully participate in the production process, the federal government established 24 hour childcare centers, shopping and cleaning services, home service food, etc.—all created to handle the second shift responsibilities of women. Once the war was over and there was no longer a need for women in the labor force, these services were all completely cutback.

Presently, both in the marginal jobs and in the service sector, the degree of unionization is generally less and consequently wages are much lower. According to statistics from the Department of Labor on the 10 lowest paid occupations in the job market for 1970, women represented more than 60% of the workers in 9 of those positions. Women are forced to take these low-paying jobs as it becomes increasingly hard for a family with the worsening economic conditions.

### Women in the Labor Force Today

In the U.S., women account for over 40% of the total labor force, numbering nearly 39 million women. Overall, women earn substantially less than men. This situation is even worse among minority women whose earnings are even lower. Although the differences in wages among women based on race or nationality has decreased in recent times, this in itself is misleading in so far as real wages is concerned as minority women are often head of households and only wage earners in the family. Further, the stated figures on wage differentials between men and women, and among women, reflect not so much the fact that minority women have won victories in the struggle for higher and equal wages (though this is the case to some degree), but rather the fact that the role of women (and minority workers in general) in the labor market is to fill low-paying, unskilled or semi-skilled jobs that are a necessary aspect of the capitalist economy. Thus, despite the rise in the wages of minority women, women overall earn 56% of what men earn and the gap is increasing. In



1976, the median income for women was \$6,957 and for men it was \$12,152. The low wages of women are also utilized to depress the wages of all workers as the owners of big business propose the hiring of women as a threat against the demands of male workers for higher wages.

The struggle for the liberation of working class women is at a very low level of development today. For the most part, it manifests itself through the just struggles of women on welfare seeking decent treatment as human beings and against the cuts in aid; through the struggles of women demanding daycare centers and quality school programs for their children; through the struggles of women against sterilization as well as the struggles for the right to abortions. While these are all particular aspects of women's oppression, the leading force in many of these struggles is the petit-bourgeoisie (both minority and white women), who incorrectly identify the enemy as the "white male establishment," or who in the process of becoming involved in the particular struggle objectively separate the problem from the tasks confronting the whole working class. Both being manifestations of not understanding that the root cause of women's oppression lies in the capitalist system itself.

In this respect, it is not sufficient for us to understand the problem, we must translate these theoretical premises into social practice. We, as defenders of the interests of the working class, have the responsibility of not only stating the incorrectness of the feminist view on the question ("men are the enemy") or recognizing the incorrectness of isolated struggles or the many tasks confronting conscious elements of the working class. In this respect, as we prepare to honor the significance of March 8, we must integrate ourselves in these struggles, pointing out the need to unite the struggle for social services, childcare, right to abortions, against sterilization abuse, etc., into one common class effort against the exploitative system which condemns all workers, men and women, to a life of misery and oppression. Not to raise these demands or to disregard the importance of these struggles is to make an abstraction of the correct principle of "women's oppression is a class question."

**IN COMING EDITIONS—WOMEN WITHIN THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT**



Woman in industry

## Puerto Rico Informa

"dudar de lo que es cierto y no de lo que es dudoso, he aquí el espíritu de la dialéctica"



## 51st STATE ? SIGNIFICANCE AND TASKS AHEAD

### Contribution by JSM

Just two months ago we analyzed the election results in Puerto Rico. At that time, we mentioned the status of statehood as a solution for imperialism; we also put forth that this year would have more concrete news on U.S. intentions for Puerto Rico. Some concrete news has arrived! It appears that imperialism is considering unilateral solutions on the political status of Puerto Rico. Ex-president Ford submitted to the Senate a bill for statehood. Here in the land of Betances and Albizu there was immediate reaction. For obviously different reasons, both the pro-independence forces and the commonwealth advocates repudiated the Ford bill. Desperately, immediate interpretations were made. It appeared as if the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" had galloped

into this "Caribbean Paradise" and there was no one able to halt their horses. As to be expected: the PPD (Popular Democratic Party) does not have the capability to do so, and the left is either involved in a caricature of an evaluation, typified by stalinism, or lost in absolute inaction.

In historical terms the advocates of statehood have experienced a growth in their forces. For in the eyes of the people, the statehood party has been the only one to offer an alternative. We in the independence movement have been unable to articulate an alternative to smash the commonwealth-statehood choice. Definitely, confronted with the corruption of the PPD, the people saw an alternative in statehood. It appears that imperialism also reached this conclusion. Among the independence forces, we have always believed that confronted with the choice of statehood or independence imperialism would opt for the latter as long as their interests were not endangered by the neo-colonial republic. What then are the reasons for this new position of imperialism?

Some have opted for the view that this latest development is due to the existence of petroleum in our offshore. Although I don't close the door to this explanation, it preoccupies me that it is given so much attention. First, this preoccupation is based on the fact that the exploitation of this fuel is more convenient for imperialism under the present status. Aside from such

commonly known facts as tax exemptions, cheap labor force etc., we can include another important reason which, more than once, has become the topic of public discussion—the environmental laws. Indeed, the present bill by the Ad Hoc Committee—The Compact Act—calls for environmental autonomy for Puerto Rico. This would mean two crucial things: first, since U.S. environmental laws are quite restrictive, the compact attempts to give the Commonwealth flexibility to legislate less restrictive legislative laws. Second, if the environmental laws become more flexible, production costs will be considerably lessened which would benefit the large monopolies. Consequently, those laws would become one more incentive for foreign capital.

On the other hand, statehood would mean the application of all Federal laws in Puerto Rico, including environmental control laws.

Significantly, based on the excellent U.S. trade relations with Saudi Arabia (the world's foremost oil producer), we realize that the U.S. does not have a real oil problem.

Another weak argument is that it was a plot between the Ford Administration and the PNP for the support it rendered Ford. This argument, without diminishing its merit, seems to me very simplistic. The status of Puerto Rico is too delicate a matter in Yankee politics for it to be resolved by way of a political favor.

There are other developments which at first glance do not have any internal linkage but that in my view respond to a well traced plan. During the recent election, Mr. Juan Passalacqua (a principal ideologue of the New Progressive Party- ed.), off-handedly, remarked that the Democratic Party of the U.S. was setting in motion the steps toward registering that party in Puerto Rico. At first, this news appeared as inconsequential but upon listening to Mr. Ford we can see the direct connection. To register the Democratic Party in Puerto Rico means that Puerto Ricans would vote in the Presidential elections. This, in itself, is a step toward total incorporation. Moreover, although the PNP in the last elections maintained that the "status was not an issue," this does not mean that it will not pave the road toward that objective. In fact, the PNP

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## 51st STATE (cont.)

reaction was to endorse, cautiously, the statements made by Mr. Ford. Undoubtedly, the bill announced by Mr. Ford was in the making for at least 8 months. Therefore, only an illusionist would speak of it as a blunder. What is clearly evident is that it is difficult for the U.S. to maintain the present colonial situation. They must find a solution that perhaps may not be the best for the barons of Wall St. but that will allow the U.S. government to maintain a more or less liberal image—particularly in light of the deterioration of its foreign policy. Here we include an aside. Traditionally, orthodox Marxists limit themselves to reading Engel's Anti-Durhing where he assumes a determinist position in the relationship between economic and political factors. Engels stated "that economic determines the political," relegating, in the process, the political factor as a mere appendage of economic laws. Later Engels revised his original thesis and placed the relationship in its proper perspective. In other words, he established the dialectical relationship between the material infrastructure and spiritual aspects of society (morals, politics, arts, etc.). Moreover, he affirmed that in given periods the political factor assumes a position above economic laws and becomes in the process the principal aspect by assuming a decisive influence over economic aspects.

From the above, we derive that something similar is occurring in Puerto Rico, that is, the political aspect has become the principal factor in the relationship. Significantly, the economic structure of the island is in a critical situation and worsening due to the colonial status. In this regard, although Wall St.'s views are fundamental in determining U.S. policies in respect to Puerto Rico, it is equally true that the political situation decisively influences their intentions.

Puerto Rico's case must be seen within the context of liberation at the international level. The National Liberation Movements have virtually encircled U.S. imperialism. After suffering both political and military defeats in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Angola and experiencing problems with the previously unconditional allies of Spain and Portugal, the U.S. imperialists have had to retreat. To where have they retreated? Towards America. The U.S. has been forced into the position of necessarily supporting highly despised regimes such as in Chile, Argentina and Brazil. This means that even traditional bastions are becoming unstable. Within that marsh, that constitutes the political dealings of the great powers headed by the U.S., we must place the case of Puerto Rico.



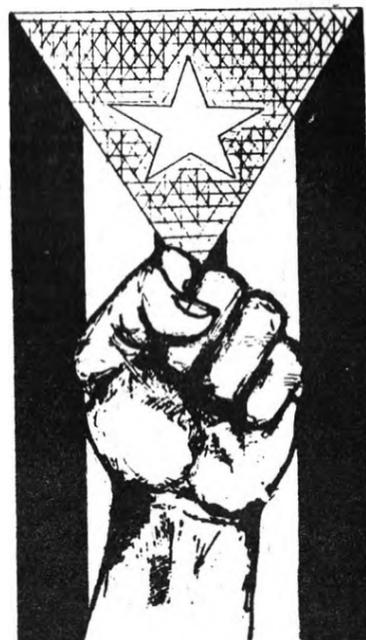
## "...DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT"

The colonial system has become unmanageable. As we've pointed out imperialism must find a solution. We must not be surprised that they are looking toward statehood...

To this situation, what alternatives can be presented by the left? We must not look for mechanical solutions. We must carefully think out the options. In this respect, I think we must eliminate the famous broad fronts in which principle positions are diluted in order to establish fragile unity which inevitably leads to political conciliations. On the contrary, we should discuss the possibility of creating a National Liberation Front. In my view this constitutes a need not only tactically but strategically. This NLF should be formed not only to combat the plans for statehood but, above all, as a formulation to struggle for independence. The NLF should include in its program the patriotic aspects of our struggle in order to include in its ranks those that disregard class struggle but have maintained a consistent, anti-imperialist position. It must, fundamentally, include in its program the aspirations of the working class in such a manner that it insures against the ideological deviation of the front.

I think that if the spirit of unity is maintained above sectarianism; and the aforementioned principles are implemented; the NLF would be a strong response by the Left. In the process, we can then perhaps break with the inertia that is dominant today.

The time of supreme definition has arrived: Yankees or Puerto Ricans! Proletariat or Bourgeoisie!



## BRENTWOOD, LONG ISLAND

# MINORITIES ORGANIZE TO DEFEND RIGHTS



In recent years a considerable number of industries have relocated their bases of operation outside of New York City for a variety of reasons; lower property, state and city taxes, larger proportion of non-unionized labor, etc. In essence this is done in search of lower production costs. These relocations, coupled with the high level of unemployment in the city have forced many working class families, a large number of which are minorities, to move to nearby counties. This trend and the existence in these counties of a significant minority population, has led to the growth of neighboring working class communities sharing similar experiences. One such community is Brentwood in Suffolk County, Long Island. As a consequence of these relocations, this town has developed one of the largest Latin communities outside the New York City area.

Following the Long Island chapter of our organization describes aspects of a recent struggle developing in the Latin community of Brentwood, this a reflection of the conditions confronting Latins as well as other workers in these developing communities.

Within this general framework, we can fully appreciate the most important lesson of the struggle carried out by the Hispanic Parents Association of Brentwood, i.e., that we must combine forces in our communities to defend our rights. It is only in this manner that we as workers can force the ruling class to make concessions that will improve our standard of living.

The actions in Brentwood provide a clear example of what the united efforts of working people can achieve. The effectiveness of the struggle was greatly enhanced because an organization existed that was able to mobilize the parents and inform them of developing events. The Association was the center for coordinating the entire struggle. Many communities do not have such organizations. The experience in Brentwood proves that fighting organizations of this nature are needed and must be developed.

In addition, the struggle was effective because of the

wide support it attracted from many other groups: Bilingual Professionals, other community organizations, the Civil Rights Commission, etc. It is important to stress here that when other people come out openly in support of actions taken by parents (or any group of people), it is for all involved to insure that no reprisals whatsoever can be carried out against any level of support given. Since the courts at the state level ruled several times against the best interests of the children, reprisals against all involved were a real possibility.

Yet it is also important to point out the aspects we must emphasize in the coming months to build the effectiveness of future struggles. Here we point first and foremost to the fact that the confrontation remained solely within the Hispanic community.

Although the immediate issue pertained to bilingual education, the fact remains that the education of the other children (WHITES AND Blacks) is also being destroyed. Over 70 teachers have been excessed with more to come, resulting among other things in classrooms of up to 30 children. This means that the parents of all children represent the direct allies of the Hispanic parents in their fight for quality education. Links with other parents must begin to be forged immediately to be better prepared for future battles.

We also point to the fact that only a very small sector of the community knew about the struggle. Propaganda about the issue was limited to one leaflet, and this was directed only at the Latin community. Efforts to publicize the situation in the mass media and newspapers were initiated only in the final stages of the struggle, and this again was addressed solely to El Diario, a Hispanic daily newspaper.

In general, we must recognize the positive aspects of the struggle as represented by the determination of the parents to carry the fight to the end. But it is crucial that in the future other sectors of the community are integrally

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Parents struggle for bilingual education

# SMALL SHOPS- COMMENTARIES

In its recent local publication—ON THE LINE—our Workers Sector described the miserable conditions prevalent in small shops throughout New York City. These shops, employing a reduced number of workers are being promoted throughout the city. This trend has been initiated by the municipal government and banks as one of the "solutions to the fiscal crisis."

Generally non-unionized, or organized by corrupt Mafia controlled locals, these shops are part of the city's plan for the "liberalization of zoning laws." In order to attract these industries, the city has proposed the lowering of business taxes, lower interest loans to small business, freezing real estate taxes, etc. As the city extends these handouts to light industry, it disregards the most elemental needs of the workers in these shops.

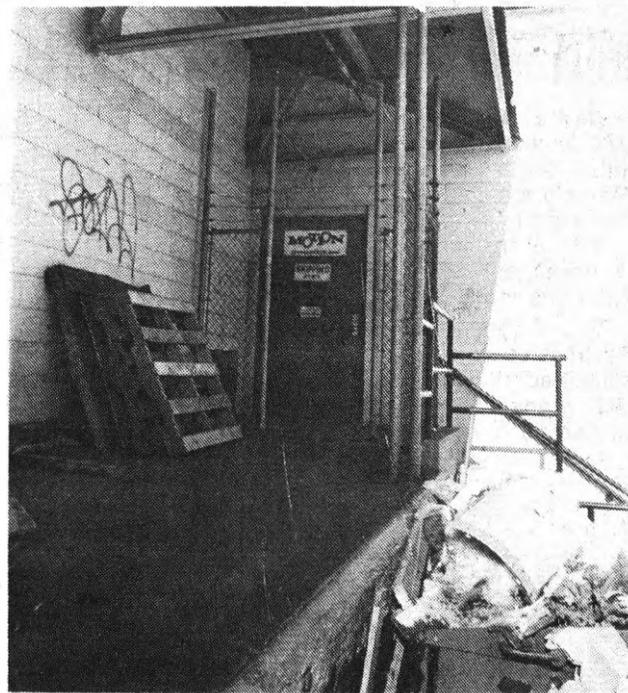
Responding to our local publications, a young Latin worker related to us his recent experiences in a small plant, Motion Dynamics of Brooklyn. We asked brother JE to describe for OEM these experiences which not only reflect the conditions of many small shops in the city but serve to expose the attitudes of business unions, corrupt locals and major Internationals such as the ILGWU.

*Editors, recently I picked up a publication in which your organization described the conditions of small shops in the city. I have worked under similar conditions and thought you might be interested in sharing these experiences with others.*

*The name of the company I worked for is Motion Dynamics, a company specializing in the design and construction of moving advertising displays, like those seen in food and liquor stores throughout the city. Until recently the plant was located in the Bush Terminal, a large industrial area along the Brooklyn waterfront near Sunset Park. Last month the plant was moved to a new site*



Bush Terminal area



Entrance to Jamaica site.

*in Jamaica, Queens. It is this move which I think may be of interest to you as it shows how workers are treated by the owners of these shops.*

*The number of workers at the shop was between 8 to 20 workers, depending on the level of work to be done. During the peak periods, lasting anywhere between 4 to 5 weeks, a full force of twenty workers was employed. As soon as the work was completed, all the new workers were layed off. I went through this process myself a couple of times.*

*Most of us were young, in our early twenties. Without exception, we were from minority groups, Latins and Blacks. Almost to a man we all shared a lack of skills and formal education. In my case I am attending evening school, hoping to enter college or pass the test for training school. As far as salaries at Motion Dynamics these are very low. The highest wage at the shop is \$2.95 an hour and only a few workers were getting this. On the average, I would say that about \$2.55 was the wage of most of us, and according to the union contract the next 10 cents increase is not due till July of 1977. On these wages, it is difficult for one person to exist, never mind those brothers who have families to support. These low wages, and the periodic lay-offs [within the last six months I was layed off twice for three week periods each time] are the main reason for the large turnover in the shop. In fact, during the time I worked at Motion Dynamics, I would say that over 60 brothers worked there at one time or another. Most of them left looking for a better job.*

*As you mentioned in your publication, unlike in large plants, the foreman at Motion Dynamics does more than just supervise. Many times he became involved in the work. Yet he never mellowed his attitude of foreman toward the rest of us. He looked down on us and treated us as if we were ignorant or mindless people to be watched*

## MINORITIES ORGANIZE(cont.)

involved. Our goal must be an overall struggle for equal and quality education. In addition, other communities must follow in the footsteps of the Hispanic Parents Association and work unceasingly to create the mass democratic organizations that will unite all the working people in the communities. This will enable us to carry on a consistent and systematic struggle to uphold our interests as a united multinational working class.

The rights of minorities for quality education in Brentwood came under attack last November when the school administration removed Mrs. Delia Vela from her first grade bilingual class. Angered by this action, the hispanic community decided to fight back.

In the struggle to reinstate Mrs. Vela, the Hispanic Parents Association of Brentwood, an organization that since its creation has fought consistently to improve the quality of education for all children, played a crucial role in bringing the parents affected together and in maintaining a high degree of unity among them. The united efforts of these parents plus the support drawn from a wide range of organizations and individuals created the necessary conditions for the eventual victory.

Mrs. Vela, a qualified bilingual teacher, was assigned as a substitute to a first grade class for two weeks. Three months went by and she was still teaching the class. During that time the children developed the highest regard and admiration for their teacher. Even though her removal would have affected the children, the parents were more concerned with the fact that Mrs. Vela was replaced by a teacher who was not qualified to teach in a bilingual class. This would have the greater impact on the children's education. They refused to accept the irresponsible actions of the school administration. In assuming this position, the Hispanic Parents Association took the lead in the struggle to re-instate the bilingual teacher. The Association decided to boycott classes until Mrs. Vela was returned to the classroom. This boycott

*and harassed. But if the foreman was bad, the boss was even worse. To him we were nothing but hired help with no right to question or complain.*

*At Motion Dynamics, we were represented by local 132 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. During the time I worked at Motion Dynamics, we met with the Union representative a couple of times. He was Latin, with an attitude just like the poverty pimps of our communities. To him his job was like a favor to us and only he knew all the answers. If we asked questions, he brushed them aside; after talking about the laziness and lack of interests of the workers as the main reason why we knew so little about the union and our rights. Yet, just before Motion Dynamics decided to move to Jamaica a few of us asked about a union meeting but he discouraged our attendance because "it was too cold and the meeting was cancelled."*

*Most of us in the shop first heard rumors that the shop was moving during the beginning of the winter. Those that had been working at Motion Dynamics the longest paid no attention to the rumors because they had heard these rumors before and nothing had come of them. It was not till two weeks before the move that we were told. We, the most affected, were told last.*

*Ed. Note: We encourage our readers to contribute their experiences or criticisms to OEM.*

lasted for three weeks. Throughout the boycott, the parents confronted administrative harassment intended to undermine their unity and weaken the struggle.

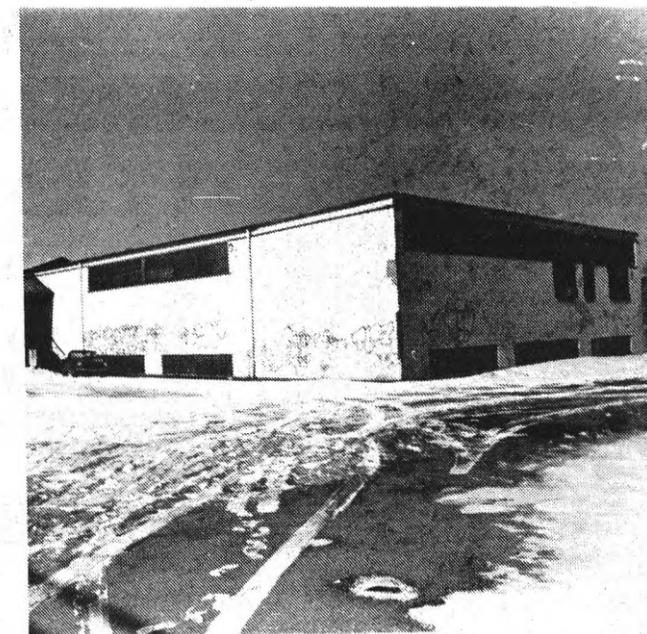
In the process, the hispanic parents became aware that their actions were against the law. Yet they refused to obey a law which forced their children into a totally unfavorable situation.

Besides lowering the quality of education for hispanic children, the administration's move would have set a precedent whereby other bilingual teachers who lacked seniority in the school system would also be removed. This would effectively destroy the bilingual program.

Support from significant numbers of bilingual teachers added strength to the parents and reinforced their willingness to continue struggling.

In general, these were the conditions that set the Latin community of Brentwood in motion. But the problems affecting minorities in this community are not limited to education. In fact, only the immediate problem was resolved in terms of the classroom situation. With conditions continuing to deteriorate in other aspects of life in this community, the people will become aware of the need to unite their efforts and demand their just rights. We must reflect on this recent experience in order to gather the lessons necessary to guide our struggles in the future.

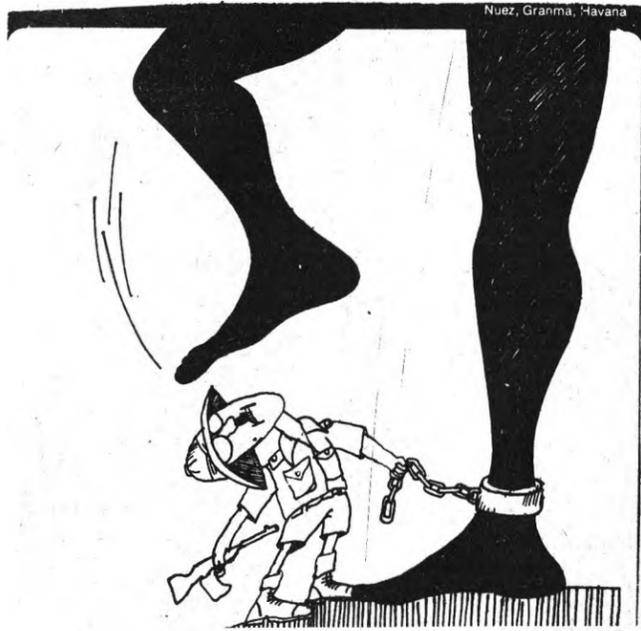
First and foremost, it is important that we understand that the root of the recent attacks on our children's education is to be found in the present economic crisis—a crisis that (as we have elaborated in past issues of OEM) has been brought about by the greedy motives of the big corporation owners to make sure that the wealth of this country stays in their own hands. This is translated into record profits for a small minority of the population and mass unemployment, lower wages, high prices, increased taxes, poverty, and misery for the millions of other men and women. This situation will continue to get worse before it gets better as long as making profits remains the main drive in this society.



Motion Dynamics.

# SOUTH AFRICA - (END OF SERIES)

contribution to OEM from companero BS



Revolutionaries are not the only forces who can perceive the course of history. In a distorted form so can the oppressor. In south Africa the Vorster gang knows that Apartheid is in its "eleventh hour". They have developed several strategies to postpone the further development of the primary contradiction within South Africa and more generally to forestall the successful culmination of the revolutionary trend in southern Africa. At the level of productive forces, the settler regime attempts to overcome the restrictions of the domestic market by actively seeking markets in the rest of Africa, especially in those areas not yet saturated by western imperialism. Its foreign policy of "detente" and "dialogue" are the political expressions of the quest for new markets, the quest for areas to export her internal contradictions.

The basis of this foreign policy can be found in the weak and vulnerable economies of many African countries, especially those like Malawi and Botswana. But conditions for the success of this strategy appear in at least three of the five "frontline" African states: Zambia, Botswana, and Tanzania (the remaining "Frontline states" are Angola and Mozambique). These economies are accompanied by social structures in which the revolutionary forces are still quite weak and undeveloped. Basically, countries of this type are neo-colonial. Economic failures at home and the example to their own peoples of the successful peoples struggles in Angola and Mozambique raise serious threats to their legitimacy. This neo-colonialist, petty bourgeoisie bureaucratic leadership needs South African trade to shore up its local economies and thus its legitimacy. It is South Africa's racial policies and their obvious unpopularity with the masses of these countries which prohibit the accommodationist leadership from openly selling out to South Africa. Through cosmetic changes at home

such as ending segregation in churches, toilets, libraries, etc. and in moving up the timetable for granting "independence" to the bantustans, the Vorster gang hopes to become palatable enough to the neo-colonial regimes of Africa to buy their tolerance politically and penetrate their markets economically. The high points of this thrust were the Vorster-Kaunda talks at Victoria Falls in August 1975 and the Nkomo-Smith discussions of March 1976. We hope that the Geneva talks will not join this list.

The policies just mentioned are all attempts to channel the class struggle in southern Africa into non-antagonistic, non-violent constitutionalist channels before the indigenous revolutions through armed struggle develop past the stage of petty bourgeoisie leadership to that of peoples war and socialist transformation. Only from this perspective can we clearly understand Vorster and Smith's position on Zimbabwe. This is a brazen attempt to move the arena of conflict from the battlefield to the conference table before the people's development through armed struggle sweeps away self-doubts, internal divisions, lack of knowledge and petty bourgeoisie leadership.

One must not minimize also the ability of South Africa to intimidate frail neo-colonial regimes. This is the deeper meaning of their intervention in Angola and the model of twentieth century "gunboat diplomacy" initiated by the Israeli settler regime at Entebbe Airport in Uganda.

Outside of the "Republic" itself, we can now see that the greatest immediate danger in southern Africa is neo-colonialism in the form of a negotiated constitutionalist solution reached in the absence of armed struggle. The contradiction between the aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie and the masses exists in all the liberation movements and the African states which support them. The policies of "detente" and "dialogue" are nothing but attempts to make the petty bourgeoisie the major aspect of this contradiction. Presently, however, the pace of popular struggle has been so swift that South Africa has largely failed in this attempt.



African students in Soweto.

Inside South Africa itself this strategy of empowering a collaborationist petty bourgeoisie cannot be implemented as it can in other parts of southern Africa. There is too close an identity of interest between capitalism and racism for this to take place. The quest for legitimacy cannot take place behind the mask of an all-Black government. For this reason the Vorster gang advances the bantustan independence scheme. The pursuit of legitimacy then, takes place by projecting Black-white equality within separate developmental spheres. The bantustans are to be granted a sham independence and serve the racists as a political vehicle for Black development. In fact South Africa will continue to dominate these areas economically and thereby also politically. Presently 9.4% of the Apartheid budget is set aside in order to prepare the bantustans for "independence". This amounts to approximately 700 million dollars or 80% of the revenue for these "reserves". Their lack of economic viability strongly suggest that they will continue as areas of reserve labor for the industries of South Africa. But the real function of the Bantustans independence scheme is to establish Apartheid's legitimacy by giving a material basis to the small segment of petty bourgeoisie bureaucratic collaborators so as to channel the struggle for power internally into separatist, non-violent, constitutionalist solutions. Thus, both internally and externally, South African Apartheid attempts to reach an accommodation with the Black petty bourgeoisie. Apartheid, however, is structurally not the kind of system which can easily coopt this class. The recent reception of Transkei "independence" suggest this policy is also doomed to quick failure.

## THE UNITED STATES: THE MAIN PROP OF APARTHEID

We cannot end this discussion without returning to the role of U.S. led western imperialism in propping up Apartheid and settler dominance in southern Africa. Without this support South Africa and Rhodesia would fall forthwith before the people's onslaught. Because the fruits of settler exploitation in southern Africa are deeply mortgaged to imperialist profits, the U.S. will fight back like a wounded beast to preserve imperialism's position in this part of the world. We can see this clearly in the United States official position on the South African situation. As stated in National Security Study Memo (NSSM39), the U.S. has been selectively relaxing its stance toward white regimes on the assumption that they were here to stay and that the only constructive change in the area would have to come through them. Parodying racist assumptions the document goes on to say that Blacks in southern Africa cannot change their situation through "violence" but can only cause chaos and thereby give advantages to the Communists. Thus the U.S. has embarked on a program of formally denouncing Apartheid while quietly easing South Africa's isolation, loosening economic restrictions and trying increased aid to "Black African" governments to their willingness to accept South African "detente" and "dialogue".



U.S. presence in South Africa.

In pursuit of a strategy for establishing imperialist dominance throughout Africa, the U.S. has fostered an alliance between the settler regimes of southern Africa and Israel. It has been reported in the media that Israel needs South African ties because it needs support wherever it can get it. Moreover, the depressed status of Israeli industry needs the jobs created by exports to South Africa. Apartheid has also spawned a large Zionist community in South Africa from which it gets some of its most resolute support for continued white supremacy. As for South Africa, the recently concluded "Economic, Industrial and Scientific Pact" provides South Africa duty-free access to the U.S. and European Economic Community (EEC) markets. This is done by transshipping South African goods through Israel with Israeli markings. Recently, Israel sold two naval ships to South Africa, one of which ironically participated in Operation Sail. Israeli military advisors, in fact, are in South Africa while Jewish members of the South African military have fought in the Middle East with the Israeli Army. It is the U.S. hope to catch the African and Middle Eastern liberation struggles between South African and Israeli sub-imperialist pincers.

The ability of the United States to intervene in southern Africa according to the dictates of NSSM-39 has been significantly hampered by military defeat in

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## AFRICA DEL SUR (cont.)

vitalidad de un moribundo capitalismo monopolico nacional. Estos son los apoyos, las bases materiales sobre las cuales la ideología del economismo ha venido a dominar el movimiento obrero en los E.U. Las contradicciones de clases de los E.U. han sido transportadas en parte al sur de Africa como conflicto racial. Este es solo la otra parte del conflicto capitalista-trabajadores y el antagonismo colado suavemente a través de las superganancias de Africa del Sur. Está claro también que las recompensas materiales extendidas por los imperialistas a los trabajadores blancos norteamericanos refuerza su racismo hacia los pueblos del Tercer Mundo a nivel nacional. De esa manera, la derrota del imperialismo en el sur de Africa acelerará enormemente la lucha de clases domesticamente. Hara esto obligando a la reimportación de tantas contradicciones de clases a nivel nacional, a donde pertenecen. En adición a eso, el racismo será una proposición mas cara para ambos: el capital monopolista de los E.U. y la clase trabajadora blanca. Para prevenir esta posibilidad el imperialismo occidental, con E.U. a la cabeza puede considerar la guerra general como una alternativa aceptable. El papel de los E.U. en el sur de Africa entonces implica una muy real amenaza de una guerra general.

### La responsabilidad de la izquierda norteamericana en los esfuerzos de apoyo para la liberación del sur de Africa

Comenzamos a definir las responsabilidades de la izquierda aquí con una advertencia: no repetamos los errores de izquierda y el dogmatismo que plagan nuestros esfuerzos de apoyo durante la crisis de Angola. Nuestro análisis debe ser materialista en el mas estricto sentido del termino. Es esencial entonces, que le demos a las masas norteamericanas un análisis exacto de lo que está sucediendo en sur de Africa. No debemos confundir la contradicción principal con la secundaria o el papel de las contradicciones internas con el de las externas. La lucha contra el revisionismo no puede adelantarse en los E.U. estableciendo incorrectamente la misma como la contradicción principal que encaran las masas del sur de Africa cuando diariamente ellas sufren casi exclusivamente y mas gravemente a manos de los agentes del imperialismo occidental. Este error trae como resultado solo el descredito de las fuerzas antirevisionistas ante los



Policías Africanos disparan hacia manifestantes.

ojos de los oprimidos y explotados a través del mundo, mientras paradójicamente guía a las fuerzas de la liberación a los brazos de los revisionistas mismos, que les están aguardando. Confusiones tontas e infantiles como estas de dogmatismo de izquierda son, en esencia posiciones de derecha, las cuales sirven de ayuda y alivio a los enemigos de la clase trabajadora que lucha en todas partes. En el contexto de las luchas de liberación el, revisionismo es un mal de la transición al socialismo. Generalmente asume la forma de una contradicción primaria después que la etapa combativa de la revolución ha terminado. Por lo tanto debemos estar alertas ante aquellas fuerzas que en el futuro puedan elevar el revisionismo a una posición de contradicción principal mientras evitamos promoverlo incorrectamente como en el presente en una situación donde no puede hacer nada sino causar confusión entre las filas de las fuerzas de liberación y los que las apoyan.

Nuestras tareas en el esfuerzo de apoyo pueden resumirse de la siguiente manera:

1. Desarrollar apoyo de masas en los E.U. para los movimientos de liberación y los estados progresistas del sur de Africa.
2. Utilizar la crisis en el sur de Africa para aumentar la conciencia de las masas del Tercer Mundo particularmente en los E.U. y a la población americana general hacia la verdadera naturaleza del monopolio capitalista, del imperialismo, y de su rol en perpetrar el racismo.
3. Contra-atacar iniciativas imperialistas entre las masas, que intentan levantar actitudes chauvinistas y racistas hacia la lucha de liberación sud-africana.
4. Detener al imperialismo en su labor de rescate de los regimenes colonialistas sud-africanos de la justicia revolucionaria que les habrá de venir por las luchas de liberación.

La lucha de las masas sud-africanas es nuestra lucha. Tenemos el mismo enemigo una experiencia comun de opresión y lazos históricos y culturales con nuestros hermanos en el sur de Africa. Reconozcamos que la lucha continúa y que estamos ganando.

