

OBREROS EN MARCHA

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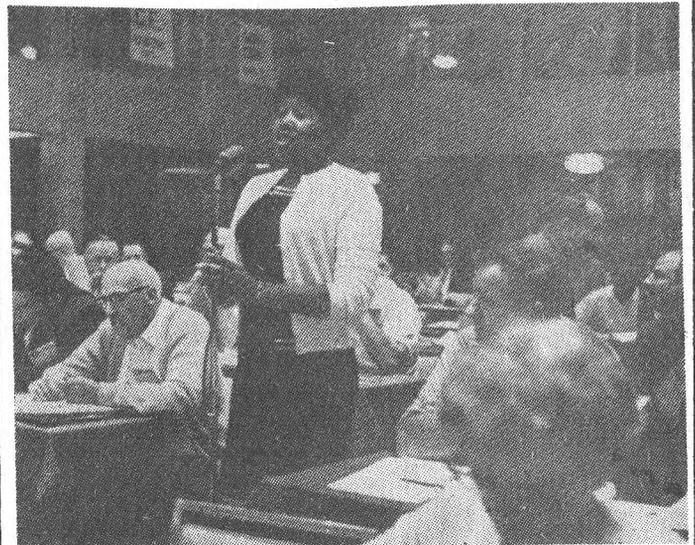
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OBREROS EN MARCHA

Obreros En Marcha is the central publication of El Comité-M.I.N.P. (Puerto Rican National Left Movement). El Comité-M.I.N.P. is a developing Marxist-Leninist organization which originated on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, New York. We formed in the summer of 1970 as a Latin community organization committed to the struggle to improve the living conditions of the poor, mainly minority, families who lived in that area. Our goal was to get decent, low-rent housing, quality education and improved health services for these families.

Two years after our formation we began to respond to the needs of Latin workers in the factories. We also started to organize students at the university level and to get more actively involved in the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence. Our participation in these struggles ultimately led to our transformation into a new type of organization with more defined political objective. Thus in 1974 we began a slow and complex process of transition into a Marxist-Leninist organization: an organization guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism and integrated into the struggles of working people.

As such an organization, we understand that an essential aspect of our work is to raise the level of political consciousness of workers in this country. This is one of the conditions necessary to develop the revolutionary movement capable of overthrowing the present order and building on its ruins a new socialist society. In this effort, we join with other revolutionary forces in the U.S.

Our political organ, *Obreros En Marcha*, has as its goal the development of revolutionary consciousness among our ranks, the advanced elements of the people, and among the masses in general. We attempt to accomplish this task by the examination and analysis of the developing progressive and revolutionary movements locally, nationally and internationally.

El Comité-MINP
577 Columbus Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10024
(212) 874-9162

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EDITORIAL

"CAMP DAVID": Another Betrayal

For the past three decades, the Palestinian people have been struggling to reclaim their homeland from the clutches of Zionism and U.S. imperialism. In this struggle they have at times been aided, and often times been betrayed, by the reactionary Arab governments that border Israel. Such a betrayal by Jordan in September, 1970 cost the Palestinian movement the lives of thousands of its people. On that occasion, the Jordanian government ruthlessly attacked Palestinian guerilla and refugee camps situated within its boundaries.

Recently, the Palestinian people experienced another betrayal. On this occasion, the sellout of the Palestinian cause came at the hands of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

In the U.S. presidential mountain retreat of Camp David, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, President Sadat, and President Jimmy Carter secluded themselves to discuss the issues of the Middle East. From this summit, various agreements were reached. The major benefactors of these accords were definitely Israeli Zionism and U.S. imperialism; the losers were the Palestinian people and the people of the Middle East.

This fact is clear when we examine the nature of the accords reached at Camp David. These agreements were embodied in two documents, one entitled "The Framework of Peace in the Middle East" and the other, "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel." With these accords, Egypt breaks rank with the other Arab countries in their prior efforts to have Israel return the occupied territories of Jordan and Syria. It also abandons the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination.

Egypt has done this in pursuit of its narrow national interests, namely those of its ruling bourgeois elite. By this action, Egypt has strengthened the continuing efforts of the reactionary regime in Israel to deny the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people. Rather than helping to resolve the Palestinian question, Egypt objectively aids Israeli efforts to maintain part of the national territory of Jordan (the West Bank) and Syria (the Golan Heights).

For now, Israel and U.S. imperialism are riding high in the Middle East. With the Camp David agreements, they have been able to split off the most powerful Arab state from the bloc of Arab opposition to Israeli Zionism. But even with this victory, they have not been able to gain open support for the agreements from either Syria, Jordan or Saudi Arabia. This hampers their attempts to achieve "stabilization" in the Middle East. This situation, coupled with the existence of the "Steadfast Front", composed of Algeria, Libya, Syria, South Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), who categorically reject the Camp David agreements, will make it difficult for the decisions to go unchallenged.

Even more importantly, however, the Israeli and U.S. governments will never be able to obtain a settlement in the Middle East unless it affirms the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination. This struggle for self-determination has shaken, and will eventually topple any false or contrived "peace" in the Middle East. If anything marks the Camp David accords, it is precisely the fact that the Palestinian national question is not taken into account.

An important result of the accords, unforeseen by imperialism, has been that they have served to unite the Palestinian liberation movement, particularly the forces that make up the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO. Prior to the summit at Camp David, there were those in the PLO who thought that some positive concessions could be gained by Egyptian bilateral negotiations with Israel. These illusions have now been thoroughly shattered. This has led the various political tendencies in the PLO to unite in total opposition to the Sadat/Begin agreements.

With the Camp David accords, the U.S. government has deepened its entanglement in the Middle East. This furthers the possibility that the U.S. could get involved in a war in that region. Such an involvement is not in the interest of the North American people—particularly the U.S. multinational working class. The billions spent in arming Israel and supporting reactionary Arab governments come out of the funds needed to meet the needs of the North American people for job training, social services, education, etc. The demand of working people, progressives and revolutionaries in this country must be for the U.S. to get out of the Middle East, for an end to all U.S. aid to Israel and reactionary Arab governments and for self-determination for the Palestinian people.

NATIONAL

THE STRUGGLE FOR RANK AND FILE DEMOCRACY

In September, the United Steelworkers of America (USW) held its 18th semi-annual convention. Also in September, the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) held its annual convention. The issue of rank and file participation and of a democratic union came up at both conventions, but the way in which each union dealt with the issue was qualitatively different. The steelworkers' convention was characterized by the attempts of the opportunist leadership controlling the union to suppress all rank and file initiative; at the same time, the rank and file was unable to mount an effective offensive against the sellout leadership. On the other hand, the UE convention exemplified how, under particular conditions, the base of a union and its leadership can be unified in a common struggle to defend the rights of its members.

MCBRIDE FORCES DOMINATE CONVENTION

The USW convention took place in Atlantic City, New Jersey, attended by 3500 delegates representing 1.4 million workers employed mostly in the steel and metal industries, in metal fabricating, and in mining or allied fields. However, 1500 of the delegates were not elected representatives of the union's rank and file, but instead were actually employees of the union. Because the union paid the convention expenses of its employees, but not the expenses of the delegates elected by the locals, many small locals could not afford to send their own delegate to the week-long convention, and so could only be represented by a union employee from their area. This situation typified the kind of tactics the USW leadership has used to suppress the emergence of a vocal rank and file at industry-wide meetings.

The majority of the issues raised at the convention nearly all focussed on the lack of democracy in the union, but the proposals deal with the question from two opposing perspectives: proposals submitted by the leadership and its supporters, led by Lloyd McBride, president of the USW; and proposals coming from the floor of the convention.

McBride's major proposal was to outlaw outside financing in the USW's elections for the five top union offices. His proposal required that every contribution above \$5.00 be certified to come from a USW member. A special board would be set up to oversee the process and deal with charges of violations of the regulations. In addition, the board would be empowered to disqualify candidates. This proposal undoubtedly resulted from the events of the 1977 USW presidential election,

in which McBride faced a strong challenge from rank and file activist Ed Sadowski. Sadowski received some of his campaign donations from liberal forces outside the union. In any election, McBride and his fellow bureaucrats already have a clear advantage in that they have complete access to AFL-CIO funds as well as access to the USW propaganda mechanism. The proposal obviously undercuts outside support in future elections and makes it even more difficult for opposing candidates to compete against the USW's entrenched bureaucracy. With his solid base of support among the delegates who were union employees, McBride's proposal was easily passed.

THE STRUGGLE FOR RANK AND FILE RATIFICATION

The main proposal that came from the union's rank and file was that all USW contracts should be subject to rank and file ratification. Currently, only the local presidents are eligible to vote on contracts. McBride and his supporters posed that such a method would divide the union and pit the

majority against the minority. They used the United Mine Workers as a supposed example how rank and file ratification could sow division within the union. In fact, ratification by the entire membership was a very important weapon the miners had in combating the sell-out tactics of their leadership. This weapon was crucial to the miners in their strike late last winter. Similarly, if the USW membership had the right to ratify contracts, such anti-worker provisions as the Experimental Negotiating Act (ENA)—would have been much harder to impose. (Signed between union leaders and the steel industry in 1977, the ENA forbids industry-wide strikes and forces the union to submit grievances and contract disagreement to binding arbitration.)

The rank and file's proposal for contract ratification was defeated. In fact, all rank and file proposals were consistently defeated by the McBride-controlled convention. Among these demands were the payment of all delegates' transportation and convention expenses; increased strike benefits from \$35 a week to \$50; making the right to strike against unsafe working conditions a contract



USW chief McBride and President Carter support the same anti-worker policies.

demand; and putting the union on record supporting affirmative action for minorities and women, including the utilization of quotas.

The rank and file proposals also included firm opposition to any government wage controls. This was raised because of recent talk within the Carter Administration about anti-inflation measures and in particular, wage and price guidelines. When Carter addressed the USW convention, he did not specifically mention such guidelines, but he clearly stated that the anti-inflation measures he was planning would require much "sacrifice" on the part of the workers.

UE DELEGATES CALL FOR ORGANIZING THE UNORGANIZED

The character of the 43rd International Convention of the United Electrical Workers (UE) differed dramatically from that of the USW. At the UE convention, the union leadership not only demonstrated its clear support of the resolutions of the rank and file, but it also took the lead in initiating discussion on some of the key issues affecting workers today. UE President Albert J. Fitzgerald's opening speech warned that the coming contract negotiations in 1979 would be particularly difficult because the employers would have the government backing their efforts to keep wages down. Fitzgerald's clear identification of the enemies of the workers stands in sharp contrast to McBride's sympathetic posture towards the "plight" both of the employers in their struggle to maintain their profits, and of the government in its attempts to resolve inflation. The UE delegates sent a telegram to Carter stating that the only control limits the administration should establish should be limits on corporate profits.

dustries have fought bitterly against any at-

A main focus of discussion at the convention was the need to combat corporate efforts, particularly on the part of the two major corporations in the industry, Westinghouse and General Electric, to undermine union conditions in organized plants and block unionism in unorganized shops. Both union officials and local delegates called for the need to improve rank and file leadership and participation in organizing efforts. They emphasized that such a mobilization on the part of the union was key to the defense of the workers' interests. UE Director of Organization Hugh Harley singled out runaway shops as a major threat to a strong union. The resolution on organizing that was passed, stated, "... because it is clear that runaways are a major part of the corporate threat to our wages and conditions, our bargaining power and our very union, we must expand our organizational work in the runaway areas." The same resolution emphasized the need to particularly organize among minority groups and women, who were beginning to make up a substantial percentage of workers in the electrical industry, working in unorganized shops for minimum wages at substandard conditions.

Significantly, over the past years there has been a notable increase in young workers and minorities in the UE, both in the union as a whole and among the delegates at the convention. In contrast to the USW, which used to be the biggest union after World War II, but now remains at a standstill, the UE is small, but since the early 1970's, has been steadily growing.

Much of its growth can be attributed to the UE's drive to involve the rank and file in organizing non-union shops, particularly in the south. Since the 70's, many northern-based companies moved their factories to the south where labor was non-unionized and, therefore, cheaper. The companies in all in-

tempts of the workers to organize, but two years ago, the UE made a breakthrough in the electrical industry, organizing Westinghouse and General Electric shops in Virginia. Recently, through the concrete support and organizing efforts of those two established locals, two other shops in southwestern Virginia were able to withstand the bosses' anti-union campaign and emerge triumphant in their struggle to unionize and bring in the UE.

With the support and mobilization of workers at nearby locals, significant successes have occurred in Southern California among Chicano workers, who hold the lowest paying jobs in the industry and work under the most oppressive conditions. In the early seventies, the UE stepped up its efforts to organize among these workers and now they form a growing sector of the union.

During the entire convention, emphasis was placed upon the necessity of a strong and active rank and file directly involved in the organizing process as the only route open to the labor movement in its struggle against the intensifying attacks of the bosses.

The experience of the UE convention in which the aspirations of the union leaders and the rank and file are similar and where the leadership is responsive to the demands of the base differs greatly from the USWA convention in which the union leadership, at every turn, was engaged in sabotaging the legitimate demands and efforts of the rank and file. The example of a democratically-run union such as the UE presents us with a model for the kind of unions that we must fight for which will honestly and effectively struggle for the just demands of the workers.

In future articles we will discuss more extensively how the USW and the UE developed in such opposite ways. This will be part of an ongoing series *Obreros En Marcha* which will be beginning on the history of the labor movement in the U.S.



Delegates of the U.E. during a plenary session of their recent convention.

PUERTO RICO INFORMA

Imperialism's Strategy for Puerto Rico

Interview with the MSP

In September, our organization hosted a visit to New York City by leading representatives of the Popular Socialist Movement (MSP). Their purpose in coming to New York was to present and discuss with progressive and revolutionary forces in the city the MSP's analysis of the present situation in Puerto Rico and their conception of the strategy and tactics to develop for this stage of the struggle. The representatives from the MSP met with various solidarity groups, political organizations, lawyers, etc.

On September 23, in commemoration of the 1868 uprising for independence in Puerto Rico, El Comité-MINP invited its friends and comrades in the struggle to a forum where the MSP presented its positions and answered questions from the audience. (A few copies of their presentation are still available in English).

Following, OEM publishes the first part of an interview we held with comrades from the MSP. This first part deals basically with their characterization of U.S. imperialism's plans for Puerto Rico and the repressive situation on the island. The second will focus on the concrete work that progressive forces must take up at this time.

OEM: What is imperialism's present strategy for Puerto Rico? Is Statehood imperialism's principal option, as some forces on the island are saying?

MSP: We understand that North American imperialism is debating different alternatives to the problem of Puerto Rico's status at this time. We believe that this is due to the economic and social crisis that is jolting the Commonwealth, which at present is in definite economic and social bankruptcy. Right after ex-President Gerald Ford's statements concerning statehood (in early 1977), different sectors in Puerto Rico stated that the U.S. has opted for statehood as a strategy for Puerto Rico.

We believe that this assertion lacks a basis because up to this moment these comrades have not been able to demonstrate which social or economic forces within North American imperialism are pushing the strategy for statehood. It has only been established that there are some political circles, members of the State Department, Congressmen, etc. who are pushing for this. Marxists understand that each occurrence of social change is determined by economic causes and that these politicians respond to concrete economic interests. It seems to us that in order to affirm that statehood is imperialism's present strategy for Puerto Rico, one would have to point out those economic forces those sectors of imperialism that are actually pushing for statehood. It seems to us that the fundamental weakness of this thesis is rooted in not being able to identify those sectors. It is a thesis that lacks a historical materialist analysis of the problem of the present imperialist strategy for Puerto Rico.

Our position concerning the present imperialist strategy for Puerto Rico is that, among the alternatives that imperialism is debating at this moment, it leans towards the Commonwealth. Although in bankruptcy, the Com-

monwealth continues to serve the economic interests of North American imperialism in Puerto Rico. The imperialists know that the Commonwealth will not last forever, and, in this context, they look for new alternatives of colonial or neo-colonial domination. In this sense, we believe that certain concrete sectors of imperialism who support that alternative can be identified. These are the sectors of finance capital, such as the pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals, bondholders, financiers, and the banks that profit from the exploitation of the island. These sectors would continue to benefit greatly from some type of modified colonial domination or of some neocolonial domination. For these sectors, statehood would mean great economic losses, if not their ruin. We think that these sectors are found directly or indirectly behind positions that propose some type of colonial modification, or rather the Commonwealth consolidated within the constitutional framework of the U.S., the free association or associated republic governed, perhaps, by the Puerto Rican Independence Party.

However, we do not want to underestimate the danger that statehood represents for Puerto Rico. We see this danger because in Puerto Rico, the party that presently administers the colony adheres to a strategy of annexation. The New Progressive Party (PNP) has developed a profound ideological offensive in the heart of the Puerto Rican working class pushing the supposed benefits of statehood. As a result, the working masses, who find themselves in a profound economic crisis, tend to identify statehood with an economic guarantee and security for the working masses. This is why Governor Romero Barcelo has posed that statehood is for the poor and this is the strategy that guides him. In this message to the people, statehood means more food stamps, more federal transfers, more social security, more medicare, etc. In the process of identifying statehood with economic and material security for the impoverished masses, the PNP assumes an ideological offensive that contains a very dangerous feature for our struggle because it definitely is winning over, or is in the process of winning over, significant sectors of the people to statehood conceptions. This is a real danger, the danger of propaganda and the concrete ideological offensive that is being waged on the people. Utilizing and manipulating the ideology of colonial dependency that our people have with respect to the transfers, funds, and federal programs, Romero Barcelo has mounted all of his strategy.

We cannot negate that Barcelo and his party have been able to establish different levels of relations with political circles in Washington, fundamentally with sectors close to the presidency of Jimmy Carter. These political circles would be useful, at a given moment, to negotiate in favor of statehood, if the PNP, through its ideological offensive, obtains the overwhelming support of the people towards statehood. Within this context we believe that statehood is then converted into an objective that must be fought politically in Puerto Rico, combatting it from a class perspective, demonstrating to the people that statehood is not the alternative to their economic problems, but that independence and socialism are the only real alternatives to

“...the imperialists know that the Commonwealth will not last forever and, in this context, they look for new alternatives of colonial or neo-colonial domination.”

the serious social and economic problems.

OEM: How do you evaluate the present repressive situation in Puerto Rico?

MSP: It seems to us that in Puerto Rico we live in a period of an increase in the state's repression against progressive forces. This is obvious in the latest incidents, particularly from the time that Romero Barcelo assumed control of the Commonwealth. From the violence that the state implemented to destroy the UTIER strike; the imprisonment of the trade union leader, Radames Acosta, for supposedly violating the Taft-Hartley act; the assassination of the Teamster delegate Juan Rafael Caballero; the arrest of Teamster organizer, Comrade Miguel Cabrera, and the intent to fabricate a criminal case against him, accusing him of having participated in the execution of the boss' lawyer, Alan Randall; the ambush and assassination of two young Puerto Rican independentistas on July 23rd—these all serve as evidence to the escalated repression. Subsequent to this most recent execution, 8 independentista comrades were arrested, having been accused of being linked to the two youths assassinated in Cerro Maravilla. In addition, at that same time, Comrade Edgardo Alvelo Burgos, member of the Popular Socialist Movement, was arrested, having been accused of illegal possession of a sawed-off shotgun, of



materials to make explosives and of two cars. The press treated his arrest as an arrest of a presumed terrorist, intending to link the comrade and our organization with terrorist actions which have been developing in Puerto Rico.

What we have described responds to the need for the colonial regime to provide an element of stability in Puerto Rico that guarantees any scheme that imperialism advances in terms of status. In order to create this stability, the target of the government's repressive actions is, on the one hand, the advanced sectors of the organized workers' movement and, on the other, the Puerto Rican left. The cannons have been lined up against these sectors in the last few months, in the last few years. And what we see today is not an isolated fact, but a systematic campaign that began under the administration of Hernandez Colon. In these moments, under the direction of Romero Barcelo, this campaign is reaching higher and more brutal levels. It is important to emphasize that it is not a repression that began with the government of Barcelo, but that in fact it began with previous colonial administrations and at this time has intensified. It is part of a process that has as its premise—independently of the status option that North American imperialism chooses—that the only way to guarantee bourgeois domination on the island is to exercise organized repression against the workers' movement

and the left.

Independently of the status alternative imperialism opts for, what is imperialism's only course of economic development in Puerto today is the exploitation of non-replaceable natural resources. The exploitation of these resources represents a very high investment of capital. The imperialists know that exploitation will generate large movements of opposition and resistance on the part of the Puerto Rican people. We say that it is the only alternative that remains, because the problem of the Commonwealth is not only a political problem. It is one of a structural crisis of the economic system of capitalism in Puerto Rico. When U.S. imperialism decides upon political options to solve their problems, they will understand (and they understand it as such at this time) that they have only one road to take in terms of economic development. In order to implement that economic development, they will rely upon repression. This is why we wish to clearly express that with respect to repression, the option that imperialism chooses does not matter. The fundamental problem that will present itself in Puerto Rico's reality will be the increase of repression against the workers' movement and the left in order to guarantee the political stability of the regime and, above all, to guarantee the exploitation of the non-replaceable natural resources that exist in Puerto Rico.

OEM: In describing the repressive situation in Puerto Rico, you have used the phrase "police state." Can you briefly elaborate on that characterization?

MSP: We have indicated that, in Puerto Rico, conditions are such the state will eventually convert itself into a police state. This means that there are developing material and psychological conditions of preparation by the state, as well as preparation in the state of mind of the masses towards the conversion of Puerto Rico into a police state. A police state is a state which, while preserving all of the elements of bourgeois legality, parliamentarianism, the court system, etc., begins to intensify its repression converting this into a form of fundamental domination by systematically directing it against the workers movement and the left: torture; assassination; the disappearance of people who are opposed to the government; the violation of human rights; selective repression carried out by illegal organisms of the PNP, paramilitary organisms of the Cuban "gusanos" in Puerto Rico, together with daily harassment by the police against progressive elements, would be commonplace occurrences in Puerto Rico. It would be a regime that would combine formal elements of a bourgeois democracy with a repressive apparatus. The levels of sophisticated technology achieved by a regime such as this, would allow it to easily suppress any mass movement.

We want to make it clear with this characterization that Puerto Rico is moving toward a regime in which repression is qualitatively increasing against the progressive sectors of society and that this increase in repression is, today, manifested in the development and consolidation of the repressive apparatus of the state, which would function within a framework of apparent formal democracy. It is based on this contradiction—between the external appearances of democracy on the one hand, and on the other, a situation developing where repression becomes the fundamental mechanism of domination by the ruling classes—that we characterize Puerto Rico today as moving toward a police state.

(to be continued)

NATIONAL

Stagflation: New Twist in U.S. Economy

The two main economic concerns of the American people in general and U.S. working class in particular can be summed up in one word—*Stagflation*. This is the term that the bourgeois economists have coined to describe the two-edged sword of inflation and stagnation. Inflation, or the diminishing purchasing power of the dollar, is experienced every week by millions of working people, as they find their paychecks able to pay for less and less of their necessities. At the same time, we have the overall stagnation of the economy. This is particularly reflected by the high levels of unemployment and the increasing attacks on workers who still have jobs; in addition, there is an increasing amount of idle productive capacity in basic industries, like steel.

The government, in its national and international policies, has been unable to deal effectively with the phenomenon. Still, one thing continues to be clear. The various levels of government are ensuring that this becomes a crisis that only affects the working class, while the huge profits of big capital are safely protected.

The evolution of *stagflation* is unprecedented in the history of capitalist economic crises. It has defied the analysis of

today's bourgeois economists. According to "logical" bourgeois reasoning, if there are high levels of unemployment, this in turn should offset the rising level of inflation since there would be less money in circulation. This has obviously not been the case. Their only solution to this problem is based on limiting workers' wages and cutting government funds for social services. But stagflation still exists.

Although an in-depth discussion of the complex nature of this present crisis is beyond the limits of this article, we will attempt to point out some general characteristics.

In order to put the present economic crisis into proper perspective, it is important to understand that the normal state of the business cycle in today's monopoly capitalist system is one with alternating high and low points within a general tendency towards increasing stagnation. This means less products produced for the market, less utilization of a factory's productive capacity, etc. This is due to the continuing centralization and concentration of capital (fewer and fewer corporations controlling the machinery and work force that produce the goods.) The job of bourgeois economists in this period is to

develop methods to stabilize the economic system during the shaky downturns and continue the centralization of capital in a healthy state. Yet it is these "propping up" mechanisms that have exacerbated the present crisis to critical problems.

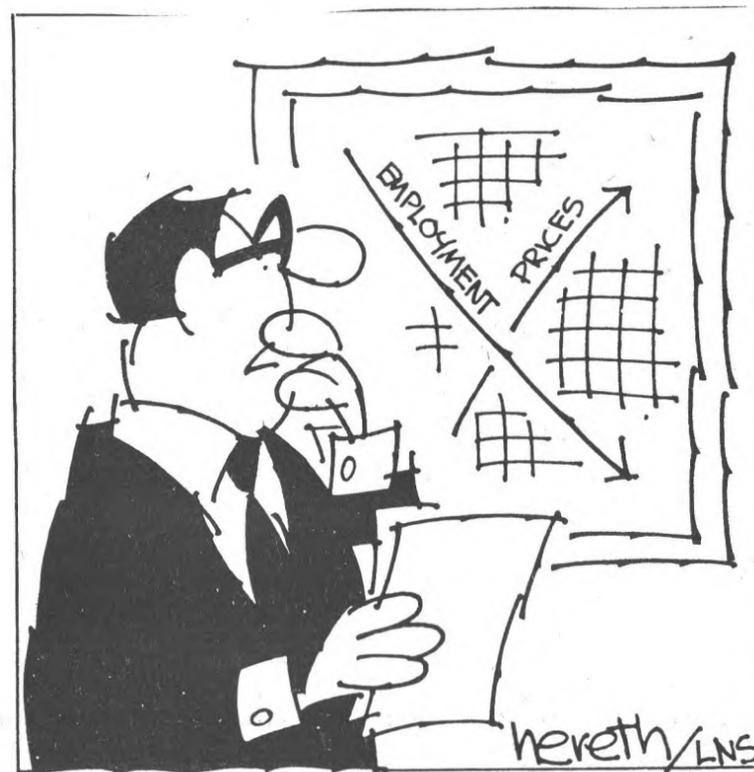
THE KEYNESIAN SOLUTION

To demonstrate this more concretely, we can trace some of the major roots of the present crisis to the last world war. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, bourgeois economist John Maynard Keynes developed the idea that the capitalist system could be rescued from its depression by using two closely related processes. The first was deficit government spending i.e., spending money you didn't have yet, ideally on large government projects (defense equipment, highways, buildings, etc.). The other was increasing the money supply, which meant developing a flexible money and credit system. Keynes' ideas, however, were not tested until World War II.

During the Second World War, the United States was able to begin an economic expansion process that gave a much-awaited boost to its capitalist economy. Using Keynes' ideas, together with price controls, rationing and other measures needed to finance the war, the U.S. economy expanded tremendously. At the war's conclusion, aside from winning militarily, the U.S. emerged as the most financially stable capitalist power. This led to two key developments.

In the first place, this situation enabled the U.S. to impose the gold/dollar monetary system on the entire capitalist world at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. The U.S. dollar was to be the standard for all international trade negotiations. Since the U.S. practically controlled the entire quantity of mined gold in the world at this time, the agreement at Bretton Woods was a windfall for the U.S. bourgeoisie. What ensured this was that at a rapidly increasing pace, the U.S. began printing money, whose acceptance internationally was now obligatory.

The excessive printing of dollars for spending abroad created a growing deficit in the U.S. balance of payments (more money going out than coming in). This laid the basis for the dollar's recent devaluation. Although not acknowledged by bourgeois economists, the overriding reason for the deficit was the immense cost of maintaining the U.S. world empire. In addition to putting war torn capitalist countries on their feet, the cost of maintaining overseas military bases, limited wars, and military and economic subsidies to client states (e.g., the military dictatorships of Latin America) necessitated vast amounts of money. Our problem was that more dollars were being printed than could be backed up by gold.



“The president says he wants immediate answers — which means that today we'll have to decide whether to call this thing stagflation, slumpflation or inflump.”

EXPANSION OF CREDIT STUNTS GROWTH

Yet the phenomenon that more than anything else shaped this present crisis was the unprecedented growth of credit. During the 30 years of relative prosperity following the Second World War, anytime a recession loomed in the horizon, the government turned to Keynes. Deficit spending plus increasing the money and credit in the economy became the order of the day. The two "limited" wars (Korea and Vietnam) that were waged in the interim also helped to temporarily ease the pressure on the unstable economy. The "small" amounts of price inflation that necessarily had to accompany these credit binges were considered to be better for capitalism than price deflation. Yet the accumulating effect of these practices were bound to eventually burst the dam, and this they did.

The over extension of credit was so vast that by 1975 the United States stood atop a mountain of debt that was \$2.5 trillion high! And the debtors came primarily from all sectors of the bourgeoisie: \$1 trillion in corporate debt, \$600 billion in mortgage debt, \$500 billion in U.S. government debt, \$200 billion in state and local government debt, and \$200 billion in consumer debt. The

remedy that the capitalists had turned to in order to maintain their system had turned into its poison.

A vicious circle developed. Business borrowers could stand the acceleration of debt so long as they could meet the rising interest rates and still make a profit. But eventually interest on the accelerating debt load began to choke off profits. As interest burdens increased, the capitalists raised their prices to meet these obligations. As price hikes spread throughout the economy, the need for even more borrowing followed. Thus debt obligations, interests charges, and prices chase each other in the upward spiral of inflation.

DOLLAR IS DEVALUED

The inflation situation was further aggravated by the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system. This came about primarily due to a persistent and growing deficit in the U.S. balance of payments. This led to the devaluation of the dollar in favor of other healthier currencies (e.g. the Japanese yen). The other side of the devaluation coin is domestic inflation.

By the 1960's the expansionary forces in the economy were clearly weakening and the long run upswing had finally come to an end. Despite all the "pumping" of the economy, with its corresponding inflation, the U.S.

capitalist system was on a declining road, as was evident by the rising level of unemployment and the growing idle productive capacity. The attempts to revive the economy with mechanisms that were in essence worsening the crisis thus brought about the present situation of *stagflation*.

To date, the imperialists' world finds itself still searching for a solution to what can develop into a world-wide crisis. In the meantime, monopoly capital is continuing its centralization and concentration by weeding out the weaker business firms. The role of the government is key not only to mobilize federal funds to support industrial and financial firms, but to increase the domestic rate of profit. This means cutting into the living standards of the working class (transportation, housing, Medicaid, welfare, etc.). A Carter recently stated at the September Steelworkers Convention, a "tough" and "voluntary" submission to wage and price limits is on the agenda. The experience that the working class has had with these schemes is that they will be forced on the workers while the capitalists find pressing reasons to raise their prices. However, not only will the working class be targeted. Old age retirees, the petty-bourgeoisie, and smaller businesses will feel and already feel the crunch of monopoly capital looking to maintain economic stability.



"...We don't want more promises! We don't want more politicians to make careers out of our miserable conditions. We must strengthen ourselves. To do this we must strengthen our grass roots community organizations, such as our local housing groups, parent associations, cultural groups, workers' organizations, etc. It is only through our own efforts and organization that we can begin to properly address and correct our situation."

This was part of the presentation delivered by the El Comité-M.I.N.P. Bronx chapter at a recent rally in the South Bronx. Close to 200 people participated in the march and rally through the streets of the South Bronx community.

On October 5, 1977, President Jimmy Carter visited the South Bronx, one of the most devastated ghettos in the

SOUTH BRONX COMMUNITY PROTESTS LIVING CONDITIONS

nation. Like the many politicians who had visited the South Bronx on earlier occasions, Carter made numerous promises which made people think that at last something was going to be done to help the community. The area has one of the highest unemployment levels in New York City. It has the most deplorable housing in the city and perhaps even the nation. High unemployment, a deteriorating educational system and a complete lack of decent health care are only some of the problems the South Bronx faces. As of today, one year later, the millions of dollars that Carter had promised have yet to appear in the South Bronx.

The march and rally on Saturday, October 7 was to protest the lack of government response to the needs of the South Bronx community and to declare the determination of these people to fight for their rights to decent and safe living conditions.

INTERNATIONAL

Nicaragua:

Insurrection and Retreat



Three comrades of the FSLN arrive in Panama after their successful takeover of the National Palace, August 25, in Managua, Nicaragua.

THE INSURRECTION

To Somoza, all of Nicaragua became the enemy. The advance of the popular opposition, beginning last October, culminated in the recent takeover of various cities by popular forces. Somoza responded by unleashing total repression against all of Nicaragua. Martial law and a curfew were decreed; leaders of the bourgeois opposition were arrested; the radio, television, and press were censored. The National Guard counteracted with all of its power and its maximum use of terror. The cities under the power of the popular forces were bombarded indiscriminately with conventional bombs and napalm. From helicopters, the population was machine-gunned. Tanks, airplanes, and sophisticated forms of armaments, provided by Israel, confronted a people armed with revolvers and 22-caliber guns. The National Guard, upon entering the cities, killed or mutilated boys over the age of ten to stop them before they became integrated into the forces of rebellion. After two weeks of civil war, the count was more

than 5,000 dead; 10,000 wounded; and 25,000 people without homes. Estelí, León, Masaya, Chinindega, Dirimba, and Rivas—the cities heroically held by its people—lay in ruins and ashes.

The insurrection was detonated by the FSLN's success in the takeover of the National Palace. Popular and revolutionary forces confronted an extremely well-armed enemy backed by mercenary forces from CONDECA (Central American Defense Council) and the United States. The FSLN attempted to give political-military direction in all the areas that joined the insurrection. León and Estelí, the two cities where it was possible for the FSLN to provide most of the direction, were the cities with the most effective resistance. Losses were minimal and the newly integrated fighters retreated with the FSLN to receive political education and military training. From our perspective, it is still too early to determine the impact of the insurrection on the correlation of forces in Nicaragua.

The FSLN has already made some preliminary observations on the offensive: "...politically it was a success for the people

and in general for the revolutionary forces because it clearly demonstrated to the world that our people are willing to fight. Even more, they are willing to sacrifice their lives to create a different type of society. Secondly because we achieved the total isolation of the dictatorship and lastly because it showed that our people are determined to push forward."

The present is a time of tactical retreat and a regrouping of forces. The military harassment of the Somoza dictatorship continues, but the essential thing is the accumulation of political-military forces until it is time for the people, and, in particular the working class and the peasantry—led by the FSLN—to confront the dictatorship in a decisive insurrection. An important part of that accumulation of forces is the policy of alliances adopted by the different sectors. That is why it is important to examine the recent history of alliances of the sectors which oppose Somoza.

THE BOURGEOIS OPPOSITION

At the end of last October when the popular struggle against Somoza initiated a new offensive, the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie began to look for ways of utilizing the people's outrage as a means to further their own interests. Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, a well-known leader of the bourgeois opposition, began to meet with other representatives of the opposition and with the United States ambassador. What resulted from these meetings was the UDEL (The Democratic Liberation Union), a coalition of various bourgeois parties and two trade union federations. The UDEL would depend upon U.S. backing if the clash between the popular forces and the National Guard were to sharpen. Faced with the growing strength of the popular forces, Chamorro decided to broaden his support and urged the formation of "The Twelve," a group of intellectuals and professionals who have a certain amount of support among the working class and the peasantry. "The Twelve" set up a plan for a provisional government. Somoza, in recognizing the development of the prestige and influence of Chamorro and "The Twelve," ordered the assassination of the former and the capture of the latter.

After the murder of Chamorro, "The Twelve" fled the country, leaving for different parts of America and Europe. Somoza had achieved his objective—to do away with the bourgeois opposition—but only momen-

larly. The bourgeois opposition surmounted the loss of its leader and utilized popular mobilizations begun after the assassination of Chamorro to pressure Somoza to permit the return of "The Twelve." When they returned to the country, the Broad Front of Opposition was formed. It included the UDEL in addition to other sectors of the bourgeoisie.

THE REVOLUTIONARY OPPOSITION

While the FAO and "The Twelve" have captured the major headlines in the international press, the popular opposition has been growing with the silence of an overflowing river.

The United Popular Movement (MPU), a coalition of combative trade unions, the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN) and mass organizations that respond to the perspective of the FSLN, was formed a little after Nicaragua (PSN), was formed a little after the assassination of Chamorro to prevent the manipulation of the mass movement by the bourgeois opposition. This movement has been instrumental in the coordination of many actions of the Nicaraguan people against the dictatorship of Somoza. It has also served to aid the victims of Somoza's repressive machinery. This is the structure that has allowed for the coming together of the left and, more importantly, the greater integration of the cadres of the FSLN to the daily struggles of the people.

Something that has given impetus to the sharpening of popular opposition against Somoza is the recent reunification of the three FSLN trends—the Proletarian Trend, the Prolonged Popular War Trend, and the "Tercerista" or Insurreccional Trend.

Originally, the program and strategy of the FSLN put forth the concept of prolonged popular war as the fundamental base through which the revolutionary struggle is built. After the acceptance of that general line, a small sector initiated a polemic. This tendency differed with the concept of prolonged popular warfare because in their opinion the people would not be able to resist such a war. In its place they put forth the full development of their political force until the take over of state power. In other words they do not recognize the role of armed struggle. Eventually this tendency, called the proletarian tendency, was expelled because of its violations, in practice, of the strategic agreements.

In the beginning of 1976 another sector began to affirm that the politicization of the masses is not necessary, that a prolonged popular war would weaken the popular forces, and that the masses were already willing to support and participate in an insurrection. This sector, called the terceristas or insurreccional tendency, separated itself from the Front but continued to use the name FSLN. During all this time, most of the leaders of the Front were either in jail or exile. Carlos Fonseca, the Secretary General, returned from exile to work for the reunification but was soon killed in an action against

the dictator's troops.

In spite of the strategical differences, there exists a real basis for tactical unity. This explains the recent creation of a Coordinating Council which coordinates the work of the three tendencies. It has increased the level of unity in action inside and outside the country. All the forces within the FSLN support the program of the MPU as the only one which truly represents the interests of the masses and therefore any negotiations without the participation of the MPU are unacceptable. Without a doubt the insurrection will take to a higher level the discussion within the FSLN around strategy and tactics.

The FSLN, at this time, supports the formation of a provisional government, as long as that government complies with two minimal points: (1) the expropriation of the wealth of the Somoza family and (2) the disbanding of the present National Guard and its substitution by a popular army.



IMPERIALISM: REARGUARD OF SOMOZA AND THE BOURGEOISIE

Taking advantage of the momentary stability of the Somoza dictatorship, the United States has been quickly maneuvering to intervene in Nicaragua through its favorite instrument—the OAS, the Organization of American States. The OAS has created a mediating commission composed of representatives of the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and the United States. William G. Bowdler, who is in charge of the State Department's Office of Intelligence, heads this commission that is to serve as a mediator between Somoza and representatives of the FAO. The FAO has stated that it will accept mediation if Somoza

stated that it will accept mediation if Somoza promises to leave before 1981. Somoza responded that he will not retire until after 1981. Whatever the outcome of these mediations, it will not include the interests of the majority of the Nicaraguans. No representative of the MPU has been invited to participate in the negotiations and the United States has categorically declared that it will not support any agreement in which the Sandinistas participate.

These negotiations reveal two important aspects of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua. On the one hand, it demonstrates the desperation of all the sectors of the bourgeoisie and of imperialism in attempting to resolve their differences before the mass movement gathers more strength. Many have said that this situation reminds them of Cuba in 1959, but Somoza was more precise when he compared the present situation to the Tet Offensive of 1968 in Vietnam. On the other hand, the disposition of the bourgeoisie to negotiate and to seek compromises demonstrates that this struggle is not only against Somoza, but against the entire bourgeoisie which heads the system of exploitation and oppression in Nicaragua.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY: REARGUARD OF THE FSLN AND THE NICARAGUAN MASSES

In these difficult moments, the Nicaraguan people and their vanguard, the FSLN, need our concrete support, not the adventurist support of the so called "international detachments" that attempt to enter and struggle in Nicaragua. At this time, the FSLN is not prepared to train and give military direction to these "international detachments." The support that the FSLN has requested is that we take up as our own the demands: End the Military Intervention of the U.S. and the CONDECA; Non-Intervention of the U.N. and the OAS; Respect the Right of Self-Determination of the Nicaraguan People.



The Cuban people show support for the Cuban Revolution and the 11th World Festival of Youth and Students.

11TH WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL HELD IN HAVANA, CUBA

From July 28 to August 6, several representatives of our organization participated in the U.S. delegation to the 11th World Youth Festival, this year held in Havana, Cuba. For 10 intensive days, our comrades participated in meetings, activities, discussions, etc., with progressive and revolutionary forces from many different parts of the world. At the same time, these comrades utilized the opportunity to experience first hand the development and achievements of the first socialist revolution in the Americas. The following article is a brief synthesis and analysis of their experiences, both with the Festival and with the Cuban revolution.

"Internationalism and its ideals of solidarity and fraternity among peoples form the beautiful essence of Marxism-Leninism. Without internationalism the Cuban Revolution wouldn't even exist. To be internationalist is one way of paying our debt to mankind." Fidel Castro, 25th Anniversary of the Assault on Moncada Barracks, July 26, 1978.

Several months ago our organization along with over 400 other delegates from the U.S. participated in the 11th World Festival of Youth and Students, the first festival held in the Western Hemisphere—in Socialist Cuba. Our participation culminated a year of work where we struggled along with other forces to insure that the U.S. delegation was broadly representative of struggling youth and workers as well as organized progressive and revolutionary forces in this country. From July 28 to August 5, approximately 20,000 youth representing struggles taking place throughout the world participated in a spectacular and enthusiastic demonstration of international solidarity. For El Comité-MINP, an organization living and struggling to contribute to a growing revolutionary movement in the heart of U.S. imperialism, this experience enriched our

understanding of the struggles of many peoples, in particular, the Cuban people.

To fully appreciate the historical importance of this event, we must look at it within the framework of the origins of the World Festival movement and today's international situation.

First Festival Heralded Defeat of Fascism

At the end of World War II, thousands of young people from 70 countries throughout the world joined together and organized a world youth festival in Prague to celebrate the defeat of fascism in Europe. While communist youth were in the leadership and central to the organizing of that festival, broad sectors of democratic and progressive youth attended that event to proclaim their commitment to seek peace and struggle for a better life. As imperialism expanded and the exploitative conditions throughout the world intensified, particularly in the underdeveloped countries dominated by the advanced industrial powers, the festival became more important as a political event. As the years passed, more and more representatives of the struggling peoples of the colonial and neo-colonial countries joined the Festival movement, bringing to the fore the intensifying battles being waged in the underdeveloped countries. The festivals took on a new character; they became forums for progressive youth to learn about struggles being waged in other parts of the world, and to reaffirm commitments of international solidarity.

In the Youth Festival of 1973, the motto became "For Anti-imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship," and so it remained for the 11th Festival held in Cuba. It is this festival that has been the most significant of all.

At a time when the largest imperialist power—the U.S.—finds itself in deep economic and political crisis throughout the world and is attempting to recover or maintain its interests through military regimes and through brutal and repressive reigns of terror such as in Nicaragua, Chile, Rhodesia and South Africa; at a time when here in

the U.S. the working class, and in particular, its oppressed minorities, finds themselves weighted under the crushing burden of domestic economic crisis and a backlash against democratic rights; and at a time when the U.S. has accelerated its attack on the victorious Cuban revolution, it is important to realize that this imperialist power was unable to halt the hosting of an international festival 90 miles from its very shores. This in itself is a reflection of the achievements of the Cuban revolution, and an international act of defiance and victory over those attacks.

Since the historic triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959, the Cuban people have reaffirmed again and again their support of and commitment to the struggles taking place throughout the world, particularly in Africa and Latin America. Their commitment was evident in every aspect of the festival, from the painstaking arrangements made to feed, house and transport 30,000 people, to the hundreds of political and cultural activities held everyday in Havana. The atmosphere was one of warmth, solidarity, great joy and pride.

Most significant for our organization were the discussions we held with people from all over the world—with SWAPO from Namibia, with Angolans from the MPLA, with Chileans from the MIR as well as other groups, and of course with Cubans from the Communist Party, the Federation of Cuban Women, the Young Communist Union, the Confederation of Workers, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and, in particular, the Pioneros—the children of the revolution. Underlying all of these discussions was a profound and mutual respect for the struggles we are each involved in and the long and difficult process that we were returning to in our own countries.

The festival helped to provide the understanding that international solidarity goes beyond the sharing of life experiences and a vocal expression of support for each other's struggles. It provided the conditions to develop concrete forms of support and to open up communications among different organizations and movements around the world. In Cuba, many of these groups were able to meet and establish forms of future communication and engage in extensive discussions on points of ideological and political unity and differences which helped many of us to emerge with a better understanding of what our internationalist responsibility entails. We were able to discuss with different organizations the kind of support that forces in the U.S. could provide—support directly related to the particular conditions of their respective struggles. We were also able to utilize this opportunity to meet with and strengthen relations with individuals and groups from other parts of the United States.

**Lack of Democracy
in Selection Process**

One of the major concerns raised by all the comrades we spoke to was the present state of the revolutionary movement in the U.S. and the struggles we must wage to overcome the sectarianism and fragmentation which presently characterizes our movement. The evident disorganization and confusion within the U.S. delegation which stemmed from the selection process and preparation for the festival resulted to a great degree from these weaknesses. The selection process and preparation was characterized by sectarianism, organizational chauvinism, and unprincipled actions on the part of the major organized force in the Festival Preparatory Committee, the Communist Party (CPUSA) and its youth arm, the Young Workers Liberation League, both in the National Committee as well as in the local preparatory committees.

In many instances progressive individuals as well as community activists, actively involved for over a year in the festival preparations and who had been chosen as delegates by the local committees were eliminated by the National Committee, and other forces—neither selected nor interviewed by the local committees—were put in their place. Attempts such as these by the CPUSA to control and monopolize the U.S. delegation frustrated and confused many young activists who had worked very hard to raise funds for the festival, not only to participate in the festival itself but also so they could see first-hand a revolution in the process of growing and consolidating despite attacks by U.S. imperialism since its triumph.

We strongly criticize these actions as they are contrary to the motto and aims of the festival—"For Anti-imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship"—and furthermore go against the aims and achievements of the Cuban revolution.

The lessons learned from these experiences must be utilized for the next festival. To make the Festival much more effective, all honest and progressive forces must strive to make future festival preparations a more democratic process, thereby enabling broader sectors of progressive and socially-concerned youth to fully participate in the planning and attending of the festival.

The uniqueness of the 11th festival was its celebration of the Cuban revolution. In objectively examining the real significance of this revolution, El Comité-MINP must once again reaffirm its commitment to uphold and defend that revolution. We must share what we know of that society as it serves as an example and a source of great lessons to us here in this country.

U.S. NAVY OUT OF VIEQUES!

*Demonstrate
Saturday, October 28*

New London, Conn. Naval Base

Buses leave from Union Sq. 8:30 AM
Return by 7:00 PM

Round-trip Tickets, \$7.50
For tix and info., call:
Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee
(212) 673-0540

**HELP US CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION
OF OUR FIRST ASSEMBLY**

**SATURDAY, NOV. 4TH
9 P.M. UNTIL ?**

*El Cyclone
861 Westchester Ave (near Prospect)
Bronx
(#2 or 5 to Prospect)*

**CALL: El Comite-MINP
(212) 874-9162**