

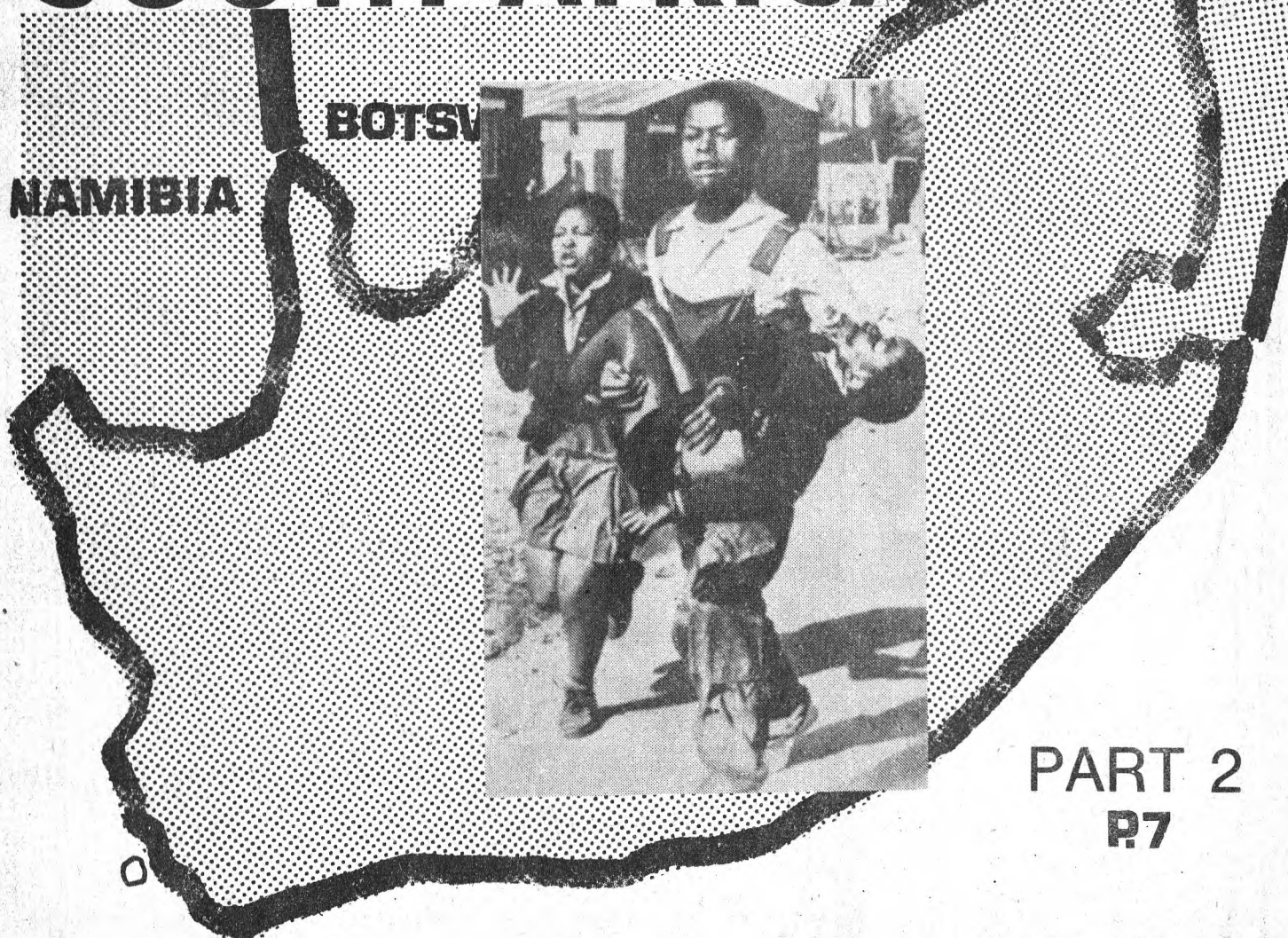
# OBREROS EN MARCHA

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

Vol. 2 No. 1

JANUARY 1977

## SOUTH AFRICA



PUERTO RICO

FORD AND STATEHOOD pg.5

## EDITORIAL-

**O.E.M. -  
A CRITICAL VIEW**

With the next edition, OEM — OBREROS EN MARCHA — ends its second year of publication. The two year period just ended, paralleled the growth and development of EL-COMITE MINP since its founding in 1974 as a Marxist-Leninist formation. Our first edition, a six page mimeograph bulletin, reflected the lack of political and organizational experience of its publishers. Although we have not overcome many aspects of these shortcomings, OEM has, nevertheless, developed into a monthly journal, fully supported by the contributions of its readers. At present, it is distributed mainly on the East Coast but it reaches other parts of the country as well as Puerto Rico.

The pages of OEM have reflected the ideological, political, and organizational transformation which our organization has been undergoing.

## DEVELOPMENT OF OEM AND EL COMITE-MINP

From a local community organization with roots in the communities of the Puerto Rican national minority in New York City, EL COMITE has transformed into a Marxist-Leninist formation, whose objective and social composition characterizes the application of the scientific methods of Marxism-Leninism to our concrete reality.

The fundamental objective of the organization is the Proletarian Revolution in the U.S., the struggle and support for the national liberation of Puerto Rico and the concrete support for the colonies and semi-colonies in their just struggles against humanity's principal enemy: U.S. imperialism. The organization has come to these positions in its process of development and through the serious study of fundamental questions confronting revolutionaries in the U.S. In the process, the resolution of the question concerning the role of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Proletarian Revolution, their role in the struggle for Puerto Rico's national liberation, and the relationship between these two revolutionary processes were of particular significance. In essence, analyzing the experiences of Puerto Ricans living in the U.S., and the process which brought them here, has led us to understand that most Puerto Ricans form part of the working class of this country (see, *The Process of Puerto Rican Migration and the U.S. Working Class*) and as such their long range interest are those of the entire working class: the destruction of capitalism and the building of socialism. These conclusions and objectives, as published in OEM, complement rather than hinder Puerto Rico's struggle for national liberation.

We understand that to accomplish these objectives, a revolutionary vanguard organization is required to guide, based on the science of Marxism-Leninism, the struggle for socialism in this country and the support and solidarity with the struggle of Puerto Rico and the colonies and semi-colonies for national liberation. In the absence of that vanguard, the construction of the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat is a central task. In this respect, a fundamental prerequisite to fulfill this task is the formation of dialectical materialist cadres, rooted within the

working class and popular sectors, whose social practice and theoretical formation are the guarantee that the Party will be formed among the masses and not external to them and their interests. In this regard, the tasks of OEM are intimately related to accomplishing these tasks.

## OEM — ITS TASKS AND SHORTCOMINGS

During the course of its development, OEM has attempted to avoid becoming a "leftist" publication of the type characteristically found in our movement which is interested more in abstract "ideological" struggle, than in the real problems affecting the working class and popular sectors. On the other hand, we have also attempted to avoid becoming a "radical" publication of the type in which Marxism is mystified as a subject solely for intellectuals, while the workers are provided information lacking serious analysis in a paternalistic language, the so called "language of the people". We have not always been successful in these attempts.

OEM has weaknesses in both content and form. At times, OEM has reflected a tendency toward emphasizing polemics with other political organizations in which our readers have lacked the basis (either informational or political) to understand or follow the political line being developed. Moreover, due to our ideological shortcomings, generalities have, at times, become substitute for scientific analysis of concrete situations. As a result, OEM has on occasions, assumed the characteristics of a "leftist" whose stereotyped writing style has made it inaccessible to workers. Furthermore, the reality of our social composition — predominantly Puerto Ricans and workers — while having many positive elements, reflects the lack of technical skills characterizing these sectors in U.S. capitalist society. "Learning from doing", a methodology which in itself is not entirely negative, does hinder aspects of OEM's production. These failings, accompanied by our inherent lack of financial resources, and often the lack of creativity and imagination of its publishers have made the process of development a difficult one.

## OUR NEXT PERIOD

Understanding the need to overcome our shortcomings, and building upon our accomplishments, OEM begins its third year of publication fully aware that the period just ended was one of preparation for the many tasks that lie ahead. Our objectives are based on the fundamental premises of historical materialism — the eventual demise of capitalism and the establishment of socialism as the predominant and fundamental system of production. But this transformation will not be gradual nor purely economic. It will result from the conscious and organized actions of the masses, led by the working class and its Party, culminating with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. OEM, and its publishers, with the constant criticisms of its readers is committed to overcome its shortcomings in order to meet the tasks assigned by the present period.

**ADDITIONAL CUTS  
IN CITY BUDGET**

Conditions at Lincoln Hospital.

In 1977, the working class and poor sectors of New York City will face the most severe budget cutbacks to hit the City since the beginnings of the fiscal crisis in 1974. Beginning July 1, the City will implement its plan to slash an additional \$500 million from its budget. This cut will be tacked on to the \$200 million cut in 1975-76 and \$380 million projected to be cut by June, 1977. These cuts will further reduce already minimized services in public schools, daycare, hospitals, transportation, sanitation, fire services, city colleges, etc. Indeed, just several weeks ago, new cuts in subway and bus services were announced. Meanwhile, there has been talk in the commercial press about "the need to merge public and private hospitals" which rather more than calls for more hospital closings.

## "ALTERNATIVES"

In deciding how to implement this third and sharpest phase of the cutbacks, the Emergency Financial Control Board (the state agency dominated by banking and corporate interests) and the city have been discussing three alternative strategies.

The first proposal, pushed by Stephen Berger, director of the EFCB and hatchet man for the banks, is to implement the cuts all at once and not look to the federal government for immediate financial aid. In an article in the *New York Times* in November, Berger stated that the fiscal plan of a balanced budget by June 1978 could be met, that the \$500 million in cuts could be made if "city officials are willing to make tough decisions."

The second proposal is to expand the amount of time it would take to pay off the \$2.3 billion debt to the banks. The short-term bonds now making up the debt would be reclassified as long-term bonds, meaning the payment on the principal would not be due for a period of 20-25 years. Payment would be guaranteed by the federal government. The proponents of this plan argue that if the loans are extended (i.e., if payment were postponed), more money would supposedly be available for budget

items other than the city's debt service.

The plan was proposed by Municipal Assistance Corporation chairman and EFCB consultant, Felix Rohatyn. Rohatyn is the senior partner in one of NYC's largest investment banking firms, Lazare Bros. It may seem strange that, given the financial interests Rohatyn represents, he would even consider the possibility of postponement on bank payments. However, there are two clearcut benefits from his plan for the banks. In the first place, refinancing the bonds for a 20-year period would double the interest cost from \$5.5 million to \$10.5 million. Thus the banks gain an additional \$5 million profit on their loans. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the extension of the debt service would lead to a 20% reduction on the real estate tax, a situation extremely beneficial to the banks, one of the major holders of mortgages in the city.

The third proposal — the most "liberal" — is to stretch out the implementation of the \$500 million cut, that is, to make the cuts over several years. As it stands now, the cuts all have to be made within the budget year 1977-78. In addition, the proposal calls for financial aid from the federal government.

The logic of this later proposal is deliberately misleading and certainly no alternative for the poor and working class. Whether the cuts are made by the end of this year, or in three more years, the crippling effects on people's lives is ultimately the same.

It is not surprising, however, that the supporters of such a plan include various "liberal" politicians and labor leaders, such as Congressman Herman Badillo and Victor Gotbaum, head of DC 37, the Municipal Workers Union. Rather than take a militant position against the cutbacks and layoffs and pin point the banks and financial interests as the fundamental culprits for the city crisis, these class collaborationists willingly accept a solution that in reality is no solution, but merely an attempt to deceive the working class and its allies, to cool out their anger and potential militancy.

## FEDERAL AID TO THE CITY?

A major unknown element in the budget crisis is the question of federal aid. From the beginning, Carter's election was interpreted to mean that a friendly federal hand would finally be extended to New York. Carter has spoken generally of increased federal aid to urban areas, but he has not yet stated anything concrete. He has said, however, that he favors low interest loans as opposed to federal guarantees of city bonds.

Regardless of the type of aid that NYC receives, whether it receives aid at all, or regardless of the "alternative" selected by the EFCB, the amount of money owed to the banks and the methods used historically to maintain capitalist profits make it clear that services and jobs will continue to be slashed at the expense of the poor and working class.

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# BOSTON MORE RACIST ATTACKS

During the second week of November, the Boston City Council dealt a severe blow to the attempts of national minority construction workers to enter the construction industry. The council deliberately cut all funding for the Third World Clearing House, a job placement center for minority construction workers which had placed over 360 workers in the construction industry last year. This latest effort to destroy the Third World Clearing House is part of the



Madison Park High:

nation-wide attempt to withdraw concessions which minorities and indirectly the entire working class had gained through struggle during the past decade.

In Boston there are very few minority workers in the construction industry, approximately only 5%. The TWCH was established as a token response to the just demands of Boston's minority workers in this industry. Despite continuous racist, national chauvinist, anti-labor attacks from the city administration, contractors, corrupt union "leaders" and such fascist-type gangs and organizations as the South Boston Marshalls, ROAR and the KKK, the TWCH has been able to place some minority workers in construction jobs.

On the day that the council cut off funding for TWCH, it approved an agreement with the Department of Labor for \$7.8 million in new funding under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) with one condition: that no part of the funds be allocated to the TWCH. This made it quite clear that the reason for denying funds to the TWCH was not the council's lack of money, but the council's desire to destroy the Clearing House, and, more fundamentally, to undermine the struggle of minorities against racial and national discrimination. In this effort, the council was supported by contractors and sell-out union leaders. These collaborationist mobilized construction workers to

demonstrate against funding the Clearing House.

The TWCH has played an effective role in placing Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Asians and other minorities in an industry which has historically ignored their needs. When labor unions have failed to take up the just demands of minority workers, it has been through the TWCH that organizations like the Third World Workers Association have been able to place their members on construction jobs. In every such job placement, the Clearing House and minority construction workers organizations have had to confront the opposition of the cities' racist forces. In some instances this opposition has taken the form of violent attacks. Now the racist forces are also attacking the TWCH by cutting its funds.

Their propaganda has been particularly effective among the less conscious white workers. With the argument that any gains for minority workers represents less jobs and opportunities for white workers, the racists have fanned prejudice and national chauvinism. By raising charges of "reverse discrimination" and "we've already made too many concessions to those people," the racist propaganda attempts to undermine the struggles of oppressed nationalities as well as the class solidarity, organization and fighting strength of all workers. This weakens their struggle against class enemies by pitting workers of different nationalities against one another.

Racism is an effective tool in the hands of the ruling class. It is used to perpetuate the misery and suffering of the entire working class. The superexploitation of oppressed minorities, and the increased exploitation of white workers, is facilitated by racism. Recent attacks against the TWCH, like the attacks throughout the nation on Bilingual educational programs, affirmative action, and Equal Opportunity are part of the intensified effort to further the super-exploitation of the national minorities in our country. Unfortunately, white sectors of the working class have been misled into supporting these attacks.

Yet white workers do not benefit from racism. Racism benefits only the bosses. The bosses use it to keep worker's wages low by maintaining a large pool of cheap unemployed labor force. This is particularly the case in the construction industry where thousands of workers, white and non-white, are unemployed. Here in Boston construction workers now fight among themselves for jobs, while construction companies keep wages down and continue to lay-off more workers. Yet, if the workers united their efforts in struggle and forced the ruling class to improve housing, health care, and education, this would put thousands upon thousands of men and women to work.

Therefore, the struggle against racial and national discrimination must be taken up by the entire working class, white workers as well as minorities.

# OPPOSITION TO FORD'S STATEMENTS

The recent statements by outgoing President Ford, in which he proposed statehood for Puerto Rico, has been a topic of broad discussions both nationally and internationally. Due to the significance and possible consequences of Ford's statements PUERTO RICO INFORMA, usually a contribution from companion JSM in Puerto Rico, will not be published in this edition in order to present the views of OEM in this important matter. — Ed. Note

Overwhelmingly, the reaction has been in opposition to outgoing President Ford's proposal of statehood for Puerto Rico. From Plains Georgia — home of President elect Carter — to the Puerto Rican communities in New York City, people of different backgrounds and interests have manifested opposition to this latest intervention in the affairs of the Puerto Rican people. This opposition has been expressed in newspaper articles and columns that have characterized Ford's statements, "a blunder of the outgoing President," "a possible payoff by President Ford to those who supported his candidacy," "an attempt by the Republicans to help the in-coming administration of the Republican supported Romero Barcelo," etc. In most cases, statements such as these have tended to obscure the significance of Ford's remarks both to the peoples of Puerto Rico and the U.S., as well as obscuring the real interests of some of those opposing Ford's proposal.

## FORD, PUERTO RICO AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS — A BACKGROUND

In the pages of OEM, we have often discussed the colonial status of Puerto Rico, as well as its present economic condition which is best characterized by high unemployment (officially estimated over 30% of the labor force) and by the dependence of 70% of those employed on the assistance of the Federal Food Stamp Program in order to supplement their grossly inadequate wages. This situation, which condemns the great majority of the Puerto Rican people to exist below the poverty level (as it is defined by U.S. Federal Guidelines), has created a situation in the island for potential mass discontent and upheaval. Such a development would have considerable impact on the Puerto Rican political situation, and, due to Puerto Rico's colonial situation, would also have immense impact on the Northamerican people — particularly the minorities. Internationally, its political ramifications would most keenly affect U.S.—Latin American relations. These are but aspects

of a reality which is recognized by both the Puerto Rican colonial government and the U.S. federal government and its ruling circles.

Yet imperialism, and its colonial agents, are aware that the economic policy that they must pursue in order to continue to extract huge profits from Puerto Rico will not resolve the economic plight of the Puerto Rican people. This becomes evident when we examine the trend of U.S. capital investment in Puerto Rico during the last few decades.

During the late forties, with the Popular Democratic Party (PPD) in power in Puerto Rico, a program of industrialization (Operation Bootstrap) was instituted. Under this "development program" labor incentive capital was invested in the island through the inducements of such programs as tax exemptions, location assistance, labor negotiations, etc. But fundamentally the chief inducement to U.S. business interests was the abundance of cheap labor and the non-applicability of federal minimal wage statute. In addition, Bootstrap was accompanied by the institution of a migration program for those not absorbed by the newly developing economy, as well as the creation of a huge government bureaucracy that would develop into one of the island's largest employer — the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico (ELA).

But with the advent of the crisis of capitalism, the last decade in Puerto Rico has seen a change in capital investment. U.S. capital has pursued less a policy of labor incentive industrialization and instead concentrated on capital intensive industrialization such as Petroleum refining, Petro-chemical bi-products, pharmaceuticals, etc. These industrial complexes employ relatively few workers, and those that they do employ are highly skilled personnel. This means that the vast majority of the Puerto Rican labor force will be unemployed or underemployed. One immediate result of this change in the economy was the unmasking of the true nature of the Free Associated State's "program of development." This program is not cemented upon a solid base but characterized by instability and dependency upon the needs of the U.S. economy. As a result, the popular sectors have begun to grasp the basis of its failure — colonialism, and in recent years have demonstrated their discontent in increasingly militant manner.

## 1976 ELECTIONS—"STATUS IS NOT THE ISSUE"

In the last November's elections, the New Progressive Party (PNP), which is closely identified with the U.S. Republican Party in this country and which in previous elections had made Statehood the center of its electoral platform, projected a populist image in which economic conditions and government corruption were the dominant issues, and not the

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## FORD'S STATEMENTS (CONT.)

question of status. With this tactic, the PNP, and their gubernatorial candidate Romero Barcelo, were victorious and struck a severe blow to the Popular Democratic Party, which is closely identified with the U.S. Democratic Party and with the status of Commonwealth.

Although it obtained victory through its populist campaign, the PNP is quite aware that the economic conditions of Puerto Rico are, to a great extent, but a reflection of the economic conditions in the U.S. In this respect, it is clear to the PNP, as well as the outgoing Ford administration, that Puerto Rico's economy cannot be strengthened unless the economic conditions in the U.S. improve. By introducing the question of the status, topic of heated debate in Puerto Rico, Ford and the Republican administration hope to divert attention from the economy and the mass discontent brewing among the Puerto Rican people in order to complement the plans of the PNP and Romero Barcelo during his term of office. Romero Barcelo and the PNP hope to pin the PPD and the in-coming Carter administration against the wall. In essence, their tactic is two fold. First, it places the Carter administration in a position where it is compelled to support the PNP program in order to defuse the argument that present Commonwealth status is responsible for the economic condition of the island poor. Secondly, should the Carter administration decide not to cooperate with Romero Barcelo, the PNP can then use the deteriorating economic conditions — as well as the argument of non-representation in Congress — to further his populist image and attract larger sectors of the Puerto Rican population to the ranks of the PNP. This can lead to the PNP outstripping the PPD in terms of membership and popularity, setting the basis for the conduct of another plebiscite on the status question in which the statehood advocates would be a majority for the first time in Puerto Rican history.

### WALL STREET RESPONSE

Among the first sectors to respond in opposition to Ford's statement in this country were the Wall Street financiers who own most of Puerto Rico's resources and most of the bonds issued by the colonial government to raise capital to maintain its huge bureaucratic apparatus. The response by Wall Street financiers demonstrated that the last thing on their mind was the Puerto Rican people or a political definition for the island. Rather, their thoughts were the loss of a sure tax haven. This is exemplified in the column written by the New York Times economic analyst, Robert Metz:

"... What makes the Puerto Rican bonds attractive is the commonwealth status of the island community. As such, its outstanding debt is not subject to federal, state or city income taxes.

... Few Puerto Ricans own bonds issued by the commonwealth at present. The

primary holders are wealthy stateside individuals, major banks, insurance companies and investment counselors who hold them for clients on the mainland.

Frank Henjes, who does business at 100 Wall Street under his own name, said yesterday that more than 90 percent of the approximately \$4 billion worth of Puerto Rican bonds outstanding was owned by stateside United States citizens." N.Y. Times — 1/4/77

Clearly, the Wall Street capitalists interests in Puerto Rico is a question of financial interests. To this sector of U.S. capitalists the present status of Commonwealth is more beneficial and consequently this is the basis of opposition to Ford's proposal and their full support — at present — for Hernandez Colon's PPD. By such a stance the Wall Street financiers lift whatever doubt anyone may have as to who really owns and controls the island of Puerto Rico.

### OIL IN THE OFFSHORES OF PUERTO RICO

Another factor that is driving an important sector of the ruling circles in the U.S. to view statehood as a viable alternative both politically and economically is the existence of oil and natural gas resources in Puerto Rico. For even under the fallacy of Commonwealth status, Puerto Rico has at present limited legal rights to its natural resources which would allow it to determine which of the oil monopolies acquires the drilling rights, what percentage of the royalties remain with the Puerto Rican colonial government and even the possibility that Puerto Rico may retain full custody of the deposits.

The government of Hernandez Colon has been aware of these deposits for the past few years and has carried secret negotiations with the oil interests, particularly Exxon and Mobil. These negotiations were consistently denied by Colon's government. This changed when Richard Copaken, a lawyer for Covington & Burling in Wall Street, made public conversations and letters between his firm, Hernandez Colon and Secretary of State Kissinger. Copaken, who for the last few years has served as assistant to Hernandez Colon lifted the cover of these secret negotiations and forced Hernandez Colon to admit to them. Nevertheless, lost in the heat of the post Ford remarks was the fact that Hernandez Colon had kept these negotiations secret throughout his term in office. This raises questions as to his future role in these negotiations and again unmasks the role Wall Street capitalists have in determining Puerto Rico's political status.

### DEMOCRATIC PARTY SUPPORTS STATEHOOD

The PNP's posture during the November elections, along with Ford's recent proposal, makes it clear that statehood is on the agenda for U.S. imperialism as a solution to the status question. It becomes clear that imperialism and its colonial agents have not

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Blacks revolt near Alexandria.

## SOUTH AFRICA (PART 2)

In the last issue of O.E.M. (Vol. I No. 22) we published an article entitled "South Africa," contributed to O.E.M. by Companero B.S. At that time, we failed to mention that it would be the first of a three part series on South Africa.

In the first segment Companero B.S. outlined the economic and political importance of South Africa to imperialism, as well as the character and nature of Apartheid. What follows in this issue is the second part of that series, which details the relationship between racial oppression and class exploitation and the levels of contradiction in South African society. In the final segment, B.S. will address the efforts of Apartheid's exponents to preserve its existence, the role of U.S. imperialism, and the responsibility of the U.S. left in the South African support efforts.

### APARTHEID AND CLASS STRUGGLE

Although South African Apartheid appears to be a system of racial rather than class oppression, the two are intimately related. Apartheid gives rise to a particular form of class struggle, whose appearance is that of racial antagonism and confrontation. This is so because the class structure of South African society places all whites in the ruling classes and all Third World peoples in the oppressed and exploited classes. Only through recourse to the particular history of capitalist development in South Africa can we understand the emergence of this form of the class struggle.

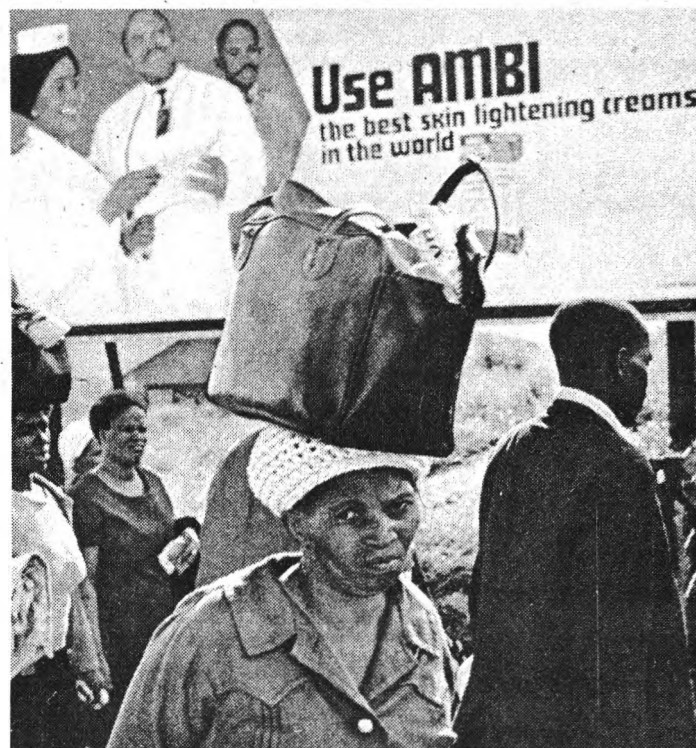
South Africa is an amalgam, constituted out of the former colonial possessions of Britain in South Africa and the two "Afrikaner" republics which she defeated in the Boer War (1899-1901): The Transvaal Republic and The Orange Free State. Until the latter part of the 19th century the economic base of the Afrikaner republics was subsistence agriculture worked by African slave labor on seized lands. These societies' superstructure of values, attitudes, ideas and

institutions were openly racist and anti-capitalist as one would expect of a society based on chattel slavery. Upon the conclusion of the Boer War, Britain was faced with the capitalist development of the mineral wealth of South Africa in an environment where she confronted the two-fold hostility of the African and the Afrikaner. She attempted to placate the white population by giving South Africa self government and dominion status within the Empire. On the other hand she offered the African the usual colonial oppression then rampant in Africa. Economically, Britain supported a "liberal" local leadership culminating in the Smuts Government (World War I and post-War) which attempted to experiment with the unimpeded operation of the labor market as a vehicle for maximizing profits. Capital sought to reduce the privileges of white miners by upgrading African labor to more skilled work, by diluting white labor with Black and lastly by trying to lower the wages of white miners. In so doing the capitalists were trying to lower the status of white labor by improving that of Black. For their efforts they unleashed a period of unparalleled class struggle between capital and labor in South Africa culminating in the great Witwatersrand strikes of 1907, 1913, 1914 and 1922.

While Africans looked on from the sidelines quite left out of this struggle, white labor, almost all Afrikaners, saw the attacks of the capitalists not only as a threat to their pocketbooks but essentially as a serious erosion on their cultural heritage of racial superiority. Having entered the labor market just like their African counterparts, rural illiterates, the white Afrikaners could not depend on the normal operation of that market to protect their social and cultural position of racial superiority which they inherited from the old Boer societies. Increasingly the class struggle took the form of a racial confrontation with

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## SOUTH AFRICA (CONT.)



Racial oppression in South Africa.

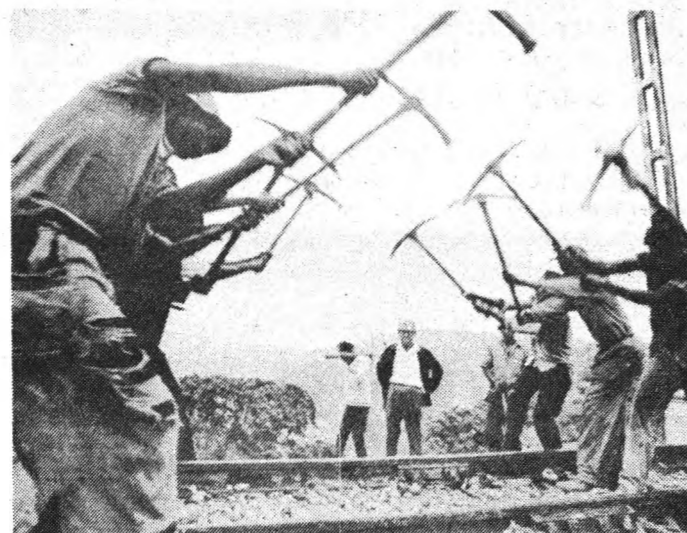
white labor rallying to the banner and slogan of "a white South Africa." In order to retain the allegiance of white workers the Labor Party of South Africa had to enter into a formal alliance with the party of the racist Afrikaner landowners, the Nationalist Party. This "Pact" between the Labor Party and the Nationalist defeated the Smuts Government in the 1924 elections and introduced a "civilized" labor policy, dismissing Africans from government employ and passing in 1925 the Mines and Works Act which finally established the "color bar" throughout the economy of the Union of South Africa. By 1948 the Labor Party was no longer a factor in South African politics, its constituency now firmly in the Nationalist Party of the Afrikaner landowners.

As for this Nationalist Party, it is in fact a coalition of Afrikaner landowners and white working class forces with some of the newly emergent Afrikaner industrial capitalists. It is not a classical ruling class party in that its social base is not the industrial bourgeoisie. On the other hand, capitalism has chosen to make its peace with Afrikaner nationalism and racism because it has become in South Africa the basis for extorting super-profits out of African labor. In this sense the superexploitation of African labor allows the capitalist the luxury of co-opting white workers with the highest material standard of living in the world. On the grounds of efficiency, capitalism could have persisted in its attack on the privileged position of white workers. But capitalists strive not only to maximize profits but to maintain ownership of the means of production and control over the labor force. In the colonial

setting of South Africa, an important prop of imperialist domination of Africans was the myth of white supremacy. Shattering that myth through class struggles between white capital and labor would have cost the capitalist much more in loss of control over African labor than he stood to gain through increased exploitation of the minority white working class. Therefore, after World War II and increasingly after the "winds of change" blew over Africa in 1960, the industrial bourgeoisie in South Africa willingly left political affairs to the Nationalist Party. They did this because it was the Nationalist Party whose program came closest to maximizing profit while maintaining capitalist control over the African majority, which was in fact the South African working class.

### THE STRUCTURE OF CONTRADICTIONS IN THE APARTHEID SYSTEM

The primary contradiction in Apartheid South Africa is between the Third World population, the overwhelming but dispossessed and exploited majority, and the white ruling classes composed of landowners, industrial capitalist and so called "working" class whites. This contradiction is, as we have seen above, a form of the antagonistic principal contradiction of this historic period - that between capital and labor. At the level of productive



South African railroad workers.

forces, it is reflected in the classical crisis of overproduction and underconsumption. In South Africa, this crisis is quite intense because superexploitation of Black labor has severely restricted the size of the internal market. At the same time it has greatly accelerated productive capacity. At the level of the social structure, this contradiction is reflected as one whose aspects are the extreme dependency upon Black labor on the one hand, and the racial exclusiveness of Apartheid on the other. Similarly, the social conditions under which superprofits are created and expropriated lack legitimacy even by 20th century capitalist standards. Therefore, the superstructure of values and attitudes does not function effectively to mask the essential production relationships under the standards prevailing currently in many other parts of the world.

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# STEELWORKERS ELECT LEADERSHIP

On February 8th, the 1.4 million members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) will elect their top international union officers, including a successor to retiring president I.W. Abel. In this contest, the entrenched sellout leadership, whose slate is headed by District 34 (St. Louis region) director Lloyd McBride, is being challenged by an insurgent ticket headed by Ed Sadlowski. This challenge against an entrenched bureaucracy, in the largest industrial union in the country, reflects the rising rank and file discontent with sellout union leaders who earn large salaries (at the expense of the membership) and turn a deaf ear to the needs and grievances of the members.

In the 11 years that Abel has been in power, he has collaborated with the steel monopolies (U.S. Steel, Bethlehem, Republic, etc.) to increase productivity, abandoned the strike weapon, and raised union dues and officer's salaries. The Sadlowski forces are calling for rejection of this type of class-collaboration and business unionism that makes the union a business enterprise and not an instrument of struggle against the persistent attacks of the bosses. As a result, they have tapped a reservoir of rank and file discontent.

### SADLOWSKI AND THE SFB PROGRAM

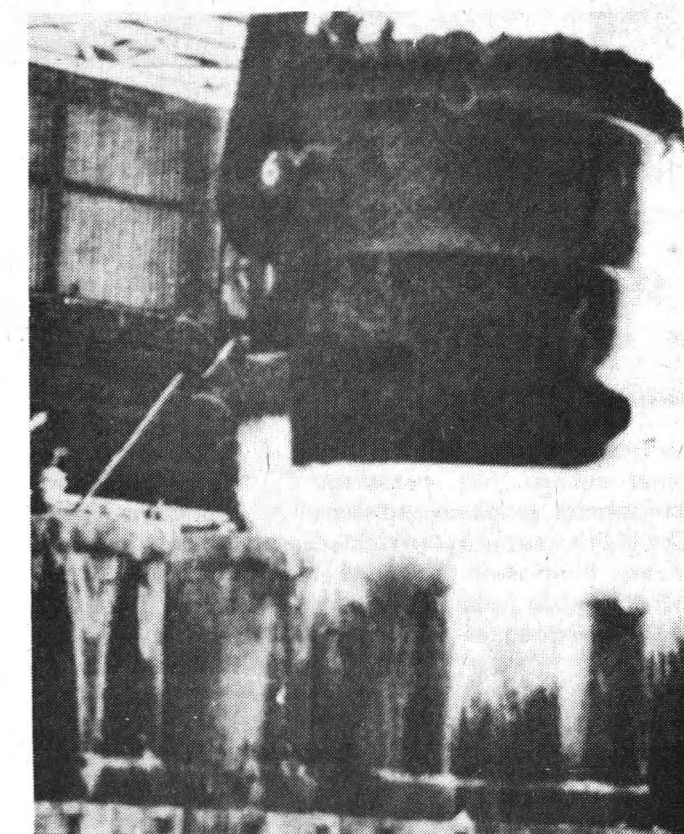
Ed Sadlowski is the director of District 31, Chicago-Gary, which claims a tenth of the USWA membership. He first ran for his present post in February 1973 against Sam Evett, a handpicked Abel candidate, and lost 25,103 to 22,753. But he and the Steelworkers Fight Back (SFB), the rank and file organization that backed him then and is supporting his present candidacy, challenged the results and succeeded in having the Department of Labor call a new election. In November 1974, Sadlowski won 39,637 to 20,058. This inspired other reform candidates in District 31 who succeeded in ousting Abel Lieutenants in the 18,000 member Local 1010, the largest in the nation, and the 10,000 member Local 1011.

The program that Sadlowski's Fight Back organization advances highlights three key issues: rank and file ratification of basic steel contracts, the right to industry-wide strikes, and a rollback of union dues. Other demands focus on a guaranteed annual wage, a cost of living clause for pensions, and a streamlining of grievance and arbitration procedures. However, lacking in the program is a strong stand against racist discrimination. Although Sadlowski/SFB has criticized the failure of the anti-discrimination Consent Decree (which has in fact institutionalized racism in the industry), this is not enough. Based on the long history of discriminatory practices in the industry, which have divided oppressed nationality workers and white workers and undermined their solidarity, strength, and combativity, a militant stand must be taken against discrimination. Having underestimated this task, the

Sadlowski/SFB slate fails to combat and expose racism as a key ideological tool used by the bosses and union sellouts to divide the workers and defeat all struggles.

### JOB SECURITY, PRODUCTIVITY AND THE ENA

For steelworkers, a major issue in the elections is job security. Abel's solution to this issue has been to cooperate with industry measures to increase worker productivity. He has united with the steel monopolies in calling for the American worker to join with Big Business to increase productivity in order to meet the growing competition from Japanese and European steel. In 1971, he established joint committees on productivity with the steel monopolies. In this way, the American steelworker would be rewarded with job security. However, increased productivity has actually meant the loss of more jobs for the U.S. steelworker. To illustrate: employment in blast furnaces and steel mills dropped from 528,000, to 487,000 between 1960 and 1974 (the year before the recession hit steel), while production increased. On



the other hand, injury rates doubled between 1961 and 1969. In 1974, 15 out of 100 workers in blast furnaces and mills - and 30 out of 100 foundry workers - suffered an occupational injury or illness. For the workers, the rewards of increased productivity have been increased unemployment and

Continued on page 10

## STEELWORKERS (CONT.)

occupational injuries and illnesses, while for the steel monopolies it has meant increased profits. The lesson is clear: in this society, productivity is sought with the goal of securing greater profits for the owners of Big Business instead of improving the conditions of the working class.

Tied to the issue of productivity has been another Abel pet project: the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA) signed in March 1973. Like all national steel agreements, the ENA was not submitted to the membership for ratification, which characterizes the lack of democracy in the USWA. The ENA forbids industrywide strikes in basic steel and allows companies almost complete freedom to make productivity improvements at the expense of the workers. Under ENA, the USWA has to submit grievances or contract disagreements to compulsory arbitration through 1979. The net result of the ENA has been to rob steelworkers of their most powerful weapon - their power to stop production. As Sadlowski so aptly characterized it, the no-strike pledge is like having "a watch dog in your house with no teeth."

### SADLOWSKI AND REDBAITING

Naturally Sadlowski's opponent, Lloyd McBride, has defended and rationalized all the Abel policies. Moreover, McBride and the entrenched machine have redbaited Sadlowski very strongly. They have alternated from calling him a "communist" dupe to being an outright "communist." Unfortunately, Sadlowski has given in to these attacks by vehemently stating that he opposes communism and by urging that communists be purged from the union. By these statements, he has weakened the struggle against the sellouts and given in to their reactionary and class-collaborationist ideas and positions. In addition, his position weakens the struggle to gain unity among the rank and file - unity needed to combat the bosses - and gives legitimacy to the msot backward, self-serving leaders in the union who demagogically red bait to quell discontent and circumvent democratic practices. Moreover, the position is not consistent with history and the exemplary role the members of the Communist Party played as organizers in the 30's in the Steelworkers Organizing Committee the predecessor to the USWA.

The Sadlowski/SFB campaign is not the first reform campaign in a major union in recent years. That trail was initially blazed by the Miners for Democracy/Arnold Miller campaign in 1972 in the United Mine Workers. Unfortunately, the Miners for Democracy was disbanded after the election. As a result, Miller, who has had to share power with holdovers from the old administration, has grown more distant from the rank and file movement that elected him. Indeed, he has given in to red baiting and not supported the wildcat strikes initiated by the rank and file over safety hazards and unjust firings (a long standing miner's tradition that a "blow against one is a blow against all.") SFB, on the other hand,

has stated that Sadlowski is "our vehicle" and that "individuals don't make changes."

### FOR A CLASS CONSCIOUS RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

The Sadlowski campaign is a militant, trade unionist movement that lacks a consistent and thorough working class perspective. Fundamentally, it lacks a firm stand on racism and has an anticommunist perspective. As a result, these weaknesses hamper the development of rank and file unity and the struggle against the union bureaucracy and the steel monopolies. Despite these weaknesses (which we do not underestimate), the Sadlowski campaign is a progressive development in the USWA which manifests and represent the rising discontent among steelworkers with the sellout leadership of the Abel machine. In particular its call for union democracy and the rejection of class-collaborationist policies (such as the ENA) are important steps towards building a militant, class conscious union. Thus, it is important to struggle for the election of the Sadlowski/SFB slate. However, it is more essential to develop the SFB as a militant, class-conscious rank and file formation with a defined program that unites the middle (such as Sadlowski) and left forces and is independent of an individual figure. In this regard, the lessons of the Miners for Democracy/Arnold Miller experience are extremely valuable and enlightening.



## UNIFIED STRUGGLE - ONLY ALTERNATIVE

The crisis in NYC for the working class will not be over even if the city "balances" its budget. The level of services the working class and oppressed sectors fought for and won during the militant struggles in the '60s will never be restored without a militant struggle today. The working class and its allies must organize to stop the cuts and at the same time demand expanded services. But the struggle must be a united effort; we can no longer fight isolated struggles, with each sector affected by the cuts attempting to salvage only its share of the pie. We must transform our unions into organizations that take militant political action against the attacks on our standard of living. In sectors that are not unionized, we must focus on their unionization. Within our communities we must develop mass movements that have a clearcut program of demands and tactics to guide a citywide struggle. Only in this way can we successfully mobilize against the budget cuts.

At the same time we must understand that today's crisis is an integral part of the general economic crisis of U.S. imperialism and that our struggle against the cutbacks must only be one aspect of a broader struggle - a struggle against U.S. imperialism, against the capitalist system.

## CITY BUDGET (CONT.)

### MORATORIUM ON '75 DEBT DECLARED ILLEGAL

In November, the discussion on the budget both within the government and in banking circles received a sharp jolt when the New York State Court of Appeals ruled that the 1975 State-imposed moratorium on \$1 billion in short-term city bonds was illegal. This meant that the city would now have to come up with an immediate \$1 billion to pay off the bondholders. The moratorium had been one of the pieces that the EFCB had developed in their creation of the 3-year plan to stabilize the city's budget. The holders of these short-term bonds were not the major banking institutions (Chase Manhattan, Citibank, and Morgan Gaurantee Trust) who own most of the bonds making up the city's debt. Thus it was not any loss to the profits of these major banks when the moratorium was originally declared. In the light of the court's recent decision, the primary concern of these banks (through their mouthpiece, the EFCB) is to insure payment on their loans and thus their profits. At present the city has not yet developed its plan for how they expect to pay off the \$1 billion.

## FORD'S STATEMENTS (CONT.)

abandoned this option. Indeed, the PNP has unleashed a strategy whose ultimate goal could very well be statehood by 1984, particularly if Romero Barcelo is able to achieve re-election in the next elections.

In viewing the PNP of today is important to understand that historically the identification of the PNP with the Democratic Party and the PNP with the Republican Party has tended to obscure the class collaboration between the Puerto Rican and Northamerican capitalists. Mistakenly, these party relationships have been seen outside the context of class interests and ties. But that veil is rapidly being lifted. What is being exposed is the unity that both PNP and PPD share as dependent political instruments that conform to the needs of imperialism. Therefore, it is not surprising that as imperialism is more seriously pursuing the option of statehood and the PPD's political capital is declining that the Democratic Party is taking concrete steps to function in Puerto Rico's political arena. Moreover, two recent events demonstrate the fragility of the party partisanship of the PPD and PNP when that conflicts or interferes with imperialist policies and interests. First, there was the integration of Baltazar Corrada, the new PNP Resident Commissioner in Washington, into the Democratic caucus in Congress which will provide him a forum in which to propagandize on the "merits" of statehood. And secondly, the presence of Maurice Ferre, Mayor of Miami and nephew of the PNP's founder (Luis Ferre), at Romero Barcelo's inauguration as president-elect Carter's representative. Significantly, he cited the

steady rise of the PNP's electoral pluralities and affirmed the Democratic Party's support of statehood, with the words that "... if Puerto Ricans desired statehood, Congress would have to grant it." Further, and as reported in Puerto Rican newspapers, Maurice Ferre ventured that this possibility will come about in this next four year period.

Now, as never before, the myth is being exposed that the PNP and PPD have polar antagonistic interests and objectives. As tools of imperialism, both will unite to save imperialism's house in the face of the storm clouds of social, political, and economic upheaval that are developing in Puerto Rico.

### LATIN AMERICA

With its statehood proposal, U.S. imperialism attempts to place a wedge between the rising independence movement in Puerto Rico and the socialist and Third World countries - particularly Revolutionary Cuba. Also, Puerto Rican statehood would further legitimize the use of Puerto Rico as a staging area for counter-revolutionary offensives in Latin America (such as done in Santo Domingo in 1965). Furthermore, the move towards statehood is consistent with imperialism's efforts to consolidate its interest in what it considers its own backyard, Latin America. In contrast to the methods used for this consolidation in most other Latin American countries where this has been achieved through the support and propping up of military dictatorships, in Puerto Rico, it proposes full annexation.

IN COMING EDITIONS - THE TASKS OF THE  
LIBERATION FORCES

# SOUTH AFRICA **cont.**

The primary contradiction then appears also as a crisis of legitimacy.

At present, the primary aspect of the principal contradiction is the white settler class propped up by Apartheid. The secondary aspect of the principal



Construction workers in Pretoria.

contradiction is the Black proletariat. This is so because the settler regime is quite conscious of its interests as a class, owns and controls the means of production, and has at its disposal the oppressive apparatus of the state and the support of western imperialism. The Black proletariat is young, still in the process of consolidating its various ethnic components (Africans, "coloreds," Indians). It has not yet developed a mature vanguard party and its leadership is still fragmented.

However, Apartheid cannot resolve in its favor all of the ramifications of the principal contradiction mentioned above: that is, it cannot resolve the contradiction between a restricted domestic market and a rapidly expanding productive capacity it cannot continue to integrate Black labor economically while segregating it socially. Lastly, it cannot legitimize its rule without extending democratic rights to the Black proletariat, thus undermining the political basis of superexploitation. Internationally, Apartheid is isolated and its imperialist allies are fresh from defeat in Indochina and Angola. Its friends are forced to openly disavow it in international forums. No longer is it surrounded by buffer zones in southern Africa. Therefore, the primary external contradiction facing South Africa - that between Apartheid and the rising tide of liberation in southern Africa and the world - condition the development of the principal internal contradiction in ways which accelerate the struggle of the Black proletariat inside the "Republic."

The Black proletariat at the same time moves from strength to strength. Its fragmented nature is rapidly disappearing as similar conditions of oppression and the conscious activity of radical intellectuals of all three ethnic components convince more and more members of each ethnic group that there is no possibility of a "separate peace" with Apartheid. The Black Consciousness Movement, growing in part out of the South African Students Organization (SASO) and taking organizational form in the Black Peoples Convention (BPC), has formulated a concept of Black Power which defines all of South Africa's Third World peoples as "Black." It has emphasized that the struggle of Black people is directed toward the seizure of political power by the Black working masses.

Moreover, this younger leadership is educating the masses to recognize the vulnerability of white settler domination by taking them into the streets to confront the power of Apartheid directly and in so doing to de-mystify it. On the international level world opinion and the moral and material support it affords from the larger number of nations and peoples of the globe has ended the isolation of the Black masses from the outside world. The two revolutionary united fronts, The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and The African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), have historically made the greatest contributions to the development of international support. Of course, the example of successful peoples struggle in Portuguese Africa has inspired the present national uprising in South Africa itself. Sooner rather than later these forces will coalesce and mature into a single united front led by a Marxist-Leninist core and deliver the death blow to settler rule in South Africa. Thus this secondary aspect of the primary contradiction is rapidly on the wane. Within ten or twenty years if not much sooner the aspects of South Africa's primary internal contradiction will reverse themselves and the mass struggle for power in South Africa will experience a qualitative leap.

South Africa's secondary contradiction at present is located in the class structure of the oppressed communities. It is the contradiction between the working classes and their petty bourgeoisies. However, Apartheid dominates this contradiction in such a way as to offer at present an option to the petty bourgeoisie but to cast its lot with the struggle of the working masses. Fearful of the masses but offered no option to "integrate" itself permanently into the Apartheid machinery, it offers conditional support to the masses hoping at every turn to divert popular victories into neo-colonialist, non-socialist compromises. It is this class which international imperialism is most comfortable negotiating with. As long as Apartheid offers no channels for redress save armed struggle this contradiction can never become the primary one and may ultimately be resolved in the post liberation period in a non-antagonistic way. When looking at the present situation in Zimbabwe, however, international imperialism and South African Apartheid both seem to feel they can protect their interest by raising this contradiction to the level of the principal contradiction.

To be continued.

