

OBREROS EN MARCHA

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

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WELFARE DEPT.
INSTITUTES
FORCED LABOR

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OLD WESTBURY
**STUDENTS
UNITE AND
WIN!**

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Credit: George Cohen

In a protest organized by the newly formed Citywide Community Coalition, over a thousand people marched on April 15th, 1977-
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EDITORIAL

EL COMITE-M.I.N.P. & GRAND JURY REPRESSION

The science of historical materialism teaches us that in modern capitalist society the State has a dual functional nature. On the one hand, for the ruling class it constitutes a series of political, administrative and social institutions which guarantee its rule over society. On the other hand, for the subjugated classes—the great majority of society—the State is an instrument of oppression and violence. This dual nature is maintained fundamentally by systematic repression and by legal demagoguery which is utilized to justify the ruling class' position of dominance and to distort truth. Through the institution of "law and rights" the ruling class presents a false image of democracy; in essence, these laws are instituted not to guarantee the equal rights of all citizens but to guarantee the position of dominance enjoyed by the small sector that rules all the people in society.

It is within this context that we view the role being played by the FBI and the Grand Jury in their orchestrated harassment of the Puerto Rican communities in the U.S., the independence movement and its supporters, as well as the most recent acts of intimidation directed at El Comite-MINP, its sympathizers and friends.

Two Years of Harassment and Illegal Acts by the FBI

During the last two years sectors of the Puerto Rican community in the U.S. have suffered the continuous harassment and/or attempts at intimidation by the FBI and the local police. In particular these activities have focused on the Puerto Rican Independence movement and its supporters. Using as a pretext the actions of a group calling itself the FALN (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional), the U.S. government has unleashed an orchestrated campaign with the objective of dismantling this growing support movement for Puerto Rico's independence. In these efforts it has tried to isolate this growing movement from the Northamerican people by attempting to link all the independence movement with the activities carried out by the FALN.

Through the use of the grand jury a number of supporters or members of the independence movement have already experienced imprisonment—Lureida Torres, who spent various months incarcerated for refusing to collaborate with the State, and presently Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin who are imprisoned for essentially assuming a similar stand—while there are others who are under threat of being subpoenaed by the Grand Jury or have already been called.

The threat of a grand jury subpoena, and eventual jail for non-collaboration, has also been accompanied by illegal acts by the State and its agents of the FBI. In our case, during the last two years, we have had members followed, homes broken into and ransacked, our office placed under surveillance; information about our personal lives asked of our neighbors, building superintendents and employers; and other acts which we could cite. In short, a campaign of character assassination has been developed. All this has been intended to create an atmosphere of fear among our fellow workers and the community that one cannot engage in any type of activity which is critical of government policies and that to engage in any form of organized activity for funda-

mental social changes is illegal and synonymous with terrorism. This experience of our organization is a microcosm of the experience of the independence movement and its supporters. Clearly and objectively, it unmasks the demagoguery of "laws," "rights" and democracy and unveils the reality that the State in capitalist society is in its essence a dictatorship of the ruling class—the bourgeoisie. For all the acts we have pinpointed are in essence illegal as defined by the bourgeoisie's own legal institutions, but these "laws and rights" are constantly being modified and interpreted in the benefit of its creators, the ruling class.

Harassment Is Heightened

On the week of April 25, 1977 an ex-member of our leading body was notified that the offices of the U.S. District Attorney had subpoenaed his credit records. This could set the base for a possible subpoena by the New York Grand Jury. This action culminates a process of two years of harassment which began when the FBI originally visited his place of work and interrogated his supervisor and co-workers. Although no longer an active member of El Comite-MINP, this companero enjoys the respect of all the membership of our organization as well as those that have come in contact with him at work or in social activities. Therefore, we view this latest attack as if it was directed toward our organization. Consequently, we are assuming the same responsibility towards the companero that we have assumed toward all victims of political repression.

Moreover, as has been our practice, we will not be intimidated by these latest acts of the State, nor will we fall victim to its plans of isolating our movement from the Northamerican people and in particular the working class. In this respect, we will not assume a defensive position; instead we will dedicate all our resources to the continuation of our political work and organizational objectives. To do otherwise would be to play into the hands of the ruling class, and its repressive apparatus, who are utilizing the opportunity afforded by the incorrect activities of the FALN to link all potential threats to its position of dominance to these activities. In this respect, we understand that the best protection we can give our membership and friends is the continuous organization of the people and by raising the consciousness of broad sectors of society as to the real nature of the state in capitalist society in order to, in the process, set the base for its destruction.

In calling for the denunciation of the most recent activities of the grand jury and the State, we understand that only by effectively uniting broad sectors of society against these repressive acts can we stop their present campaign, which continues ever extending its reach. On this account, we oppose those who attempt to limit the breadth of the support movement by incorrectly attempting to impose their incorrect views of class struggle, particularly concerning the fundamentals of armed struggle which they narrowly define as isolated acts of violence divorced from the concrete reality of the masses and the liberation movement.

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OBREROS EN MARCHA

OLD WESTBURY

STUDENTS UNITE & WIN!

In the month of April a student strike at the College of Old Westbury brought about significant victories for the student body at that college. The events received wide national coverage by the media, as well as the international press.

Moreover, during the process of the strike acts of provocation by the National Students Association (NSA)—a "student" organization actively supported by the CIA during the Vietnam war—and others reflect the significance of the events at the college.

The college itself is unique within the New York State university system (SUNY) as it was created as a result of the militant movement in the 1960's, in particular the movement of the oppressed nationalities. As a result the college has as its "missions" the education of the "traditionally bypassed"—minorities, working people and women.

In recent years, and integrally related to the economic crisis of imperialism, the dominant class has waged an intense campaign in order to wrest back the reforms and concessions of the previous decade. In this respect, Old Westbury has been targeted as one of the schools that must return to its traditional role or be eliminated from SUNY. The efforts of the State administration has been met by the resolute struggle of the student body at C.O.W. who are intent in maintaining the original mission of the school.

As a result of the most recent strike the students won the guarantee that future recruitment at the school will provide an equal mix of Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites, men and women as well as students over 25 years of age, with first consideration given to those with greater economic needs. This is a victory not only for the students at Old Westbury but for all students. It was not a full victory; two of the most progressive faculty members (there was considerable faculty support for the strike) face dismissal from the school. Both professor Anderson and Barney, the faculty members facing dismissal, will receive the support in their struggle of the students at the college.

Members of El Comite-MINP Long Island Chapter and its student front (FEP) were part of the process which developed at Old Westbury under the correct leadership of the Student Union at C.O.W. and the subsequent Student Coalition. The following article describes the experiences and projections of the students at Old Westbury. **Ed. Note**

The students at the College at Old Westbury have recently held the second strike in a 13-month period against efforts to destroy the "mission" of the school which is to serve the historically bypassed student, i.e., national minorities, women, older and working-class people in general. For nine days (April 18-26), students barricaded the entrances of the school, stopping totally its functioning, in a defiant and well-planned act of resistance that effectively gained the support of faculty, university workers, and community supporters from surrounding working-class communities. This show of unity and support brought on by the level of organization and social awareness of the students played a fundamental role in securing most of the strike demands. The struggle carried on at the College of Old Westbury must be raised for serious study within the student movement and the developing revolutionary process in that lessons to be drawn will aid in overcoming many of the weaknesses of the past and will serve to push

forward the consolidation and further development of these processes. The most important lessons lie in understanding well the reasons why the student's victories at the College at Old Westbury arose and grasping the strength given to the continuing struggle by the degree of organization and growth in political consciousness among the students.

Since its inception, the history of C.O.W. has been one of struggle. In 1971 the atrocious conditions in which the college found itself led to a strike moratorium. Better classroom and living facilities, as well as more effective academic support were demanded and won. After the strike moratorium, President Maguire declared: That justice meant "to build a society which would overcome class distinctions, racial antagonisms and prejudices, sexual discrimination, and arrogance."

In 1973, however, the same president and his administration were instrumental in bringing about a fundamental change in the mission that jeopardized the basic interdisciplinary nature of the college by establishing new more traditional programs in the college. Other basic changes included redefining the geographic areas of recruitment with emphasis placed on accommodating transfer students from local community colleges. These measures were intended to reduce the participation of the historically bypassed students.

As early as the fall semester of 1975, student opposition to administration attacks on the mission of the school took shape in the form of the Committee for Self Defense which raised the general call to all students to: DEFEND THE MISSION. The Committee was composed of various campus organizations and concerned students. Basing itself



on the study of administrative documents and general college information, the Committee understood that the general direction being given by the administration was serving to take the college away from meeting the educational needs of the historically bypassed students. The work of the Committee, more than anything else, consisted in developing a well-organized campaign of propaganda in order to educate the student body of the general conditions on campus. Throughout this campaign, the needs of the student body and the general problems facing it (food service,

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OLD WESTBURY (cont.)

day care, bilingual education, etc.) were directly linked up to the intended mission of the school. The degree of effectiveness of this campaign would depend totally on the level of consistency with which it was carried through.

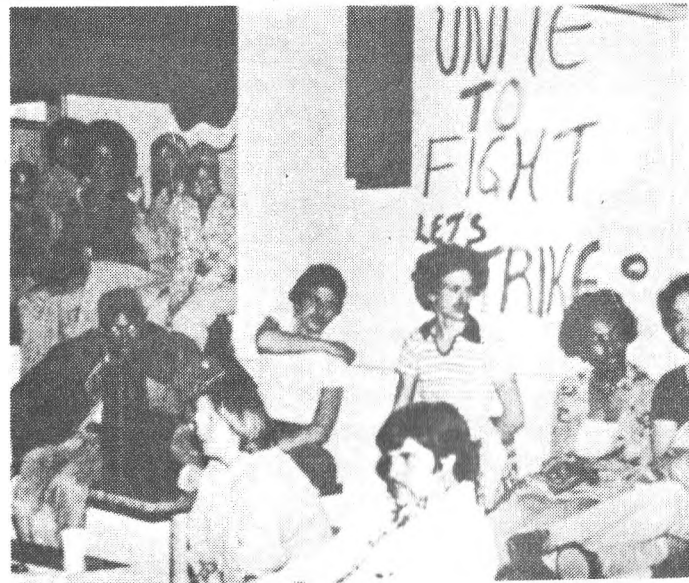
At this time, the College was approaching an evaluation for accreditation by the Middle States Accreditation Team which consisted of university administrators from throughout the U.S. and several New York State officials. The Committee for Self Defense developed a campaign which was aimed at exposing the contradictions between the administration's rhetoric and practice. The Middle States Accreditation Team had to recognize the validity of the arguments raised by the students and, as a result, they emphasized clearly in their report the uniqueness and importance of the mission of Old Westbury: "...the substantial progress made to date, if maintained and further developed, will lead to eventual accomplishments which will make Old Westbury a remarkable institution and, at the same time, will have **major implications** [emphasis added] for higher education generally." Further, "to maintain this balance is, in the opinion of the team, both the most important and the most difficult problem which the College faces during the coming year. **In view of outside pressures** [emphasis added] it can solve this problem only through substantial internal coherence and close collaboration between administration, faculty and students."

The Committee for Self Defense, the Dormitory Council and other forces continued to struggle around the issues on campus. Struggle included Christmas intercession housing for all resident students that was being discontinued; the establishment in practice of the bilingual/bicultural program; and many other issues. In these areas, students were being integrated into working committees, geared toward addressing these many problems. Again, these areas of work allowed for students to participate in the practical development of their needs, while it also served to clearly define the student alternatives in these areas.

On March 17, 1976 after a confrontation and mass rally with Dr. McGuire around the bilingual/bicultural question, students occupied and barricaded themselves into the administrative office of the college. As a result of the many months of work in building student awareness, the student body responded to this action, closing the school for six days. Some of the major demands were: 1) Reverse the 1976 Master Plan to reflect the original commitment to educate the historically bypassed; 2) Establish a bilingual/bicultural program to serve the needs of native and non-native Spanish-speaking students; 3) Establish housing to accommodate students and their families on a year-round basis; 4) Support permanent continuation of the child-care center; 5) Implement admissions policy to uphold the special mission of the College at Old Westbury. After five days of intense negotiations between the Faculty/Student Negotiating Team and the administration, an agreement was reached in which all the strike demands were met. The following months were to prove, however, that the Administration had never seriously intended to implement the agreement.

After the strike, in a general meeting of students, the formation of a Student Union was approved to ensure the maintenance and progressive development of the mission of the school.

The first action of the Student Union was to recruit those people who had shown their commitment to defend, in practice, the mission, in order to run for office in the student government. Simultaneously, the Student Union began its consolidation process, assuming a constitution and structure in which all members of the student body could participate in the planning and practical aspects of the defense of the mission.



As with all newly formed organizations, the Student Union passed through its developmental stages, and its problems. Nevertheless, in conjunction with other student organizations, a food boycott was organized in response to the conditions of the college food service. Within a week the boycott had effectively closed one cafeteria and reduced the services of the other cafeteria to a minimum.

At the same time, the Student Union began laying out the foundations for extensive propaganda to expose administration's failure to implement the 1976 strike agreement.

In the spring 1977 semester, propaganda efforts were increased. These took the form of leaflets, informative rallies, banners, classroom campaigns, etc. The work through the Student Union served to heighten the general awareness and understanding between the student body of the conditions being imposed by the administration and also served to draw some of the other student organizations in the concrete work being done. The major issues around which the students were mobilized were: 1) the suspension of the campus judicial codes and the implementation of direct presidential rule; 2) the firing of two progressive faculty members; 3) the administration's rejection of all the recommendations of the Admission's Committee and other Committees set up to oversee the development of the mission; and 4) all of the other provisions of the 1976 strike agreement which had been violated by administration concerning bilingual/bicultural program, housing, child care, etc. In this period it became crucial to consolidate the understanding among the general student population of the reasons for the worsening conditions and the increased administrative attempts to destroy the mission. The administration, which carries out the mandates of the state, and the state which upholds the interests of capital (monopolies, banks, big business), is trying to take back the many concessions they were forced to give under the pressure of the popular mass democratic movements of the 1960's and early 1970's. Old Westbury, which was a product of those struggles, is now faced with the efforts of the entire ruling capitalist class to regain the crumbs that were forced from them. This is especially true today when the ruling class, whose fundamental interests are to secure higher profits, is confronting one of the worst economic crises in its history. This crisis has led them into sacrificing the services and programs needed by the millions of working people and oppressed sectors in order

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Puerto Rico Informa

DIALOGUE WITH M.S.P. part 2

OEM: What is the MSP view on the Cuban Revolution?

MSP-UJS: I am glad that this question has been posed, since for our movement, the position in respect to the Cuban Revolution is important to our view of the international situation, i.e., our politics on the international level. It seems to me that as much as I would like to be brief, this will not be possible, especially when there has been so much written and discussed about the Cuban Revolution, ranging from the first extremely important observations made by Che Guevara, to Regis Debray, Charles Bettelheim (in his famous polemic with Che regarding the productive forces and the applicability of the law of value to Cuba) and Michael Lowy, just to mention a few, as well as, the many articles and so-called "analysis" which we will not attempt to discuss. In this context, diverse interpretations have been developed regarding the revolutionary process in Cuba. I stated that I will not be able to be brief because it is not enough to say that our position is one of support to the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution and to its consistent application, in real terms, of the principles of Proletarian Internationalism. However, to remain here would be extremely superficial. Our position is placed within the significance of the triumph and consolidation of socialism in Cuba for the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In the first place, we understand that the development, triumph and consolidation of the Cuban Revolution has been neither a "historical exception" nor an "only model" for Latin America. To pose the first is to say that developments in Cuba were experiences that could not be applied to other countries. We oppose this interpretation, and history itself has proven this not to be the case. On the other hand, to hold up and convert the Cuban experience as an "only Model" is to fall prey to that which we have criticized in others, i.e., not recognizing the dialectical character of every historical process. We shall be more precise.

We understand that the triumph of the Cuban Revolution constitutes a severe blow to the traditional communist and socialist parties in Latin America. As you know, the history of those parties has been one of continuous failures. From the decade of the 30's to the beginning of the 60's and even today, these parties saw the development of the revolution in the Americas as part of the process where the fundamental contradiction was between the nation and foreign capital. This interpretation led them to pose the possibility of a class alliance between the peasantry, the working class, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie (interested in the industrial development of Latin America) against imperialism and its allies, the big landowners and the agricultural oligarchy. This was the basis on which these parties posed that the general organizational objective was the construction of a patriotic national front of a democratic character with the strategic objective not of the socialist revolution but of a bourgeois democratic revolution and the establishment of a national government led by the bourgeoisie and supported by the popular sectors. Within this conception it was possible and even necessary to support the bourgeoisie and to even look with favor upon a seizure of the state by nationalist militarists. In viewing the present stage as being one of the bourgeois democratic revolution, it is then impossible for these parties to speak of socialist revolution until this stage was completed, and even less to speak of the fundamental contradiction as being between

the proletariat and dispossessed masses against the bourgeoisie. Armed struggle? This was out of the question! Those who posed the need for it were quickly branded as illusionists or adventurists.

In opposition to this mechanistic interpretation, alien to the actual reality of Latin America, and as a rallying call to



the consciousness of revolutionaries to develop the socialist revolution, stands the triumph of the July 26th Movement. To illustrate what we mean, let us examine the lessons that have been bequeathed to us by the Cuban Revolution—lessons which Che Guevara, true scientist of revolutionary theory and action, pointed out these are fundamentally five, because what might well be considered the sixth we understand to be non-applicable (I refer to the struggle fundamentally being one in the rural areas).

I. The Character of the Bourgeoisie in Latin America

The experience of the first years of the Cuban Revolution, similar to the experience of all the Portuguese-Hispanic Americas (to include Brazil), showed that the so-called National Bourgeoisies do not possess the revolutionary potential that many so-called Marxists presume to vest upon them. What happened in Cuba? If it is indeed a certainty that sectors of the bourgeoisie initially supported the July 26th Movement, it is even more a certainty that once the revolution had acquired an irreversible character—as it began to move toward agrarian reform, toward nationalizing and socializing important sectors of the economy and toward expropriation of the monopolies—that the same bourgeoisie passed to being counter-revolutionary. They proved that they were not willing to relinquish their interests, their class interests, let alone confront imperialism, because they were totally dependent upon vast northamerican finance capital. It is for this reason that when Che pointed out that a "revolution which is not taken to its ultimate conclusion is lost" he meant simply and clearly that it is not enough to seize power but that the class struggle must be taken to its final consequences; to wage war against imperialism, as well as, against the bourgeoisie. What occurred in Guatemala under the populist regime of Arbenz, in Argentina under

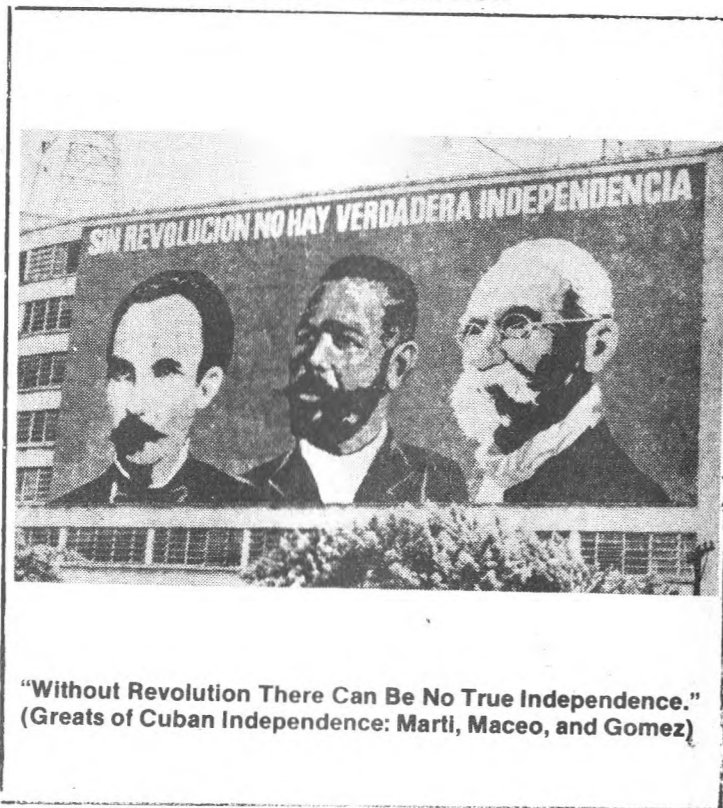
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"TRUE LIBERATION OF PEOPLES...WILL HAVE IN THE AMERICAS THE POTENTIAL TO TRANSFORM ITSELF INTO SOCIALIST REVOLUTION "

Domingo Peron, in Brazil with Goulart in 1964, and even in the Dominican Republic? The national bourgeoisie is incapable of and can never lead a revolution in Latin America. This is a lesson, which seems to us, the revolutionaries of Latin America have learned all too well; this is placing in proper perspective the role of the bourgeoisie in the era of socialist revolution.

II. The revolution in Latin America will be national in form but essentially socialist in content.

Without resorting to a mere sollogism I will state that the second great lesson of the Cuban Revolution is intimately linked to what has been posed regarding the national bourgeoisies in Latin America. If this class is totally dependent on imperialism, if it is in open contradiction with the proletariat and furthermore will never struggle for socialist revolution (particularly given the experience of Cuba and recently Chile) then where is the basis for a bourgeois-democratic revolution? It seems to us, as some say in Puerto Rico, that it has been "historically proven and dialectically substantiated," that socialist revolution is possible in Latin America. It is true that during the first years following the triumph of the Cuban Revolution the immediate tasks were those of meeting the democratic aspirations of the workers and peasants. It is just as true that these tasks could very well be developed in the initial stages of the socialist revolution. At the same time, another extremely important aspect must be considered: the role of the vanguard, which in Cuba, was able without a doubt, to push forward the march of those events within the context of what was objectively possible. What for many was merely a bourgeois democratic revolution, was transformed into a socialist revolution. If the Socialist revolution triumphed in Cuba, then can't similar developments occur in Africa, Asia, and Latin America? We think it can. Not only has Cuba proven this to be true but so has Vietnam and Angola. What I am posing here and which our organization accepts as valid, is clearly expressed in the message to the Tricontinental: "The true liberation of



"Without Revolution There Can Be No True Independence." (Greats of Cuban Independence: Marti, Maceo, and Gomez)

peoples... will have in the Americas almost unfailingly, the potential to transform itself into socialist revolution... the national bourgeoisies have lost all their ability to oppose imperialism. There are not more changes to be made; it's either a socialist revolution or a caricature of a revolution"

III. The Necessity of the Armed Struggle as the Fundamental Method of Struggle.

One of the key lessons of the Cuban Revolution, which is at the same time the central question of every revolution—the question of power and of how to destroy the bureaucratic-military apparatus of the bourgeois state—is without a doubt the guerrilla warfare experience in the Sierra itself as well as in the plains. This lesson we can summarize in the following way: The Cuban Revolution showed in practice that Marxists must be consistent with the Leninist position expounded in the State and Revolution. That is to say, the way in which the socialist revolution can be achieved is by counterposing revolutionary violence to reactionary violence. If we truly seek to be victorious in this struggle we must destroy the bourgeois state and therefore the oppressor's army. It was clearly proven in Cuba, that the popular forces can defeat an oppressor army no matter how powerful it may be, in order to achieve this it is necessary to construct the peoples army, or what we can call the Revolutionary Army of the Workers.

It must be a war and a revolutionary army that cannot be one of a conventional character but on the contrary: a mobile force. The important thing will not be to seize territory in order to establish liberated zones but to win the people over. The political military actions of the army

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"WORKFARE" - FORCED LABOR

"Workfare": How the Government Gets More for its Money

During the coming summer months, New York State will attempt once again to implement a form of "workfare", programs that force welfare recipients to take menial jobs in public agencies, receiving in return only their welfare check.

In its initial stages, the plan recently passed by the State Legislature is directed at a group of 70,000 people—those on home relief who have been classified as "employable" (i.e. they are physically able to work and do not have young children to keep them at home). These people will be required to work three days a week in order to remain eligible for public assistance. If a person refuses to work the 3 days or refuses to take a particular job, he or she would then be thrown off the welfare rolls.

For the past several years, people on home relief have already been required to pick up their welfare checks at local employment offices. If no paid jobs were available, they were "encouraged" to work at jobs in voluntary programs, where supposedly they would be trained in



particular skills. Most of the jobs people were given were dead-end: they required little or no training and in no way served to increase work abilities. It is this kind of unskilled job that people on home relief will now be forced to work at under Governor Carey's new law.

At a later stage, NYS plans substantially to expand its program by including in it the largest category of welfare recipients—women receiving money from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Presently AFDC women are also "encouraged" to participate in voluntary job training programs, particularly in New York City, in the federally-funded Work Incentive (WIN) program. WIN is explained as a program designed to help welfare recipients get off welfare. Instead the program channels women into unskilled jobs. Though WIN is not a mandatory program, many women have been coerced into it through fear of losing welfare eligibility. Indeed, many women with children in daycare have been led to believe that their daycare eligibility is dependent upon participation in a WIN program.

Denial of People's Rights

Fundamentally, workfare programs are based on the idea that people on welfare have no rights. This is consistent with the false ideology which the ruling class perpetuates that people are poor because they are inherently inferior: we grow up learning that being poor means you are stupid, that it indicates a weakness of character, a lack of moral and mental strength.

In the workfare programs, this apparently justifies people's having no choice about what happens to them. They have no choice about what kind of job they get or where it is located. They are not covered by disability or unemployment insurance; they do not get vacations nor benefits (health or pension plan, medical benefits, etc.) which might be available to the salaried workers.

Politicians' Like Workfare

New York politicians at all levels of government, liberal and conservative alike, are happy with Carey's new program. The liberals are happy because supposedly the program will provide people with skills and will prove that "poor people aren't lazy cheats and really do want to work." The conservatives are happy because the workfare program will help to reduce the welfare rolls. Their rationale is that people will choose to take regular-paying jobs rather than work 3 days a week for a welfare check; they assume that people are on welfare because they don't like to work.

Both of these positions feed the reactionary and racist myths about why people in this society are on welfare, and neither one exposes the true nature of workfare programs: that they exploit potential workers by providing the government and private industry with a source of cheap unskilled labor. Aside from the fact that these so-called training programs do not prepare people for any kind of productive, skilled work, the most misleading concept raised by the politicians is that there are jobs available to train people for! Yet government figures put the number of unemployed workers at 7 million, and this does not include the millions of workers never counted in the official statistics—those on welfare, those who've given up looking for jobs, those who have yet to find their first jobs, those whose unemployment checks have run out, and those who work part-time because it's better than nothing. The reality is that there are very few jobs available, in particular for those workers who are poorly educated and lack specific skills.

Welfare Reform

Carey's workfare plan is not something new to New York or the rest of the country. Since the late 60's and early 70's, workfare has at various times been proposed under the guise of reforming the welfare system.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon presented the Congress his so-called welfare reform bill, H.R. #1. The main thrust of the bill was to provide cheap labor to government agencies and private industry. If the bill had passed, H.R. #1 would have established regulations forcing the majority of people on welfare to work off their checks in unskilled dead-end jobs. In particular, women heads of households with children over three years of age would have had to place their children in any available daycare

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ON CITYWIDE COMMUNITY COALITION

NEW YORK CITY—On April 15th, over 1000 supporters of the newly formed Citywide Community Coalition (CCC) marched in the streets demanding an end to all cuts in services and calling for the dismantling of the Emergency Financial Control Board (the bankers and corporate-controlled state agency that regulates New York City's finances).

The turn-out for the demonstration, considerably less than the thousands projected by some of the organizers, nonetheless reflected a sizeable number of people. In the main, the composition of the march and rally were students and people in various progressive movements.



Birth of the CCC

The CCC was organized about 2 months prior to the demonstration, by a number of organizations in the Bronx that were involved in the struggle to save Hostos College and upgrade Lincoln Hospital. These community groups were joined by student organizations, churches, parents' associations as well as political formations such as the Bronx Chapter of El Komite-MINP. From these original organizations, predominantly Latin in composition, the call originated to form a citywide coalition for a demonstration on April 15th (Tax Day and also the date in which the City was scheduled to release its 1977-78 budget). The demonstration was viewed as an initial step toward uniting the various struggles that are taking place against the cuts in essential services (in daycare, education, health, housing, etc).

March and Rally

On the day of the activity, the demonstrators marched militantly and in high spirits through the streets of El Barrio (beginning at 116th St.) to the downtown offices of the EFCB and Governor Carey, site for the rally. At the rally there were speakers from the health, daycare, education and trade union struggles. They each made reference to the devastating effects of the budget cuts on the delivery of services and raised the need to restore and improve them. The speaker for the coalition (a member of El Komite-MINP's Bronx Chapter), in a well received presentation,

outlined the general perspectives of the coalition, and cautioned the members of this body, as well as those present at the rally, on the need to clearly understand the main causes for the cutbacks and not to fall victim to the false promises of politicians of either major political capitalist party as both are equally responsible for existing conditions. In a similar tone he pointed out how union misleaders take advantage of the situation "to sell out our real interests to the bosses and the EFCBs."

The Future of the CCC

At this point, there is a need for a formation like the CCC that behind the banner of expanded and quality services can unite the struggle in the neighborhoods and communities with those of the municipal employees to maintain their jobs.

Such a formation should be organized to provide the conditions for organizations already in existence to come together and develop joint activities such as the April 15th demonstration. It should provide the conditions for organizations to share resources (equipment, contacts, etc.) and to help develop and/or consolidate organizations that need help in different areas (whether health, daycare, education etc.). It should be a formation that attracts and encourages organization at the neighborhood and community level (particularly in working class communities), so that the broad base of those affected by the cuts in services are mobilized in resistance to the cuts. The formation should concretely strive (through its propaganda, agitation, and organization) to build unity between rank and file worker organizations (both municipal and non-municipal workers) and community groups. This aspect is key because it will only be a movement of resistance based on these forces that can provide the strength, the broad based support and impact to hold off any further cuts and win meaningful gains. Further, in this period of accumulation of forces and strength, it is imperative to single out the key issue or issues and to muster all our forces to achieve a focused and concrete objective—rather than to strive for a vague concept of adequate and quality services.

Its Weaknesses

One of the major weaknesses of the CCC is the lack of real participation and contact with rank-and-file workers' organizations, as well as grass-root community groups. Although various community groups are represented within it, this representation has, up to now, been a formality.

This situation provides fertile ground for those "community leaders" with long held dreams of joining the mainstream of bourgeois politics (as "revolutionary" democrats), and for those with similar ambitions but without the experience or following. Both represent some of the types of "leaders" developing in minority communities who pose as revolutionaries in order to build a career from the misery and plight of the people. In the left, these forces find support among opportunist formations who lack a base within the minorities and tail these elements in order to use them to create an image of involvement in minority struggles. In this process these formations play on the low political development of the masses to characterize all principled criticism of their practice as ultra-leftism and "sectarianism." Although, clearly, these forces and individuals of the right and left are not the main enemy, they serve as obstacles to the development of an effective, militant, and class conscious movement.

CETA WORKERS ORGANIZE

The following article was contributed by a developing Marxist-Leninist organization in New York City—the Workers and Students Organizing Collective.

We, in the Worker-Student Organizing Collective (WSOC), would like to thank the comrades in El Komite-MINP for the opportunity to express our views in the pages of their newspaper. The WSOC is a Marxist-Leninist organization based in New York City. We have engaged in organizing in workplaces, against cutbacks, in the women's movement, and in movements of solidarity with the national liberation forces combating our common enemy: U.S. Imperialism. We seek, with other organizations and individuals, to build a new communist party which, while guarding against revisionism, firmly rejects the errors of dogmatism, sectarianism, and ultra-"leftism."

In our work to build mass organizations and struggles to defend and advance the interests of our class we have been impressed by this simple fact: that unless such organizations make the specific, concrete, felt and perceived, needs of those broad numbers of people whom they seek to organize the central thrust of their work, they will fail. They will fail both to defend the immediate interests of the working class or help to advance it in the formation of its revolutionary vanguard, a genuine Marxist-Leninist party.

There are people, or "parties", however, who while claiming to stand with our class against capitalism reject this outlook. They practice dogmatic and sectarian methods of work which result in a "leftist" isolation from the people they seek to organize. In fact this is the main problem in our movement today. In this article we will discuss the struggles of CETA workers in N.Y.C. In a succeeding article we will address the situation in the taxi industry. In a concluding article we will analyze the problems created by this "leftism" as it appears in the context of each of these mass struggles.

The Struggle of CETA Workers for Parity

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) began in 1973 and was a direct continuation of similar job programs dating from the 1960's. While CETA exists nationwide, to understand the struggles of CETA workers in NYC we must look at the specific conditions in the program as it is structured here:

1. CETA workers earn only 75 percent of the wages of regular municipal workers even though they do comparable work.

2. There has never been any "training" for the bulk of the people in the program—those people in Public Service Employment (which this article is mainly concerned with).

3. CETA workers have no job security against arbitrary firings or layoffs. As a result the number of CETA workers in NYC has shrunk from 21,000 in 1975 to 13,000 in 1977 (mainly as a result of firings).

While all of these practices are justified by the City on the grounds that CETA workers are just "temporary", the fact is that all CETA workers have been on the job for at least 2 years and many have been working at the same dead-end job for over 4 years (with 4 more years of the same ahead of them). Thus, far from being a "temporary training program" CETA is, in reality, simply a super-

exploited sector of the municipal workforce—and a growing one at that.

This situation would have existed even if U.S. Imperialism was in a period of 'prosperity'. But the fact that we have entered a period of stagnation and crisis has complicated and intensified this condition. No sooner had the newest listing of CETA workers enrolled in their jobs in the summer of 1975 than the City and the union—District Council 37 headed by Victor Gotbaum—formulated a plan for the termination of 14,000 CETA workers. They were to be replaced by civil servants who themselves had just been sold out by the union misleadership; 30,000 civil servants in District Council 37 were terminated in 1975.

It is important to recognize that a large majority of the people affected by this "job roulette", both civil servant and CETA, were from oppressed national minorities (70-80 percent of the CETA program in NYC is non-white). This situation then was clearly devised to weaken resistance to all cutbacks by dividing the municipal workers along the lines of race and job classification.



CETA workers demonstrating outside Labor Department.

Responding to this situation some CETA workers organized themselves into the CETA Workers Action Committee (CWAC). CWAC, however, refused to be provoked into dual unionism (i.e., making the CWAC an alternative to the union rather than a force to democratize the union. *Ed.*) or attacks on civil servants. It consistently demanded that while CETA workers should be terminated, this must not be achieved through the termination of fellow municipal workers.

This principled demand was raised at 4 militant sit-ins organized by CWAC over a period covering Nov. 1975-March 1976. These five months of continual mass confrontation with the Federal agency responsible for the supervision of the NYC program had their effect; the planned layoffs of CETA workers were first postponed and then cancelled altogether.

In the course of the struggle against the layoffs the spontaneous militance of the majority of CETA workers was so great that it magnified whatever efforts CWAC

Continued on page 10

CETA cont.

made. This led, however, to illusions about CWAC's actual organizational strength and the impact of its educational propaganda.

With the ceasing of spontaneous activity after the defeat of the layoff threat, these illusions were challenged by the growing 'leftist' isolation of CWAC from the rank and file. Discussions in the fall of 1976 led to an agreement that the central thrust of the committee's work must be the struggle around those concrete demands articulated by the masses of CETA workers themselves.

This agreement, however, did not include the October League (OL) which belatedly and disruptively 'joined' the struggle as this consensus was being reached. Their views on the centrality of educational propaganda over concrete struggle found no support in the committee; their continual attacks on CWAC led the committee to break relations with them.

It is important to note that the new orientation towards concrete work did not mean that CWAC ceased to provide political analyses in its literature or maintain basic principles of class struggle in its organizing. The two most important of these principles as stated by CWAC are:

1. To rely on the militance and organization of the masses of CETA workers, and not on the favors of the courts or bureaucrats, as the main road to win its demands.

2. To combat any division within the working class,

mainly racism and sexism.

Because of its new orientation towards the concrete demands of CETA workers, the committee began to involve much broader numbers of people, first in the formulation of a 7-point program and then in the on-going struggle to win those demands. The program's unifying theme is that since CETA workers have worked in the same jobs as other municipal workers, often for as long as other categories of municipal workers, they deserve the same conditions as other municipal workers (specifically around pay, grievance rights, upgrading, acquisition of skills, and job security).

The task of consolidating its leadership amongst broad numbers of CETA workers is what now faces the committee. While it has been able to mobilize a measure of support for its program and has even forced the City to negotiate, it has not been able to force them to make major concessions. The key to increasing CWAC's strength is to develop a broader leadership so that the committee is more widely representative of the thousands of CETA workers in NYC. With this in mind CWAC has restructured itself into a chapter form which enables more people to participate on a regular basis. It is also developing the kinds of activities that broad numbers of CETA workers can participate in and give leadership to (surveys, petitions, etc.).

While the consolidation of CWAC is by no means complete, the unity of the existing leadership around the importance of this work, learning from previous 'left' errors and struggling against dogmatists such as the OL, speaks favorably for its potential progress.

WORKFARE cont.

slot and accept their assigned jobs, with no choice as to the kind of job, its conditions, or location. HR #1 made no provisions for job training, job benefits, pensions, social security payments, etc. In addition, every two years people would automatically have had their payments cut off and would then have had to re-apply.

HR #1 was defeated due to a nationwide struggle led by welfare rights and daycare groups. But various states and cities have, over the years, implemented their own local versions of the bill. In New York City, workfare programs such as Work Relief Employment Project (WREP) and Incentives for Independence (IFI) forced welfare recipients to accept the worst, most boring, meaningless jobs in public agencies. In California, Massachusetts, Connecticut, etc., similar programs were implemented, but as in New York, they were eventually abandoned as ineffective.

Why Workfare Now?

Why is workfare being resurrected at this time? In the first place, the economic crisis we are experiencing in this country has forced greater and greater numbers of people onto welfare. Daycare centers have been shut down, forcing mothers to quit their jobs, and leaving welfare as their only alternative. Furthermore, Congress plans to cut federal unemployment benefits by 13 weeks. This will add to the welfare rolls. At the same time, despite Beame's disclaimer to the contrary, services have been drastically cut, seriously affecting the level and quality of assistance that NYC and NYS are able to provide the poor and working class. Therefore, to avoid a demand that interest payments to the banks be decreased and funds be used to remedy these conditions, the administration pretends the level of services can be raised by mandating work programs for welfare recipients!

Workfare can be and has been used to take jobs away from workers not on welfare; this is advantageous to the

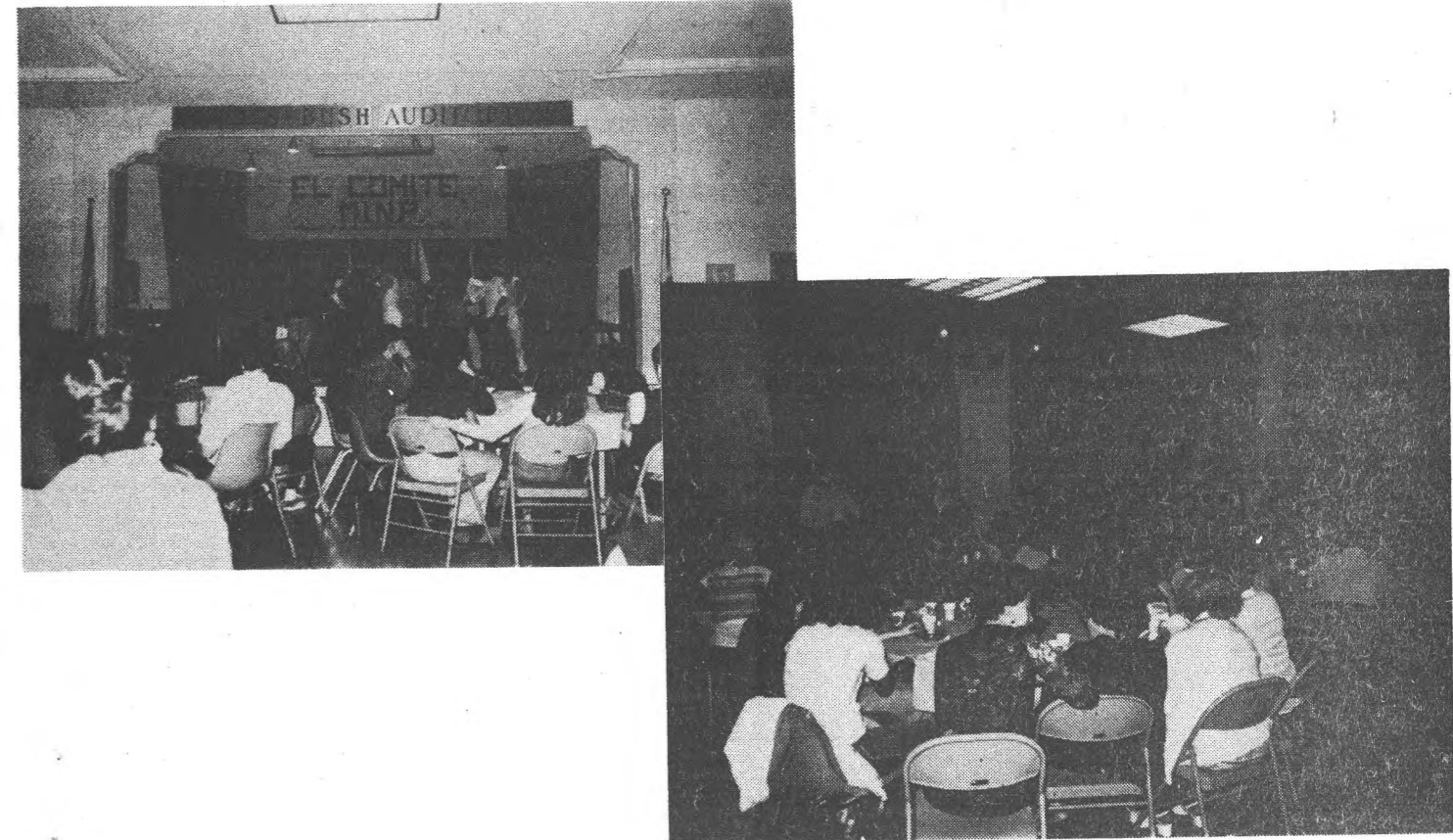
government since it means paying less money for the same amount of work. Even though various state officials have assured the municipal unions that no public worker will be replaced by someone on welfare, they do not state that the thousands of jobs already lost through layoffs and attrition may not be filled by people in the workfare program. This weakens the unions, and more fundamentally, it pits welfare recipients against municipal workers. In fact, one of the most dangerous consequences of workfare is its effect on the potential unity of working people in fighting against the cuts in jobs and services. Although the unions have spoken out against workfare, they have not clearly pinpointed who the real enemy is—not the individual on home relief who's forced to accept someone else's job, but the bankers and businessmen in whose interest the politicians govern. Without a clear understanding of this, welfare recipients will be blamed.

A National Danger

What is happening in New York is happening in other states as well. Utah and Massachusetts at present are implementing similar forced work programs. Undoubtedly, these first steps are connected to the complete overhaul of the national welfare system which Nixon first suggested as one of his many campaign promises. Under Nixon, national welfare reform meant forced work projects; under Carter, the same danger is developing.

This attack on working people must be fought by a concerted demand for true job training for the unskilled and unemployed, by meaningful job programs for the youth, by the provision of adequate daycare facilities and by the creation of meaningful jobs at union wages (with no restrictions on unionization and on striking). This can only be achieved by a rank-and-file working-class movement that establishes the unity between the employed and unemployed, those working and those on welfare, men and women and the young and the old.

MAY FIRST CELEBRATION



NY—Pictures capture part of the audience and activities of El Comite-MINP's May Day activity. Members, relatives and selectively invited individuals participated in the activity which featured a dinner, cultural presentations and messages of solidarity from comradely organizations (BISSAL, MASA, WSOC and PWOC), as well as a presentation by our Political Commission. The cultural program was highlighted by singer Bev Grant, the theater group Alma Latina from Camden, New Jersey and poetess Saifa Henderson.

OLD WESTBURY(cont.)

to stabilize the economy and assure the economic growth needed for higher profits.

Herein lies the fundamental reason for the degree of political action that has recently taken place in the form of a strike action on the campus at Old Westbury and which must continue to develop. We are confronted with the struggle between two diametrically opposed interests. On the one hand, a well-experienced and well-organized state apparatus doing whatever necessary to uphold its interests. On the other hand, a relatively unorganized and inexperienced mass of students attempting to uphold its interests. The fact that there exists a solid core of politically conscious and revolutionary students on the campus at the College at Old Westbury has served to push forward greatly the ability of the students to confront the administrative actions that are not in the best interests of the student body. It is the responsibility of the College at Old Westbury student body to be the first ones to take up the struggle in defense of what is rightfully theirs.

Based on the C.O.W. experience we can state that various aspects of this particular struggle offer concrete points of direction which may well be internalized by the student movement in order to develop an effective and consistent struggle against the attacks on the democratic

rights of the student body.

Among others, we can point to the role of propaganda and the democratic organization of broad sectors of students allowing for their real participation as well as developing the mechanisms to insure the implementation of assigned tasks and agreements. The linkage of the students' struggles with others developing outside of the university confines is an important factor, in particular, the linkage to workers' struggles and those taking place at the community level. On the other hand, the consolidation among the student organizations, and their consciousness is a factor of great importance since only by understanding existing reality will students be motivated to struggle for their violated rights and for equal education. At the same time, clear alternatives must be presented as an essential element in the first steps toward democratizing the universities.

Lastly, we must point out that the responsibility of the students is to recognize the relationship that exists between the particular attacks on their democratic rights and the general oppression and exploitation being suffered by the working class throughout the U.S. This is crucial for developing a united struggle by the workers and all oppressed sectors to put an end to the rule of the exploiters. We think that the recent developments in Old Westbury are a step in that direction.

DIALOGUE cont.

or of the revolutionary units in conjunction with the consistent political actions of its vanguard will allow the development of a protracted war of liberation. A war that will attack, harass, disorient and demoralize the reactionary forces to the point of achieving their complete destruction. A revolutionary war which will allow the synthesis of "Organization, the People, consciousness, and arms!" This means that the role of the vanguard is not to sit and wait until all the objective and subjective historical conditions coincide in order to then pose for themselves the seizure of political power. The role which must be assumed by the vanguard must stem from the objective conditions of economic crisis and the orientation of the events unfolding toward the initiation of the revolutionary struggle.

This is what occurred in Cuba and we understand that it has been a lesson which is applicable and that has been concretely taken up in the Americas where at the same time, there have existed other experiences that have enriched the former one, as is the case with the Tupamaros of Uruguay, the PRT-ERP in Argentina, etc.

The other contributions of the Cuban revolution have been their real and sincere gestures of Proletarian Internationalism within which they have spared no efforts in aiding the revolutionary organizations and peoples in struggle for their national liberation. In Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, and in many countries in Latin America these have been in places where the revolutionary people of Cuba have shown their commitment to the principle of internationalism in theory as well as in practice. A further contribution, and as expounded by Che Guevara, has been the strategic conception regarding the struggle on a continental scale. If Cuba confronted imperialism, then the peoples of Latin America can do the same but this time in united form.

This, in general terms is our position regarding the Cuban Revolution, and as I stated from the beginning, for these and other reasons we support the Cuban Revolution as a Socialist revolution and one which has contributed much to the International Revolutionary Struggle.

OEM: What is your view regarding the Northamerican left?

UJS-MSP: The question which you pose to us might very well be the most difficult one to answer. At the same time, its response might also be ill-advised, particularly if we were to limit our opinion based on the period of this visit. In any case, and given the contacts which we have maintained with various organizations in the United States, as well as the fact that we are up to date in terms of the situation here, it seems possible to respond around this matter.

Firstly, we believe that as is the case in all societies (ours for example) there exist in the U.S. as many organizations as there are ideological positions in regard to the development of the revolutionary struggle in the United States and externally. There are organizations which seem more concerned with events in the countries of the Socialist camp than with what is taking place here in the United States. Within this variation (if it can be called that) are on the one hand, the so-called "maoists" who are more concerned with the sino-soviet split and in addition, many if not all their publications are geared around what they define as "soviet social-imperialism" or the "myth of the cuban revolution." These are concepts (if they can be categorized as such) that to our understanding do not correspond to the genuine scientific concepts of marxism, particularly those which are utilized in analyzing any socio-historical formation. In essence they

constitute attempts at analyzing reality as they would wish it to be and not as it really is. One cannot just categorize the Soviet Union as social imperialist (as most who think along these lines do) on the basis that "capitalism has been restored in the Soviet Union," nor can one view revolutionary Cuba as a Myth. History has already proven that this is not the case. In posing this, we do not pretend to make an absolute defense of the Soviet Union particularly when there are innumerable criticisms of it.

On the other hand, there exist other organizations, Trotskyites, and as an example the Socialist Workers Party (S.W.P.), whose positions regarding Puerto Rico, Latin America and the countries of the Socialist Camp are incorrect. From their criticism of the form in which armed struggle has developed in Latin America to their attempt to raise to the level of an absurdity the Marxist position regarding mass struggles this is manifested, particularly when they pose that if there are no mass struggles then there can be no armed struggle. In this way they negate the true role of the political and military vanguard of the workers. In posing this we are not negating the practice which any of these organizations may have developed. Nor do we want to negate the right that organizations have to pose their positions, criticisms, and analysis regarding every process and organization. Nevertheless, the ability and right to pose these is not and cannot become an obstacle to the development of analysis and positions which are responsible and scientific. At the same time, there also exist a series of political organizations whose theory and practice correspond with the need of effectively taking up and developing to politically more advanced levels the revolutionary struggle toward the seizure of political power by the working class in the United States. That revolutionary struggle is one which is complex and difficult but is one which can never be said to be impossible. It is a revolutionary struggle in which the workers of hispanic background (Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Dominicans, Panamanians, etc.) have an integral part, as do Black and White workers. It is our understanding that the Northamerican Left, speaking in both general and particular terms, have a great historical responsibility toward themselves, toward the working class in the United States, and toward the oppressed peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America that struggle for independence and socialism. A vivid example of this reality was the effect on the imperialist ruling class of the consistent mobilizations against the economic and military intervention by yanqui imperialism in South East Asia and Vietnam in particular. We understand that it is necessary to also point out that there are various organizations whose political practice, serious and scientific analysis around the northamerican reality, as well as the manner in which they have been implementing the necessity for principled unity among the various political forces on the Left, have served as a revolutionary example to the northamerican left in general. In concrete terms we refer to El Komite-M.I.N.P. This organization to our understanding has carefully guarded themselves from falling prey to opportunist positions and practices. At the same time, their political positions regarding the revolutionary struggle in the United States, the Puerto Ricans in the U.S. and the struggle in Puerto Rico and other parts of Latin America is extremely serious, and politically clear from a marxist standpoint. Finally we would also point out that we have become more aware of the absence of information regarding the situation in Puerto Rico. In some cases the information available has been incomplete. At the same time, the interest which we have been able to observe about our struggle is very heartening.