

OBREROS EN MARCHA

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

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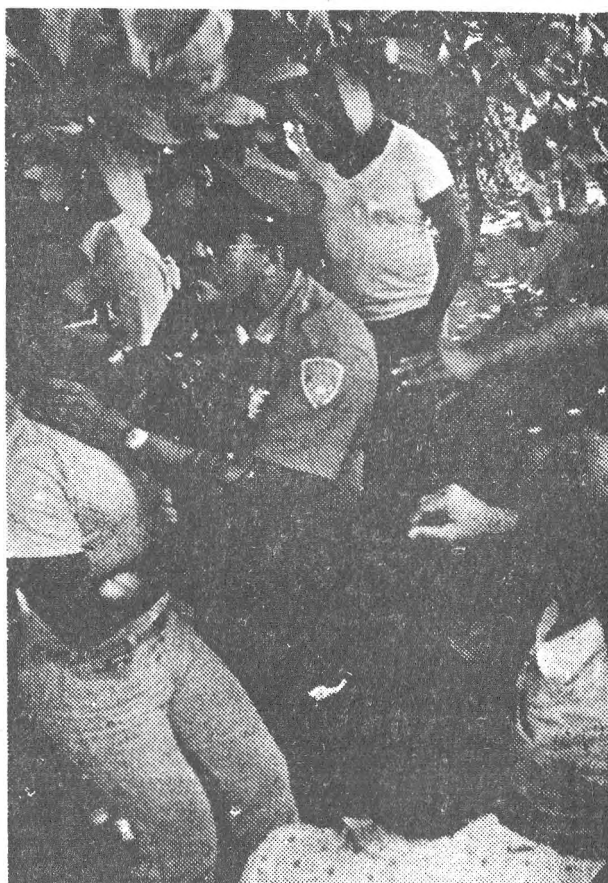
Employers and Government attack:

THE UMW in the US

See editorial on page 2 and story on page 3.



State troopers escorting scab coal trucks in Virginia. Coal operators mobilized National Guard in some states in attempt to break the strike.



Policemen attack members of UTIER last month during picket in Puerto Nuevo.

The UTIER. PR

page 5.

N.Y.C.:

**Koch
VS.
Municipal Workers**

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EDITORIAL

ON THE MINERS STRIKE

The present situation gripping the coal industry is a glaring example of the upcoming period of class struggle in this country. It lays bare the strategy the ruling class will apply to maintain its profits and position of power. The miners' strike provides important lessons which must be analyzed and internalized by the working class. It indicates what the conditions facing the working class will be like and the methods it must utilize to defend its interests. This new period will test the correlation of strength between the bosses and the workers. We must accumulate this experience and knowledge and incorporate it into the arsenal of workers in their struggle against the bosses' offensive.

Conditions in the U.S.

The coal industry strike is better understood when analyzed within the context of the present economic crisis and the strategy of the ruling class in its attempts to resolve it. The U.S. economy is in a grave state of crisis, stemming from the inherent contradictions in the capitalist economy. Capitalists compete for ever-greater control over sectors of the economy. The working class struggles to improve its standard of living, while the bosses constantly strive to reduce it. As a result of the victorious and ongoing struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America to gain control over their own economies, the U.S. has lost markets abroad. In their efforts to find new areas in which to reinvest their overaccumulated capital and increase profits, the advanced imperialist countries are competing to redivide and control ever-larger spheres of the world economy and seek to influence the economies of the socialist countries. These conditions have led to the shrinking of markets where the U.S. can productively reinvest accumulated capital. Thus, the controllers of the large multinational corporations and banking concerns turn to increased exploitation of their "own" labor force as the main solution. They seek to establish new policies to manipulate the distribution of wealth so that a greater portion is transferred from the working class and other oppressed sectors to the large monopolies.

To achieve their goal, since the 1970's the government and corporations have developed a new strategy to reduce the standard of living of the working class. They have frozen and reduced wages, rescinded other economic gains through "austerity" measures (social service cuts), and displaced growing numbers of workers from the active labor force.

Moreover, the ruling class must debilitate the working class movement so that it is unable to defend itself. Part of the new strategy is to intensify the attack on the organized labor movement, weakening it to the point that it cannot fight back effectively. They utilize tactics that have produced positive results for them in the past: 1) to divide the working class (promoting racism, sexism; pitting organized workers against the unorganized; skilled against the unskilled, etc.); and 2) to pursue union-busting (to take away instruments of struggle such as the right to organize and to strike, etc.). When this is not enough, they won't hesitate to use the repressive apparatus, tactical police, national guard, etc.

The ruling class relies on the aid of the top leadership of the organ-

ized labor movement to promote its policies within the ranks of workers. These union leaders have allowed thousands of workers to be laid off permanently; have betrayed the interests of retired workers; have supported the elimination of health and pension funds; and are promoting that workers give up their only effective instrument for waging the economic struggle—the right to strike.

However, the militant history of the U.S. working class indicates that they will not accept this passively for long. Up to now the majority of workers have accepted portions of this strategy with relative calm. Further attacks will be met with militant resistance. The miners' struggle attests to just that.

Significantly, the miners' strong stand in defense of their rights does not concern wage increases. They are fighting for the rights of retired workers; for the right to utilize wildcat strikes whenever necessary to ensure safe and healthy working conditions; for decent health benefits and democratic grievance procedures. They knew they would have to confront the full force of the bosses and government, yet they have already rejected two sellout contracts and have defied the government-invoked Taft-Hartley Act, as they have done throughout the history of the union. The miners know that if they give up the right to strike they will be surrendering to a future of increased misery. Their militance and commitment to fight at severe cost and sacrifice for a decent contract will serve as inspiration and example to other workers in upcoming contract negotiations.

The miners have acquired a clear understanding of the sellout policies of the labor bureaucrats and are fighting against them. Currently, a rank and file movement aimed at replacing union president Arnold Miller is growing. It is clear that if workers are to secure their rights, they must fight against these leaders and extend and strengthen rank and file organizing. In the process, new class conscious leadership and democratic structures where workers can discuss all issues concerning their interests must be developed.

The rank and file fight against the onslaught of the companies and the Carter Administration has led to the re-emergence of class solidarity—workers of different industries have given financial and other forms of support to the miners. In many cases this has been inspired by rank and file efforts; in others it represents opportunist acts on the part of trade union bureaucrats. But despite the opportunism involved, the rank and file support has strengthened the miners' position.

It has been a long time since we have witnessed such expressions of solidarity among workers of different industries. Workers must unite to fight the present and future offensive of the bosses and the government. This offensive must be met with increased militance and determination against management, government and trade union bureaucrats.

IN UNITY THERE IS STRENGTH—
IN THE WORKERS LIES THE POWER

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OBREROS
EN MARCHA

MINERS DEFY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

On March 6 President Carter invoked the Taft-Hartley Act against the 160,000 striking members of the United Mine Workers Union. Under the provisions of this Act, Carter ordered the miners back to work for an 80-day "cooling off" period. The Carter Administration took this action after rank and file miners rejected the contract settlement reached between the coal operators and the union's leadership, headed by UMW President Arnold Miller. President Carter, the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) and the union leadership wanted the miners to accept the agreement and waged a broad and expensive campaign to convince the miners to ratify it. Miller spent over \$40,000 of the union's funds in a drive which attempted to deceive the miners into believing that the contract was fair. But the rank and file miners rejected the contract by an overwhelming margin of 2 to 1. They have also united overwhelmingly to defy the provisions of Taft-Hartley. Government response to this has been to cut off all subsistence benefits to the miners and their families. Scabs have been hired by the companies and escorted by the National Guard to transport coal. The National Labor Relations Board has refused to issue an injunction in behalf of the miners to prohibit the use of scabs.

Before invoking the Taft-Hartley order, the Carter Administration had applied pressure on the negotiators to come to an agreement, attempting to portray the government as a "neutral" party concerned only with the "national interest." Government and media news released all over the country warned that the continuation of the strike would cause a national economic disaster, thereby attempting to round up public opinion against the miners and weaken the rank and file's growing strength and massive support. (This same "divide and conquer" tactic was used by the colonial administration of Governor Barcelo against striking workers in Puerto Rico in recent months.) But their plans failed. The miners' rejection of the contract forced the administration to expose directly "which side they are on!" The invocation of the Taft-Hartley Act clearly attests to the fact that the government defends and upholds the interests of the bosses.

SELLOUT CONTRACT

The BCOA wants desperately to rescind benefits and non-economical clauses which the UMW membership had gained as a result of previous struggles and collective bargaining agreements. The contract, agreed to by Miller and the union's Bargaining

Committee, contained a clause giving the companies the right to fire any miner who "has participated or otherwise been actively involved in causing an unauthorized work stoppage or sympathy strike." This would severely penalize miners for walkouts over safety-related and other fundamental issues. The BCOA wants to destroy the 30-year old UMW health plan by terminating subsidies to the health plan and requiring miners to pay \$300 to \$750 yearly for deductibles. This enriches the BCOA by \$150 million annually. The coal companies seek to continue discriminating against older retired miners by giving them \$225 less per month than recently retired pensioners receive. These too were included in the contract.

TAFT-HARTLEY - SLAVE LAW

During the 80-day "cooling off" period required under the Taft-Hartley Act, the workers are ordered to work under the provisions of the expired contract while the opposing sides must continue negotiations. If no agreement is reached within 80 days, the union may resume its strike. But who benefits from this process?

It is clear to the miners that if they were to return to work under the Taft-Hartley order, the only one who would benefit would be the coal operators who would be able to build up their inventories and reserves, thus minimizing the threat to their profit margins if the miners return to the picket lines. When the strike began, the major coal companies had huge coal reserves but these have diminished greatly in the course of the strike. Whereas the correlation of strength was weighted on the side of the coal companies at the start of the strike, the steadfastness and

militance of the coal miners has transformed that reality. Now the miners are in a position of strength with shortages of coal in many areas reported. This is not to say that the miners and their families are not suffering or sacrificing—because they are. But their strike remains strong and effective and financial and material support for their struggle grows throughout the country.

The miners' defiance of Taft-Hartley is consistent with a long-standing tradition within the UMW of "no contract, no work." In the early 50's during the Korean War and in the 40's during the government-imposed strike moratorium, the miners also defied Taft-Hartley injunctions. Their refusal to work under "slave laws"—as the miners accurately refer to Taft-Hartley—today and in the past exemplifies their growing understanding that they must remain united in their resistance to all forces who seek to undermine their struggle for a decent living—whether it be the companies, the government or the union leadership. The miners' refusal to acknowledge the so-called law of the land by conducting an "illegal" strike is something that the government and corporate interests would have like to avoid because historically it has created conditions that led to a higher-level of working class unity in this country. The miners' struggle can set the tone and example for other workers to follow in upcoming contractual negotiations.

"IMPROVED" CONTRACT PRESENTED TO MINERS

As OEM goes to press, the miners are in the process of voting on another contract agreement reached between Miller and the



companies. A massive campaign has been launched by the companies, the government and union officials to convince the miners that this one is a vast improvement over the last. It is not. Even from the limited disclosure of the contents of the settlement, we can see that the contract represents a severe regression in basic rights and benefits for the UMW workers. While wages have been increased, under the new contract provisions the miners will still have to pay large deductibles for health care expenses. Leaders or "instigators" of wildcat strikes will be subject to punishment by the companies. Control over the grievance procedure remains in the hands of the coal operators. It is likely that the miners will go back to work—not because they are fooled—but because many feel that they cannot objectively achieve a greater victory at this point. To reject the settlement now would provoke a violent confrontation with government and company forces which they are not presently equipped to defeat. Either way, what is most important at this point is for the most conscious elements among the miners to pursue consistently the further organization and consolidation of the rank and file, to combat and disarm the anti-worker UMW leadership, to expand their membership and to better prepare for and lead the intensifying struggle to defend their rights—as miners and as part of the working class overall.

WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

The miners' strike has rejuvenated expressions of working class solidarity absent from the trade union movement in this country since the 1930's. This support has largely been generated by rank and file groups in numerous union locals but has also been rendered by major national unions such as the United Automobile Workers of America which contributed \$2 million and the United Steel Workers Union which donated \$1 million. These latter contributions came from bureaucratic self-interests to demonstrate their "humanitarian" support for the

miners, but they also resulted from rank and file pressure. In a significant show of worker-to-worker solidarity, striking farmers across the country organized a mile-long caravan filled with food supplies for the miners presented at a support rally attended by over 7,000 people.

Although it is still in an embryonic stage, the re-emergence of class solidarity is very important for the future of the labor movement. If workers in any industry are going to win even the most immediate demands such as higher wages, better working conditions, the right to strike, to organize, etc., it will require the united strength of the working class, particularly given the present attacks by the corporations and government institutions to reduce wages, to displace workers and cut social services. To carry out such policies, the ruling class must weaken the organized labor movement. The future promises more misery for the working class, posing the need for workers to strengthen their fighting organizations and to close ranks against the bosses' offensive.

PRESENT TASKS

The miners' strike, the use of Taft-Hartley, the union leadership's weakened state, and the drive of the coal operators to increase profits and destroy the miners' organization could all serve as an explosive force in the class conflicts in this country. The coming period may represent the beginning of a new level of class struggle in the U.S. directed against class conciliatory union leadership as well as the corporate and government onslaught.

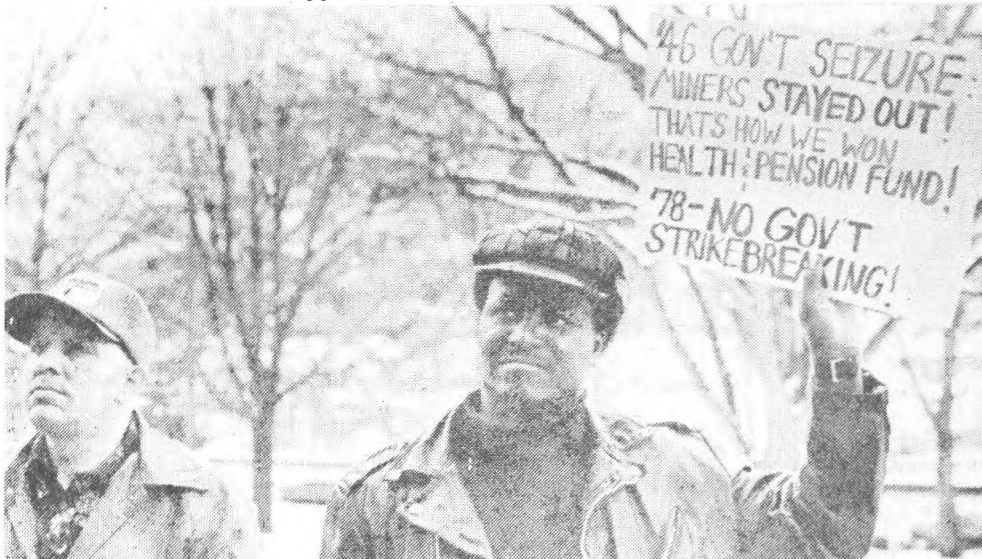
The miners' strike and the new period opening up provide favorable grounds for the work of the revolutionary forces. But it demands from us more consistent, long-term and clearer perspectives in our organizing efforts. We must use this moment primarily to deepen our roots within the workers' movement. Once there, we must begin to defeat the efforts by the corporations to divide and weaken the workers' movement.



A concerted effort must be made during the present period to eliminate racial, sexist and economic divisions that exist within the ranks of the working class. We must take up the fight of minorities, women and unemployed workers for jobs at living wages, improved working conditions, sound health and retirement plans, etc. We must increase our efforts to organize the hundreds of thousands of unorganized workers. In these processes, we must develop democratic structures which will ensure that workers participate in the decision-making processes. The miners' strike shows the essential role that rank and file organizing plays in pushing the union to respond to the workers' needs. That is a process that needs to be generalized throughout the labor movement. Meeting these tasks will be a long and difficult process. Therefore, we must carry them out patiently. Only by integrating ourselves within the workers' movement and concretely addressing the workers' needs and interests—both short and long-range—will revolutionaries be able to gain the respect of the class and lay the foundation for developing a revolutionary wave in this country.

In gathering support for the miners' strike, we are faced with the task of education workers in other industries, in the communities, students, women, and all other sectors about the significance of this struggle. We must combat the coal operators' and government's attempts to isolate the miners from the people by claiming that the strike endangers the health and safety of the nation. We must ask people in shops, communities, educational institutions, etc. to contribute to the miners' strike fund to help the miners and their families meet their needs while they hold out on strike. We must organize rallies, pickets, demonstrations, etc. to demand that the coal operators meet the demands of the workers. We must ask our unions, organizations, etc. to pass resolutions, send telegrams and letters in support of the miners and to make financial contributions. In the last instance a victory for the miners is our victory; their defeat will be our defeat.

**THE WORKERS UNITED
WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!**



Puerto Rico Informa

GOVERNMENT VS. U.T.I.E.R.

CONTRIBUTION FROM PENSAMIENTO CRITICO
VOL 1 #2—MARCH 78.

Two months since the six thousand workers affiliated to the UTIER declared a strike, the situation of worker-boss conflict has taken the character of a relative balance of forces. The third month appears to be the one which will tip the scales towards one side or the other.

In the midst of government harassment, the union reconfirmed in meetings held at the end of February that it has a united membership behind it. Calling workers meetings at moments when the government is making concerted efforts to divide the membership is a daring move. Up until that moment the bold intentions to foment dissidence and undermine the union from within have proven fruitless. This, however, does not mean that *El Nueva Dia*, the voice of the government, and the traitor, Victor Guillermo Fernandez, who notwithstanding his discredited reputation was recruited to head the artificially inflated "dissidence", will cease to sow their seeds.

A suitable tactfulness and much prudence should continue to guide the leadership of UTIER in managing the affair of the "dissidents". This is of the utmost importance inasmuch as management and its agents will certainly attempt to use the necessary prolongation of the strike to strengthen the mini-faction which wants to sell out the six thousand workers.

Thus the government has advanced little in its three tactical objectives: to weaken the UTIER, to prevent acts of sabotage, and to turn the people against the strikers. That being the case, one would expect the union to be in a favorable tactical-strategic position in these moments. However, this is not the case. The situation, we repeat, is one of a balance of mobilized forces. This has its reasons.

If this had been just another worker-boss conflict, it is almost certain that with the decision for struggle shown by the workers of the AFF and with the armed actions which developed in support of the strike, the situation of the union evidently would be more favorable and the road towards achieving a victory for the strikers would already be clear. But the conflict of the UTIER and the AFF is a conflict which exceeds the limits of a traditional strike between a union and a company.

"The UTIER is not only confronting the AFF. The enemy of the six thousand workers is not only that agency (even less Pedro Vazquez by himself), but the present colonial administration. One should not lose sight of the fact that the government provoked the strike with very clear intentions in mind. Those purposes are summarized as follows:

To attack the leadership of the UTIER in order to eliminate or seriously weaken it because it counts among its members more than one socialist and thus represents, from the government's point of view, a bad example of firmness and honesty; to warn all public employees beforehand, in case the government sees itself obligated to pass legislation recognizing their right to unionize, that they should "understand" that the strike weapon may not be so necessary, and it may be counterproductive in their struggles for economic gains; in summary, to sabotage

beforehand the unionization of the public sector as an initial step in the domestication of Puerto Rican unionism.

This plan fits into the multiplicity of tactical steps which are being taken by the colonial administration with the purpose of creating favorable conditions for the annexation of Puerto Rico to the United States. The taming of the workers' movement to make it subservient is an indispensable requirement for the peace and stability in the labor arena, which any annexationist move would demand. This is made evident by the fact that the government is equally intransigent in the case of the UTIER and that of the TUAMA, while in the latter case the excuse that the leadership is socialist cannot be used.

There is one additional sign which exposes the governments' real intentions in this case: the attempts to impose upon the UTIER rules pertaining to the internal affairs. This is contained in managements' so-called "final offer" which was submitted on Feb. 14. Said offer of \$50 during the first year of the contract, \$40 during the second, and \$45 during the third was accompanied by the following limits:

"...the AFF submits the following offer which will be effective only if it is submitted to the membership so that it can decide by SECRET VOTE in a referendum supervised by the Dept. of Labor and Human Resources, its acceptance of the same. The offer is then contingent upon a secret vote of the membership".

The government knew very well that this condition would be unacceptable to the Negotiating Committee of the UTIER. In terms of repressive measures, this false incursion into the internal life of the trade union in the style of Barcelo is just as effective as was the mobilization of the national guard under Hernandez Colon.

This panorama is what has impeded so that in this situation we see that in spite of the high level of militancy the struggle has not consolidated decidedly in favor of the workers. But neither has it done so in favor of the government.

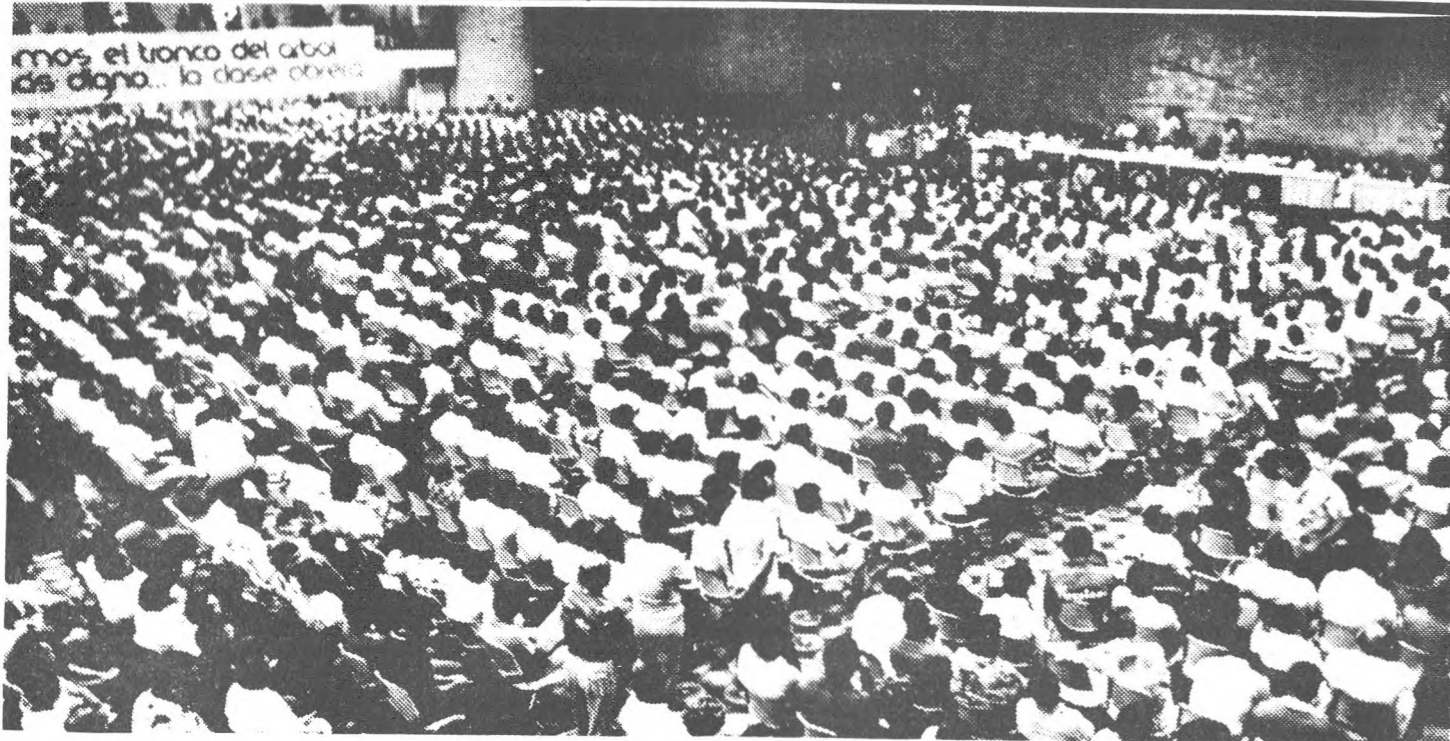
Consequently this third month is of crucial importance in the breaking of the stalemate in which the strike finds itself at the moment. Now is the time to oppose the multifrontal attack with which the government wishes to defeat the strikers; to launch a multifrontal offensive which will not focus exclusively on the AFF, since it is only an instrument of the global strategy of the government which seeks to, again we repeat, crush militant unionism regardless of whether it is socialist or not.

It was Romero and the PNP who made this into a governmental conflict, utilizing it for annexationist ends. So the response of the other side, which includes not only the UTIER, but the whole workers' movement, should be that of the fortification of all fronts as it is confirmed that it is not a conflict against the intransigence of an agency, but against the anti-worker strategy of the colonial administration.

One thing is evident: whoever tips the forces in their

favor, will undoubtedly be in a better strategic position. And the government has the resources to carry out such a move, but it also has the weaknesses which have hardly been touched and to which part of the worker offensive could be directed so as to break the impasse of the strike. Or the workers need not wait for the government's attempts to alter the present balance of forces in order to initiate its own offensive.

The announcement to substitute scabs for the workers is a dangerous step which the government has decided to take with the intention of turning the situation in its favor. But neither of the two groups can predict exactly the repercussions of such a measure, nor can either guarantee that, with this, the present situation will go decisively in favor of one or the other. Therefore, anything can happen. Whatever transpires will be the object of analysis in the next edition.



Over 5,000 UTIER workers attend assembly and vote to return to work.

UTIER locked out...

As *Obreros En Marcha* was going to press we learned that the 6200 members of the UTIER (Electrical Industry and Irrigation Workers Union) had decided to return to work. Over 5000 union members of the union, attending a highly militant assembly held on Sunday, March 19, decided to return to work even though the contract clause on the wage increase was not resolved.

The response of the AFF (Water Resources Administration) was to bar the workers from returning to their jobs until a full contract settlement was reached, and they intensified the patrols by the police and the private security forces.

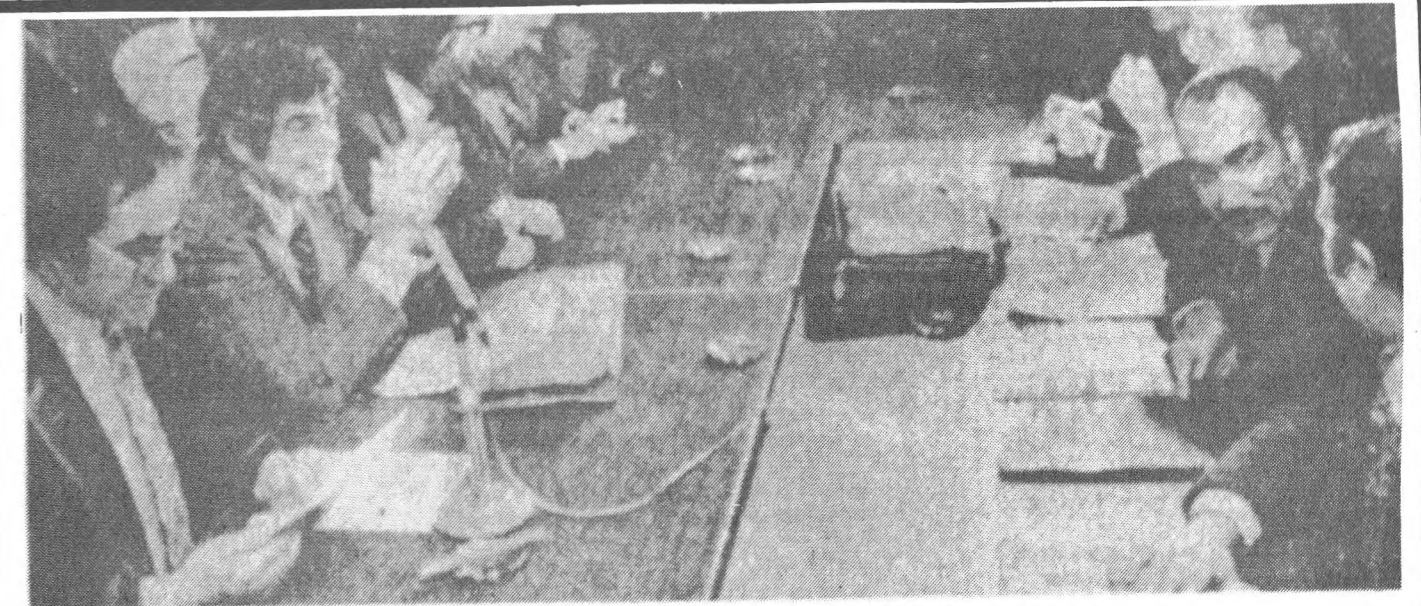
Leading members of our organization in Puerto Rico at time, were able to attend the UTIER assembly and witnessed the unity and high level of militancy of the workers and their strong support of the leadership. Their determination is an inspiration to all the workers in Puerto Rico.

The UTIER workers decided to return to their jobs while continuing to negotiate their latest contract demand of 69 cents an hour for three consecu-

tive years. However the AFF and the colonial administration have remained intransigent in their offer of 50 cents for the first year, 45 cents for the second, and 40 cents for the third. This action has changed the nature of the dispute from a strike to that of a lockout. According to the union this is in violation of the law and they intend to follow the legal procedures but will continue to man the picket lines and continue the demonstrations.

In a related matter, the members of the TUAMA (United workers of the Metropolitan Transit Authority) voted their continued endorsement of their president, Jorge Pazol. In another massively attended militant assembly, he maintained the overwhelming support of the union in spite of the splitting attempts of a small dissident group. In the voting Pazol received a total of 951 votes while the dissidents received only 145 votes. Pazol stated that although he was of his support among the rank and file, he called the assembly to thoroughly defeat this sabotage attempt by the bosses and that now they would get back to the business of the strike.

N.Y.C.—MUNICIPAL WORKERS UNDER ATTACK



Negotiations between Deputy Mayor Basil Patterson and the Big Four coalition.

The 1978 contract negotiations between New York City and its municipal employees have been in progress since Feb. 27. Through its distorted coverage, the commercial press and media has been trying to convey the impression that although the negotiations are rough, they are beginning to make slow headway. But a close examination of what appears to be a pitched battle between the Koch team, headed by Deputy Mayor Basil Patterson and the "Big 4" coalition, representing over 200,000 city workers will show otherwise.

In order to confront the city with a "unified show of force," the major unions of city employees formed a coalition for joint bargaining. This shaky grouping was originally composed of District Council 37 (D.C. 37), the largest, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), Teamsters Local 237, the Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association, The Police Benevolent Association (PBA) and the Uniformed Firefighters Association (UFA)—the Big 6. Having been built on opportunism rather than principle, the coalition lasted less than a week once the negotiations began. The PBA pulled out, closely followed by the UFA.

The PBA's position for doing so was that they could get more from the city on their own. Through their high-powered negotiator, Richard Hartman, they declared that they deserved more anyway. They topped off their reactionary position by insisting that the city give them their demands even if it had to raise taxes to do so! The UFA tagged along hoping this would prove to be a good strategy.

This action then leaves the remaining unions in the now "Big 4" coalition to represent approximately 50 municipal unions. And what does the coalition get handed by the city? A package stating that there can be absolutely no general wage increase, and in addition listing a total of about 60 "giveback" benefits that must be taken away from already existing contracts. These would include cuts in coffee breaks, overtime, vacation days, and pension rights.

After going through their well practiced theatrics, the union bureaucrats secretly huddled with the city's professional negotiator, and two weeks later, the city was singing a different tune. The intransigent Koch had now

softened his position to state that he was prepared to grant city workers pay increases and he also conceded that they would not totally be paid out of "give backs" and productivity improvements.

Can we attribute this change of heart to Koch's mellowing attitude or to the "productive tactics" of the union bureaucrats? No. This action reflects an insidious plan being orchestrated primarily by the Federal government to put the entire weight and risk of the bourgeoisie's crisis on the working class. A closer examination of the intrigue being developed in Washington, D.C. will help to put our local situation into sharper focus.

FEDERAL "AID" - ATTACK ON WORKING CLASS

For months Koch has been pleading with the Federal government for financial help which he stated was critical for New York's survival. After an extended cat and mouse game the Carter administration put a \$2 billion aid program for the city before Congress, which it vowed to fight for. This aid package, together with the stipulations and strategy that accompany it, is the cornerstone of Koch's four year financial plan.

The terms of the aid are that the Federal government will provide guarantees (insurance) for up to 15 years for as much as \$2 billion worth of taxable city or Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC) securities. These guaranteed bonds must only be sold to city and state employee pension funds.

Now come the catches. There will be no outlay of Federal funds to back up this scheme. The money to be used in case the city defaults on paying the interest or principal will be Federal revenue sharing funds that have been set aside for state and city aid. In other words, if the city defaults, and the possibility exists, the entire working class and poor population of New York City will be penalized by a \$2 billion cut to welfare payments, housing funds, Medicaid benefits, payrolls and all the other services the state and city had pegged for these funds. Not only have they committed our vital services to a game of Russian roulette but they have required the state to enact legislation to insure "a fiscal control and monetary entity" with

powers no less extensive than those of the current Emergency Financial Control Board.

This works out perfectly for Carter. He makes no "unnecessary" spending which would risk further inflation, he maintains the mirage of a recovering New York, and he reinforces his "liberal" image, all through a cleverly disguised anti-worker plan. Yet Carter cannot be given all the credit. This deal was developed in collusion with MAC chairman Felix Rohatyn, Gov. Carey, Mayor Koch and with the Big 4 coalition having full knowledge through their chief consultant Jack Bigel.

UNION MIS-LEADERS AND KOCH KEEP WHEELING AND DEALING

The real treachery involved here is yet to be seen. The union bureaucrats wanted their say also and this is how we can understand Koch's concession to grant some pay increases. They agreed to submit the already abused pension funds to this dangerous plan in return for that so-called wage increase which will not even make a dent in the needs of the workers. These traitors to the working class capitulated to this because their conciliation has put them in a weak position and they want to maintain credibility within the more privileged sections of their unions, which are the backbone of their support. As a matter of fact, two weeks before Koch even announced the "possible" wage increases, Felix Rohatyn was in Washington, D.C. lobbying before the hard line Republican Congressmen for a moderate wage increase in the current negotiations. He stated that the increase would be even less than 5 percent and assured them that if it could not be offset by savings or productivity increases then layoffs would be necessary!

The coalition's sellout is clearly demonstrated by their reaction to the city's recently announced "attrition plan". Koch announced that the municipal work force would be reduced by 6,345 through attrition. The hardest hit would be the Board of Education, losing 1,710 positions in addition to a \$7.7 million cut in supplies and lunch programs. Next in line would be the Dept. of Social

WOMEN COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL DAY

On Saturday, March 11, 1978, over 800 men and women in New York City joined together to commemorate International Working Women's Day. The day's activity began with a march from Union Square, which proceeded up Eighth Avenue and culminated in a rally at Herald Square. The commemoration was sponsored by a coalition of women's groups and political organizations dedicated to changing the perspective of the women's movement to one which reflects the needs of poor and working women. For the first time in many years, the focus of the day was the attack on poor and working women and the need to integrate them into the struggle for women's democratic rights. This focus was evidenced in the different speakers and chants of the day: "Support the workers at J.P. Stevens; union rights, now" and "Woman, worker, integrate into the struggle". We, El Comite-MINP, were a part of the coalition that dev-



veloped the plans for the day and we commend the different groups within it which throughout the struggles of the past four months never wavered from the principles of unity agreed upon.

International Working Women's Day cele-

brates the heroic struggles waged by women everywhere in defense of their right to safe and healthy working conditions, decent living wages, equality, and freedom. It was the particular struggles of North American working class women that led to the creation

THE WORKING CLASS MUST UNITE!

The situation of the working class in New York reflects the overall attacks on the class nationwide, particularly in the large urban centers. It is daily becoming clearer that the entire state mechanism and super structure is mobilizing itself to drive the class into greater depths of impoverishment and destitution.

Our situation in New York points to the inescapable fact that the struggle of the municipal workers and the struggle of the rest of the class to maintain decent living standards is one and the same. This is something our enemies are fully aware of. The "federal aid" scheme has laid the foundation for a wide chasm to develop between the municipal and the rest of the class if New York should default. Yet the Big 4 coalition consciously supported this plan.

We must continue to intensify the efforts towards unity that have begun at various levels. The rank and file forces within the city unions and those honest second level leadership forces must continue the dialogues with other progressive forces in the city. Those who have been organizing within the communities must resume those initiatives which began with the City-wide Community Coalition. In the long run we must see the necessity to build a solid, militant working class movement in New York City that will effectively confront our enemies and their schemes. Through this process, the basis will be laid for the development of higher levels of worker unity, extending even outside of New York City. This is the only road the working class can take in order to eventually overcome its confirmed enemy—capital.

In Unity There Is Strength,
In the Workers Lies the Power!

brates the heroic struggles waged by women everywhere in defense of their right to safe and healthy working conditions, decent living wages, equality, and freedom. It was the particular struggles of North American working class women that led to the creation

of this important day. Throughout the 19th and 20th century, women in the U.S., particularly those in the textile and garment industries, fought in the shops and in the streets against long backbreaking hours and starvation wages. Women fought against child labor exploitation and in 1848 launched the 72-year long battle for the right to vote.

To honor these struggles and the progressive struggles of women the world over, March 8th—the day women textile workers in New York City rose up and demanded the 8-hour day—was designated in 1910 by an International Women's Socialist Conference in Europe as a day of unity for working women everywhere in their struggles for equality and democratic rights.

The internationalist spirit of the day was reflected at this year's celebration by the delivery of several messages from solidarity and liberation groups exemplifying the growing worldwide resistance against U.S. imperialism. Speakers represented the Iranian Students Association, the U.S. Trade Union Committee Against Repression in Puerto Rico (TUCAR), Action for Women in Chile (AFWIC) and the African National Council in South Africa.

OUR WORK IN THE PAST YEAR

It is important at this time, as it is when commemorating all important days of the working class, to reflect upon our own experiences in work on women's particular needs and to examine our strengths and weaknesses. It is through this process that we will have a firm base from which to project our work for the coming year.

A year ago, we stated: "...as we prepare to honor the significance of March 8, we must integrate ourselves in these struggles, pointing out the need to unite the struggle for social services, childcare, right to abortions, against sterilization abuse, etc., into one common class effort against the exploitative system which condemns all workers, men and women, to a life of misery and oppression. Not to raise these demands or to disregard the importance of these struggles is to make an abstraction of the correct principle of "women's oppression is a class question."

We began the implementation of this statement by raising the particularities of women in all our mass work in the communities, schools and work places. It has been this ongoing work with women in shops, education, daycare, and housing that has given us a clearer understanding of the obstacles confronting women in their fight to improve their living and working conditions. We have also participated in forums and conferences dealing with various aspects of women's oppression. At the founding conference of the Coalition for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA), we stressed the need to develop work on abortion and sterilization abuse in the communities of the women most affected by the attacks, i.e., the poor and working class. We also discussed the form of organization necessary to carry out this task and the forms of struggles

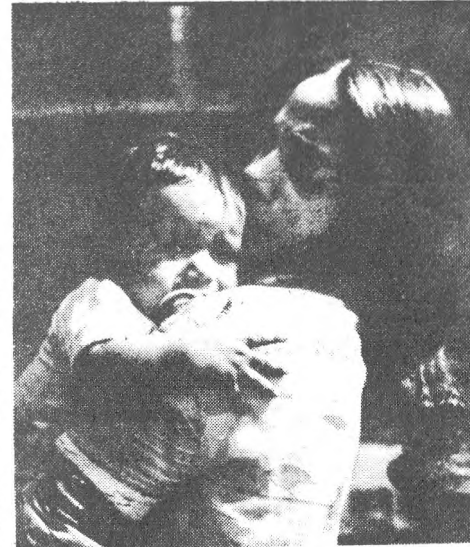
needed to raise the level of consciousness of the masses. In this regard, we stressed the need not to focus on legislative work, but to create a mass base in working class communities and in this way most effectively build a movement able to respond to the government attacks.

At other activities we stated the importance of implementing the connection between the struggle for safe and free abortions and the struggle for quality health care in general. We cannot see certain issues only as "women's issues" and other issues as concerns for all oppressed peoples. This would contradict our understanding that the particular needs of women must be addressed by all people who struggle against the injustices of this capitalist society. In order for this perspective to guide the work of the women's movement, it means that Marxist-Leninists must play an integral role in these struggles.

Our organization, El Comite-MINP, has just begun the process of integration into women's struggles. In the coming year we will further integrate into those formations which have the potential (or help build them where they do not exist) to take up the perspective that women's struggles must be part of the overall struggle against exploitation and oppression.

Our experiences of the past year have enabled us to see the need to develop a theoretical foundation and a concrete strategy to help us implement our perspective. We have begun an analysis of this question, but we are self-critical for not having completed this task to date. This will be rectified in the coming year.

Internally, our organization has become more consistent in dealing with the manifestations of sexism within the organization. This is reflected by the leadership roles that women have begun to assume, both within the organization and the revolutionary movement and as representatives of the organization among the masses. We are also in the process of developing the mechanisms that deal with obstacles that women often face in their process of development as communists, particularly around the question of children.



IN THE COMING YEAR

Today we continue to face a reality of economic crisis: further reduction in social services; increased unemployment and a general deterioration in our standard of living. Given the fact that sexism and racism are two major tools of the bourgeoisie utilized to divide the working class, oppressed nationalities and women are hardest hit by these conditions. Out of the 73% of the labor force that is unorganized, women comprise 40% of it. Because of women's responsibilities in capitalist society to the home and to children, cuts in social services put an added burden on women, both financially and psychologically. These are a few ways that show how poor and working women face a higher degree of oppression. It is precisely this reality which emphasizes the need for women to become part of the struggle for a better society in general as well as women's rights in particular.

In this moment, as we reaffirm our commitment to intensify the fight to defend women's democratic rights, we present the tasks we outlined for ourselves in the coming year. Internally we will continue the process of consolidating our women comrades as materialist cadre and in particular focus on the question of women exerting leadership within the organization. Externally, we must work to defend the rights of women in shops, factories and service industries. We must push unions to take up the task of organizing women and respond to the particular needs of working women. We must demand an expansion of quality daycare services and struggle in the communities for an equal and quality education. As we integrate within the different organizations where working class women participate (or create them where they don't exist) and take up the struggle to defend their rights we will strive to develop and consolidate their capacities as leaders in those organizations and movements. It is in this spirit that we as Marxist-Leninists continue to struggle for a society that will meet the needs of all working and oppressed people.

MARCH TO OVERTURN BAKKE DECISION

The "reverse discrimination" poison trying to be spread primarily by the infamous Bakke decision has not met without resistance. Increasing sections of our society (workers, students, professionals, whites, non-whites) are becoming more conscious of the need to become actively involved in overturning this decision. This awareness is developing at a time when the overall standard of living of the workers and poor is under planned attack.

The economic structure of this society is undergoing a severe crisis and the solution of the ruling class is to transfer it onto the workers. The general campaign of the dominant class at this time is to increase the impoverishment of the workers in order to maintain its own economic stability. But in order to do this it is striving to undermine the unity and organization of the working class.

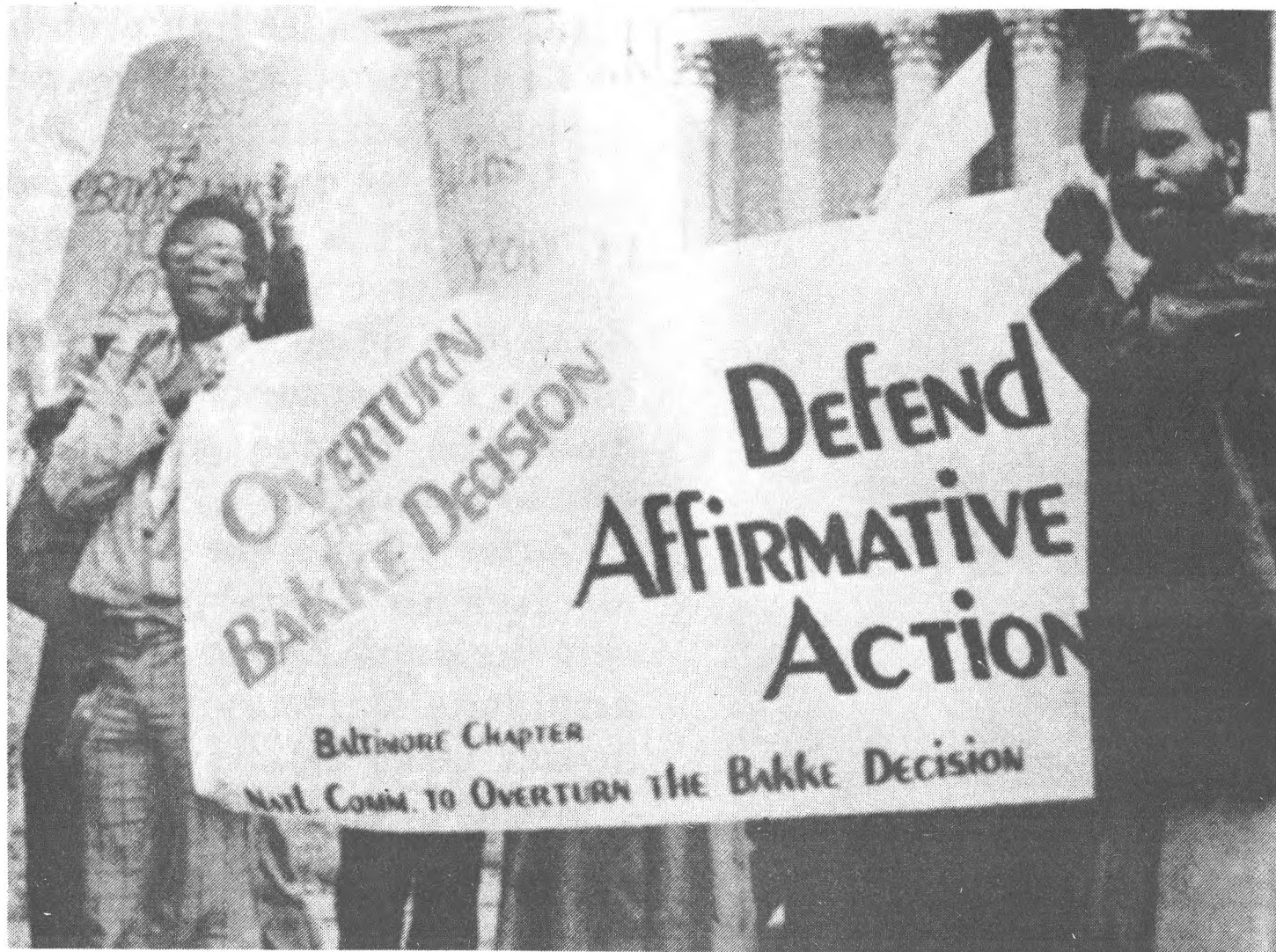
We can then place the racism generated by Bakke and other such legislation, part and parcel within this scheme of the capitalists. As has historically been the case in this country the national minorities have been the most exploited section of our multi-national working class. It comes as no surprise that it is within minorities that the effects of the crisis will be most strongly felt. They want to eliminate all the hard fought for democratic gains we were able to win during the 60s (affirmative action, bilingual

education programs, daycare, etc.)

At the same time the governing class has had much experience using racism to create division within the ranks of the workers. The large property owners will attempt to fan the flames of racism which will then create favorable conditions for the increased exploitation of all workers. If we begin to view the Bakke case within this context we will see the far reaching consequences that this case has not only for the national minorities but for the entire working class.

The National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision (NCOBD) has planned the next national demonstration to take place in Washington D.C. on April 15. We urge all those who see the necessity to begin confronting the racist and divisive tactics of the capitalists to make their presence felt at the capital on this day. By both whites and nonwhites alike demanding an end to the attacks on the standard of living and against the democratic rights of workers and oppressed we will strengthen the multi-national unity that can only benefit us all.

For information in the New York City area on the buses leaving for Washington D.C. on April 15, we can be contacted at 874-9162.



ARGENTINA—2 YEARS UNDER JUNTA

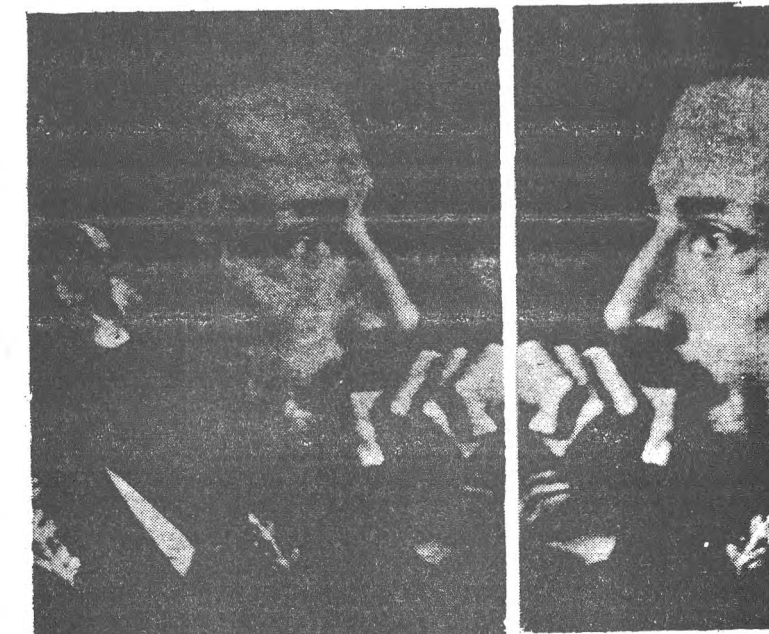
Contribution from MASA

On March 24, 1976, the Argentine armed forces launched the nation into a generalized civil war. Their decision in favor of total war was caused by their fear of the vigorous revolutionary development of the Argentine working class and the constant growth of its vanguard organizations. The Argentine military, principal representatives of great foreign and national capital, took over the government to dedicate all their efforts to crushing all possible resistance of the Argentine people to their plans of oppression and super-exploitation. This plan can be correctly said to be of a fascist nature since its objective is to impose a corporatist state which, crushing all popular resistance to it, would modernize existing structures and thus pull Argentine capitalism out of its present crisis.

When the Argentine military decided to carry out their coup, they did so convinced that they would finally stop the revolutionary trend in our nation. The military, who had already been repressing our people behind the facade of Isabel Peron's government, believed that by militarizing the nation and "killing all those necessary," to quote General Videla's own words, in a few months they would not even leave a trace of our people's resistance. They did not reckon on the Argentine people's long tradition of struggle, dating back to the last decades of the 19th century.

THE RESISTANCE

In the two years since the coup, the Argentine people have faced the frenzied, murderous repression of a dominant class attempting to stem the tide of history. In such a short period of time some 10,000 people have been murdered, a further 30,000 have disappeared, and some 20,000 more are rotting in the various jails and concentration camps throughout the nation. This repression, these plans for super-exploitation, for the fascistization of



the nation, have been met with the steadfast and firm opposition of the Argentine working class. This resistance ranges from sabotage to refusing cooperation, to armed actions—always hitting the enemy while at the same time being careful not to give it easy targets. It is precisely this resistance, which culminated in the months of October and November in massive strikes involving hundreds of thousands of workers, that has moved other sectors of the Argentine people into a firm opposition to the Military Junta. Today we can say that only a small sector, consisting of the dependent bourgeoisie, supports the Junta; whereas the vast majority of the Argentine people, from the working class, to the middle class and the national bourgeoisie, oppose it.

THE STRIKES OF OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

The months of October and November, 1977, showed how mistaken the military were in thinking that they could defeat the Argentine people. Beginning on October 11th over 10,000 automotive workers of the Renault plant in the city of Cordoba, went on strike demanding wage increases forbidden by the government. The strike lasted for six days, even though the Army occupied the factory and arrested some 200 "agitators." Though further reprisals were threatened the workers only returned to work once their demands were met.

Four days later, after the beginning of the Renault strike, "La Opinion" of Buenos Aires reported a street battle between the Army and a squad of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), which escaped with only one casualty. The same newspaper told of a demonstration by over 600 relatives of political prisoners in front of the National Congress in Buenos Aires.

The same day the Renault strike ended, October 17th, the newspaper "La Razon" reported two other strikes; one of the mailmen in Mar de Plata and another of service stations in Buenos Aires. Also on October 17th, there were several bombings and armed attacks on the railroad lines of Buenos Aires, La Plata and Berazategui which, at least in one case, stopped service for several days.

On October 20th the manager of industrial relations at the state-owned YPF oil company, was gunned down by an



unidentified commando. The company had just denied wage increases to its workers.

Five days later, on October 25th, the head of quality control of the Lozadur enterprise, which had just fired 800 workers arbitrarily, was killed. The day afterwards, October 26th, the press reported a bomb explosion in the office of the Minister of Labor, General Tomas Liendo, who escaped uninjured. The same day an Air Force Major, several policemen in the Buenos Aires area, and one of Videla's advisors were all executed by the guerrillas.

In the weeks that followed strikes in the following areas were reported by the press: mail and telegraphs, oil workers, dock workers, bank workers, race track agents, grain salesmen, railroad workers, light and power workers, metal-workers, meat packers, subway operators, longshoremen, airline pilots, workers in a glass factory, and on and on. On November 10th it was estimated that, regardless of the repression unleashed by the government, over 200,000 workers were being affected by the strikes. At the same time the strikes were being ably seconded by armed actions. This way on November 1st power lines were attacked and cut, and rail lines obstructed; and on November 5th rail lines were blown up.

These are only a few of the examples of resistance by the Argentine people—the examples that escape a strict press censorship. All these actions of the Argentine proletariat and revolutionary vanguard, the massive wave of strikes and armed actions throughout October, November, and even December and January, showed the failure of the Military's fascist plan for Argentina.

This constant resistance of the Argentine working class is what has pushed other, more vacillating, sectors of Argentine society into opposition to the Junta. The result has been that the Junta has had to take steps backwards in order to avoid its increasing political isolation in the nation. But we know that neither the Junta's promises nor the activity of the traditional parties is a guarantee for a future return to democracy in Argentina. The only guaran-

tee is the struggle of the masses, headed by the working class; for only popular pressure can force the military to withdraw once again from the government.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOLIDARITY

And yet, we also know that the final victory of the Argentine people will only be achieved after a long and hard struggle. We know the importance that Argentina has for imperialism, for as General Gordon Sumner, president of the Inter-American Defense Council said in October 1977: "Argentina is the anchor of the continent, and more specifically of the Inter-American system. This country is necessarily important for anyone who studies the strategy of the Free World. Argentina is the battle front of the hemisphere, and its strategic routes in the South Atlantic are vital for the future of oil shipments."

This is why solidarity work with Argentina is so important for our people. It is not inconceivable that when the struggle of our people reaches such intensity as to threaten the overthrow of the system, that United States troops will intervene there. This is why international solidarity is a fundamental objective within the revolutionary strategy of our struggle for liberation and socialism. International solidarity is a pillar of our revolution, and this conviction is strengthened by the experiences which preceded us. Vietnam, or more recently Angola are the most eloquent example of what proletarian internationalism and international solidarity mean. This is why we think that this is not a task of words, but of work, of action to create the conditions that will obtain for the revolutionary struggle of our people the firmest and most dedicated solidarity.

As Che Guevara once said: "The present is struggle, the future is ours."

M.A.S.A.
March 7, 1978.

