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Reagan/Carter

Two Sides of the Same Ruling Class



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On Our 10th Anniversary

"Cling to the masses, share their struggles. Learn from them. Unite with them. This is the first and foremost condition for carrying out the revolutionaries' historic mission. Only thus will we be able to prepare ourselves and the people for a prolonged effort."

Mario Roberto Santucho

For our organization, MINP-El Comité, these words by the assassinated Secretary-General of Argentina's Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) address one of the key elements which allow for the growth and consolidation of any revolutionary organization: its relationship to the masses. As we approach the tenth anniversary of our organization, we recognize the crucial role that this perspective has played in the process of formation and consolidation of MINP-El Comité.

MINP-El Comité formed initially in the summer of 1970 as a Latin community group. We participated in the struggles of working people for decent, low-income housing. Today, ten years later, our organization has become a Marxist-Leninist formation, struggling alongside like-minded groups and individuals to make the necessary and possible contributions required of the revolutionary movement in this period. We are committed to the process of class struggle which will bring down the bankrupt social and economic system this society is based on. On its ruins we want to see built a genuinely just and democratic society—a socialist society.

We did not come to view socialism as the alternative to the plight of working people in this country merely as an outgrowth of our own experiences in community organizing. We were influenced to move in that direction also as a result of our participation in the Puerto Rican movement which sprang forth in the early 70's in support of independence and socialism for Puerto Rico. In addition, our decision was conditioned by the politics and social practice of some of the minority grassroots movements of that period, such as the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords—who openly called for a society organized on socialist principles. Finally, our embrace of socialism was inspired by the Cuban and Vietnamese people and their heroic and successful struggles to free themselves from U.S. imperialism.

The examples of Cuba and Vietnam, along with our early support for Puerto Rico's independence, led us to understand that we were part of a worldwide movement composed of the exploited and oppressed throughout the world. Over the years, armed with this understanding as a key aspect, we have made international solidarity tasks an important part of our work—particularly with the struggles of people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In our early years, during our involvement in the squatters movement and bilingual education struggles in lower and upper Manhattan, we came to experience the limitations of the day-to-day struggle for reforms. These limitations are inherent in a struggle unguided by a vision of a different society. Our social practice in predominantly Latin communities and our own ethnic background led us study the history of Puerto Rico and later on to address the role and tasks of Puerto Ricans in this country. It was our efforts to address these questions that moved us most concretely in the direction of Marxism.

Our study of Marxism and our transformation to a Marxist-Leninist organization was not an easy process. It generated much internal ideological struggle regarding the necessity of studying Marxism and also regarding our commitment to Puerto Rico's independence and its relationship to the class struggle in this society. The people who engaged in this struggle were not academic Marxists. The individuals that composed El Comité in its early

years, as well as those who predominately compose it today, came from Puerto Rican or other Latin working class backgrounds. Most did not have a history of study or intellectual preparation. In fact, many were high school dropouts and products of the substandard education that working people receive in this society.

Despite these limitations we struggled to grapple with our study. In the process, we discovered the depth of our own intellectual capacities and the nature of Marxism-Leninism: a science of and for working class people reflecting their needs, aspirations and experience. In addition, the experience of our study and social practice made clear the need to transform our organization into one whose members, whose cadre would be armed with Marxism-Leninism and characterized by a high level of commitment to the working class and its short and long-range interests.

Besides these important lessons, our studies led us to understand that the overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. were integrated into the social-economic reality of this society and did not form part of the nation of Puerto Rico. They were a national minority in the United States. On the one hand, this clearly established that our primary responsibility as Marxist-Leninists was to advance the class conscious participation of the Puerto Rican national minority in the revolutionary process in this country. We would do this in the process of contributing to the formation of a revolutionary party of the entire working class. On the other hand, it confirmed that as Marxist-Leninists, along with other Marxist-Leninists, we had a responsibility to organize and consolidate class-conscious support among the North American people for Puerto Rico's independence. Our organization today is more than ever consolidated on these positions.

As we look forward to commemorating our tenth anniversary, our interest is to learn from our history so that we can better contribute to the class-conscious organization of the U.S. working class. If anything summarizes our history, it is the slogan adopted by our First Assembly, which was to *Forge the Cadre Among the Masses*. If we do this effectively and continue to strengthen the ideological and political capacities of our membership, then our organization will deepen its role in the revolutionary process. □

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Union Leaders Impose Bad Contract on City Workers

The city of New York has concluded this year's contract negotiations with its employees and once again it has come out on top. We can begin the summing-up of this process by examining some general aspects of the two groupings that negotiated with the city—the Coalition of Municipal Unions and the Uniformed Coalition.

Unlike the 1978 negotiations, these contract talks began with two separate coalitions instead of one. This division was initiated in 1978 when the Police Benevolent Association split from the original, larger coalition, contending that they deserved to get more from the city than the "civilian" workers. This year's Uniformed Coalition was made up of the unions representing the police and firemen, fire officers, correction officers and sanitation workers. The Coalition of Municipal Unions, representing almost 215,000 workers, included District Council 37, headed by Victor Gotbaum, the largest union in the coalition with almost 130,000 members. The next largest was the United Federation of Teachers with about 77,000 members and headed by Albert Shanker. The rest of the coalition was made up of nearly 60 other smaller unions and locals, including the Teamsters.

A more significant difference in this year's contract talks was that unlike the negotiations in 1976 and 1978, this year's negotiations, in particular those of the municipal workers, were concluded in a relatively smooth manner. They are a direct contrast to the militant rank and file mobilization and ultimate strike of the Transit Workers union only weeks before. The relative ease with which the agreements were reached and imposed on the municipal workers can be basically attributed to two factors—the present state of the trade union movement in the municipal unions, and the control and manipulation exerted by the bureaucratic leadership.

A look at the terms of the agreements reached will show why the contracts could only have been railroaded through the unions.

Since the beginning of the fiscal crisis in 1975, the city's workers have had to pay dearly as the banks imposed upon the city the need to "balance its budget." Municipal workers have been forced to accept massive layoffs, attrition, pension funds pillaged by the banks, contract gains taken away, and in 1978, were only given a 4% wage increase.

This has all taken place against the backdrop of soaring inflation. New York City has one of the highest rates in the nation. Last year inflation was over 16% and this



While Mayor Koch and labor leaders Albert Shanker and Victor Gotbaum toast themselves on their "reasonable" contract agreement, inflation continues to eat away at the worker's paycheck.

year it is already over 20% and still rising. The wages of municipal workers are far behind the point of breaking even with inflation. In fact, the municipal coalition's original demand of a 13% wage increase each year for a two-year contract barely would have given the majority of city workers a wage able to fight inflation.

All workers experience daily the hardships of paying for rent, food, clothes and their other needs. They know what in reality is fair for them. Yet, when the negotiators for the Municipal Coalition settled for an 8% increase per year, the union leaders hailed it as a tremendous achievement! Some weeks later the Uniformed Coalition settled with the city for increases of 9% and 8% only slightly more than the municipal coalition although their position is that they are much more vital and important to the city's well-being. Undoubtedly the fact that they threatened to go on strike during the time of the Democratic National Convention (to take place at Madison Square Garden in August) no doubt figured in their getting a "better" contract than the civilian workers.

Still, the city has imposed yet another bad contract on all the municipal workers. As previously stated the internal state of the unions has to be pinpointed as the major factor which allowed this to happen. Taking the two major unions in the municipal coalition—D.C. 37 and the U.F.T.—we see that although they are two different types of unions with many particularities, there are some general similarities. Each is very tightly controlled by its top leadership; any type of real democracy does not exist. The leaderships have insured their rule by filling the majority of the lower level positions in the unions with sympathetic supporters.

Divisions among the membership are promoted and reinforced by both policy

and structure. In D.C. 37, the more than 60 locals which comprise the Council are maintained isolated from each other. This happens even when you may have five locals working side by side, in the same hospital, for example. The chance to share experiences and resources and pool efforts is discouraged.

A major characteristic of the U.F.T. is to maintain the membership divided along lines of professionals vs. non-professionals and seniority. Recently, D.C. 37 has taken the road of recruiting more professionals. The mostly minority, lower-paid workers have practically had to beg for union representation. Earlier on, Gotbaum had even stated that the membership should sit tight since larger increases had to be won for professionals to gain parity with non-municipal salaries. In the end he was forced to fight for minimal increases for lower wage workers as well.

Although negotiations with coalitions rather than individual unions was an idea developed by the municipal unions and seen as a tactic for improving their bargaining power, the results so far have shown that the union membership has gained little through this process. Only the city has been able to utilize the tactic to its advantage. In 1978, the concept of coalition bargaining was vigorously opposed by Koch. But in 1980 he specifically invited the unions to bargain in this fashion.

This does not mean that coalition bargaining is a tactic workers should not use. Rather it means that to negotiate in this way does not automatically indicate a real unity and strengthening among the unions. It is the development of democratic unions, based on a militant and informed rank and file, that will enable city workers to achieve more of their demands. □

Lessons From an Education Struggle

Puerto Ricans in the United States are subjected to the same substandard conditions of the public education system as is any other group or sector of the U.S. working class that attends our public schools. They face the same authoritarian administrations and racist attitudes of many teachers and school personnel towards minorities. They also face the disastrous impact of the budget cuts that have been implemented throughout the present period of fiscal crisis in the city of New York and in many cities throughout the U.S. Confronted with these circumstances, students and parents have been forced to fight for their rights in the schools and against the cutbacks, discrimination and abuse. To achieve the minimum they have had to unite with others that face these same oppressive conditions. At times the unity and struggle has won the immediate goal rapidly. At other times the gains have not been as quick to come. Evaluating the lessons in a struggle is always important in order to learn from the successes and the errors, to be able to be more effective in the future.

The following article narrates a struggle taking place in New York City at the present time—a struggle which exemplifies some of the conditions that Puerto Ricans in the United States face in the area of education.

Dewey Junior High School is located in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Sunset Park is a working class neighborhood where 65% of its 140,000 residents are of Hispanic origin, primarily Puerto Rican. 80% percent of the school population is Hispanic and less than 40% of the students are reading at or above grade level. Despite this fact, District Superintendent Melov maintains that "learning is taking place at Dewey."

Jose Acosta is a student at Dewey. Last January he was accused of slashing the tires of a teacher's car and was suspended. His mother Margarita Acosta visited the school to get the situation clarified. The principal, Gida Cavicchia demanded that she pay the cost of the damages to the car. Mrs. Acosta protested her son's innocence and was physically removed from the office by the dean. During the confrontation Principal Cavicchia called the police and accused Mrs. Acosta of possessing a knife. Mrs. Acosta was arrested, taken to the local precinct, submitted to a humiliating strip search and given a summons. To this day the charges against Mrs. Acosta and her son have not been proven.

After these experiences Mrs. Acosta

decided to fight. She took out a summons against the principal and the dean for assault, and began collecting signatures of parents that had suffered abuses at the school. She took her case to the District Superintendent as well as the community agencies.

As far back as 1974, numerous complaints had been raised against Principal Cavicchia by parents with children at Dewey. There were cases of arbitrary transfers and suspension (without the parents' notice), and accusations of using obscene language towards the students (calling them prostitutes and bums). There have even been charges of lowering the grades of students who fell in disfavor. Protest by parents, however, was effectively blocked by the school administration. They intimidated the students during the day with veiled threats of reprisals against the children of parents who protested too loudly. The parents, many of whom are on welfare, were threatened by the school administration with not giving them the needed written proof for the Department of Social Services that their children were attending school regularly.

Despite this situation, however, a group of primarily Hispanic concerned parents, community residents, and community organizations such as the Coalition in Defense of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Rights, rallied to the defense of Mrs. Acosta and her son. The group which even-



tually became the Committee for Students' and Parents' Rights at Dewey met with the District 15 Community School Board to present its grievances. The "investigation" undertaken by the School board consisted of asking Principal Cavicchia and the president of the non-functioning PTA if there were any problems at the school. They both maintained that all was fine. None of the parents involved in the grievances were interviewed, even though cases of abuse had been documented by the committee.

When the committee realized that the mechanisms of the educational system and the racist school administration were not going to respond to their needs and demands, they decided to hold their own public hearing in the community. Several parents and students testified about their experiences at Dewey even though they knew there could be retaliation by the school or the District Superintendent against them. A local community organization, the Center for Family Life, cited abuses that were going on at the school and spoke of the difficulties in obtaining information from the school administration.

In May, soon after the hearing, a militant picket was held in front of the school denouncing the principal for her racist comments, her arbitrary actions and her tactics of intimidation. The picket represented the high point in the committee's life-span and in its struggle in support of the Acosta family. From there on, the work and membership of the committee dwindled greatly.

Although able to bring together some parents, residents and groups in the Sunset Park community, the committee was unable to mobilize the parents at the school effectively. A base of parents was needed to educate and mobilize the general parent body in defense of its rights. This lack of a base was the fundamental reason why the struggle was not able to develop. The support of the community is not enough. The main ones who can change the conditions of the school are the parents and students themselves together with the support of the community.

Well-informed, militant and united parent bodies can play a determinant role in insuring that their children receive a better education in Dewey or any other school. We can all learn from the strengths and weaknesses in the struggle of the Committee for Students and Parents' Rights at Dewey in this way we can build on past struggles. In addition, by analyzing our own experiences, we can help future fighters build on these struggles. □



Who will lead the attacks on the U.S. working class after November 1980?

Carter/Reagan: Two Sides of the Same Ruling Class

The last phase of the 1980 electoral charade has begun. By the middle of August, all the fighting over candidates and policies that's been going on within the Democratic and Republican Parties will be over. By that time, each party will have held its National Convention; each will have defined its platform for the coming November election and each will have chosen its candidate for president and vice-president.

Which ever candidates the parties select will be news to no one. Carter and Reagan are sure to be their party's choice. But the debates over the party platforms will undoubtedly stir up more controversy. The fight between the pro-ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) supporters and those against it has already heated up in the Republican Party. The Platform Committee voted to approve a general statement in favor of equal rights for women, but it rejected specific support for the ERA. In addition, the committee adopted a plank endorsing a constitutional ban on abortion.

Among the Democrats, the major issues of contention have yet to emerge. Kennedy will try to get his policies voted in even if his chances for the nomination are very slim. In fact, Carter forces might make some concessions toward Kennedy for the sake of unity within the party.

The party platforms are supposed to show the American people what they would be getting if they elected this or that candidate. But regardless of the specific platforms the two major bourgeois parties decide on, history shows us that presidents

and their administrations function less according to the particular dictates of their party platforms and more according to the needs of the bourgeois class—those who own the banks and corporations and control the wealth of this country—and its interests at a given time. Carter and his administration is a good example of this.

Carter was elected as a "populist" president—a man of the people. The platform the Democrats ran on in 1976 called for full employment, national health insurance, a decreased military budget and expanded social services. The first two planks were nothing more than rhetorical statements designed to continue the notion of the Democratic Party as "the party of the working people." The second two policies—which were more concrete—were abandoned in the first year of Carter's presidency. For four years, Carter has consistently increased the military budget and has cut back more and more in different areas of social services.

This reality is one of the main reasons why elections hold little promise for the American people. Although people vote for president and vice-president, it is the interests of the ruling class that the government responds to and not the interests of the majority of the people. This is why we say that generally it matters little who gets elected.

Because of this reality, the electoral charade is played out every four years. With the party conventions out of the way, Carter and Reagan will turn their guns solely on each other in the remaining months before the election. Each will attempt to

show how different their policies are from each other.

But in fact, there are no fundamental differences between the two candidates. The differences are of degree rather than substance. The main trend in the ruling class at this time is its move to the right in response to the economic problems plaguing the U.S. and its loss of prestige and power internationally. The entire bourgeois political spectrum has shifted to the right. This is reflected in the policies of both parties.

As a consequence of this, Reagan has been pulled into the mainstream of Republican multinational corporate politics. He no longer represents the far-right tendency which has been his image for so long. He now represents the Republican business establishment—those tied to the world of multinational corporate and banking interests. This can be seen by the advisors Reagan is presently surrounding himself with: investment bankers, corporate heads, policy experts from conservative think-tanks like the Hoover Institute of War and Peace, and former cabinet members of the Nixon and Ford administrations.

Carter vs. Reagan: A Lesser of Two Evils?

In the area of the economy and its two major problems, unemployment and inflation, Carter and Reagan both see inflation as the principal enemy to combat. Carter has attempted to do this by cutting government spending, particularly in the areas of social services. He has also implemented voluntary wage and price guidelines which have worked to the benefit of the bosses, not the workers. His goal is to balance the budget as the way to deal with inflation. Reagan also calls for a balanced federal budget and reduced spending on social programs. In addition, Reagan has been pushing for tax cuts to corporations and the well-to-do financially. Although Carter initially strongly opposed the idea of tax cuts, he now sees them as inevitable. The Democrats in the Senate have already announced an "anti-inflationary tax cut" to be introduced in Congress in September.

Carter and Reagan do differ on the question of the minimum wage. Carter passed a bill raising the minimum wage to \$3.35 an hour as of January, 1981, while Reagan talks of abolishing it altogether. Yet many of Reagan's most right-wing or hawkish statements have sooner or later been toned down when asked for specifics. For example, in February, Reagan stated the need to blockade Cuba as an assertive response to Soviet moves in Afghanistan. Several months later he emphasized in an interview that his idea was merely "hypothetical."

On the question of deregulation of industries, Carter and Reagan have very similar positions. Carter's four years in the White House have included one move after another to deregulate some of the major in-

dustries in the U.S.: gas in 1977, oil beginning in 1979, the trucking industry and railroads in 1980, and there's talk of deregulation in the coal industry. Reagan is also a strong supporter of deregulation. He wants limited governmental interference in industry. He sees their main economic problems as inadequate private investment. Deregulation to him means getting rid of regulations that discourage investments and affect profits.

Some of Reagan's sharpest criticisms of Carter and the Democrats are in the area of foreign policy. Reagan accuses Carter of not standing up to the Soviet Union; he holds strongly to the position that the Soviet Union is the greatest threat to world peace today. However the gap between the two candidates is not so great. Both Carter and Reagan viewed the Shah of Iran as America's best friend in the Middle East. Reagan thinks we should go in to Iran and get the hostages out by force; this is exactly what Carter tried to do, only the attempt failed miserably. Both agree that the U.S. has to increase its military budget and defense spending, in order to restore the U.S. image as the major military power in the world and to take a more aggressive position in its spheres of influence, particularly in the Middle East and in Central and Latin America. The real possibility of U.S. military intervention in Central America, particularly in El Salvador, shows that it is not only a Reagan administration that would order this. Whether it's Carter or Reagan, U.S. imperialism is threatened by the growing upsurge of liberation struggles in Latin America. If its vital interests are threatened, then it would intervene, no matter who was the next president.

On the Question of Puerto Rico

Despite all the attention paid to Puerto Rico earlier in the year when both parties held primaries there for the first time in the island's history, the question of Puerto Rico's status has rarely come up in the campaigns of the two candidates. But Puerto Rico is important to the U.S. ruling class, particularly because of its geopolitical relationship to Latin America. The U.S. needs Puerto Rico as a base from which to monitor the developing struggles and also as a base from which to launch a military action in defense of its interests. In addition, the inability of the current status to deal with the island's severe economic problems makes the status issue a concern of the U.S. ruling class. Thus the next president of the U.S. will be confronted with this question.

Carter and Reagan reflect little difference on the issue of Puerto Rico's future. Carter supports the status referendum slated for 1981 in which the Puerto Rican people will "choose" either statehood, commonwealth or independence. He has not yet publicly stated any preference, but there are indica-

tions that he leans towards statehood. Reagan, like former President Ford before he left office in 1976, supports the option of statehood. This is not necessarily the position of the Republican Party as a whole, and might cause friction in the party should Reagan win the Presidency. But, as we have stated many times in *Obreros En Marcha* the question of Puerto Rico's status will fundamentally be decided not by who is president or which party dominates Congress, but by which status is most advantageous to U.S. imperialism.

Thus, whomever the voters elect will make little difference in our lives. The elections are a contention between the different sectors of the ruling class. The interests of working people are not in the picture. With each presidential election, more and more people are showing their dissatisfaction by not voting. Some are beginning to challenge this charade.

The Democratic Convention Comes to NYC

In mid-August the Democratic Party will hold its National Convention in New York City. Its presence will give left and progressive forces in New York and from around the country an opportunity to expose before a national audience the electoral farce that is taking place. The Democratic Party presents itself as a party of the working people, a friend of the minorities. The organization of a Day of Protest will help to expose this image and in general expose the lack of choice we have between the two bourgeois parties.

On August 10th, many groups and thousands of individuals will protest the lack of a political program that meets the real needs of people. Most of these groups are organized into an umbrella organization called the Coalition for a People's Alter-

native in the 1980s (CPA). The CPA was formed out of several national conferences during the past year where many interest groups, community groups, unions, churches, etc., came together to talk about their dissatisfaction with the two bourgeois parties and the kind of political alternatives that could be developed to better represent the interests of the American people.

In the coalition there is also a range of political tendencies from representatives of the anti-revisionist/anti-dogmatic left to social democrats to the left-wing of the Democratic Party.

All of these groups have come together on a wide-ranging platform of demands which essentially encompasses the particular demands of each group. Besides the rally outside Madison Square Garden on August 10th, the CPA is also sponsoring a People's Convention to take place in the South Bronx on the site visited by Carter three years ago where he made empty promises of millions of dollars to revitalize the area.

An anti-imperialist contingent—the Latin American Anti-Imperialist Pro-Independence Coalition (CAIL) has formed also to participate in the "Day of Protest." CAIL is a coalition of various political organizations and solidarity groups whose purpose it is to denounce U.S. foreign policy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We in MINP-El Comité will be participating in the August 10th Day of Protest. Although we are not a part of the CPA, we have been working actively towards building CAIL and the demonstration on August 10th.

We believe that the Day of Protest will be an important exposure of the electoral charade that this country goes through every four years. We urge all our readers and friends to join us on that day in the CAIL contingent. □

First National Conference in Support of Vieques On the Left and Unity in Puerto Rico

The 1st National Conference in Support of Vieques (PENAV), which took place on March 29th at the Lawyers Bar Association in San Juan, Puerto Rico, was a very significant event. Its significance lay in what it revealed about the present state of the independence and revolutionary movement on the island: the level of division in the movement and the different concepts regarding work in united fronts.

For these and other reasons to be discussed below, we feel that the results and implications of the PENAV are still valid. This is particularly so for the progressive and solidarity movements in the U.S. that lack an understanding of the above-mentioned aspects of the Puerto Rican reality. This is why we decided to publish this article.

All the sectors of the national liberation movement in Puerto Rico agree that the struggle to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques is an integral part of the Puerto Rican's struggle for self-determination and independence. But serious differences exist among the organizations and individuals who do Vieques work about the character of that work and how it should be developed. These differences are also reflected by the organizations and individuals in the U.S. that do Vieques solidarity work. In Puerto Rico, these differences are a serious obstacle to the creation of a broad-based support movement for Vieques. Such a broad-based movement is necessary to oust the Navy from Vieques and thus advance the process of national and social liberation.

It is essential that revolutionary and progressive elements in the U.S. that do Puerto Rico solidarity work critically examine the state of the island's revolutionary movement. In this way our support can correspond to its needs and level of development. We in MINP-El Comité recognize that one of our responsibilities is to raise the level of consciousness of the Northamerican people—and in particular the working class—about the Puerto Rican struggle for liberation. This is the context for our work in solidarity with Puerto Rico. This is why it is important to examine the evaluation of the PENAV conference made by different sectors of the independence and revolutionary movement and to relate these to work in support of Vieques.

The articles in the May-June 1980 issue of *Pensamiento Crítico* (PC), and in the April-May issue of *Ira Popular*, official organ of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), entitled "National Conference in Defense of Vieques: Sectarian Organization vs.



In the United States, grass roots work is fundamental in order to create a mass movement supporting Vieques which will be based in the working class—in particular within the Puerto Rican and Hispanic communities.

Broad Front," are two of the sources that we cite in the following article. Our other sources are two members of our Central Committee that attended the PENAV and the experiences of many of our cadre in their Vieques support work in this country.

The PENAV was sponsored by the Crusade to Rescue Vieques, an organization that works mainly in Vieques; more than 700 people were present. At the conference, the Crusade presented a proposal to create a broad-based organization that would unite all the organizations and individuals willing to do Vieques support work.

It was clear to the majority of the participants of the PENAV that the Crusade's proposal was objectively an attempt to substitute or eliminate the National Committee in Defense of Vieques (CNPDV). The National Committee is composed of different sectors of the independence movement and the Puerto Rican left. It has developed the work in support of Vieques in Puerto Rico.

When people at the Conference proposed the need to discuss and revise the Crusade's proposal, the leadership of the Crusade assumed an inflexible position: the proposal had been formulated by the Crusade alone and therefore could not be discussed or changed by the people assembled.

The PC article presented the following analysis: "The Crusade's rigid position caused an immediate reaction from the vast majority of those present. After an intense debate, a vote was taken which favored further discussion of the proposal. . . . In spite of the Crusade's position and the intervention of some high-level Puerto Rican

Socialist Party (PSP) leaders (in favor of the Crusade's position, ed.) the proposal did not gain any supporters. After the time was up for the pro and con arguments, Luis Angel Torres, secretary-general of the Popular Socialist Movement (MSP) presented a compromise motion which gained the support of the absolute majority present. This motion called for the creation of a committee made up of 3 Crusade delegates and 3 National Committee delegates who would be responsible for drafting a unifying proposal for the reorganization of the National Committee into a broad-based organization."

The *Ira Popular* article presented the following analysis of the conference: "It is obvious that the PSP used its influence with various Crusade leaders to push through a proposal that would create a new Vieques support organization in Puerto Rico, ignoring the National Committee and developing parallel to it. This was unacceptable to the rest of us in Puerto Rico who have militantly supported the Vieques struggle and . . . who have participated in the different activities of the CNPDV in spite of differences we have raised in that organization. This was the basis for the alliance of those forces which opposed the Crusade's proposal. In our opinion the Crusade made a grave error. But we must also criticize and condemn the hysterical, anarchistic and abusive behavior of some of those present at the conference. We saw and heard how insulting epithets were hurled at the front table where the Vieques were seated. The Vieques left the conference thinking that they had been treated

MARCH August 10th, 1980 MARCH
to Madison Square Garden * with the
Latin American Anti-Imperialist
Pro-Independence Coalition (CAIL)

END U.S. AGGRESSION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN
INDEPENDENCE FOR PUERTO RICO,
NO TO STATEHOOD
NO U.S. INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR
END U.S. BLOCKADE AGAINST CUBA
U.S. OUT OF GUANTANAMO
U.S. NAVY OUT OF VIEQUES

* Departing point of the march to be announced. For more information call M.I.N.P.-(El Comité) 874-9162.

as enemies."

The Left and Unity in Puerto Rico

The above passage gives us a view of the high level of sectarianism which exists within the Puerto Rican left. The passage also gives us a view of the balance of forces in the left. Most of the 700 participants of the conference were not affiliated to any organization. This non-affiliated sector has become increasingly important in the independence movement as was seen by their participation in the conference, where their numbers was decisive in the approval of the compromise proposal.

We have to raise the question—what makes sectarianism and divisionism the dominant characteristics of the Puerto Rican left at this moment? Why hasn't the left been able to build the principled unity necessary to deal with the tactical-programmatic issues presented by the country's reality—for example, Vieques?

Two elements provide the answers to these questions. First, the Puerto Rican national liberation movement does not share a common vision of the revolutionary process in Puerto Rico. Thus, the different views clash on tactical issues. Second, we have to consider the collaborationist policies of certain sectors of the independence movement. Guided by the goal of gaining the support of the leaders of the colonial parties (PNP and PPD), these sectors have totally glossed over or denied the differences that exist within the revolutionary movement. This is done in the name of unity but results in the opposite—raising the level of frustration and division among the forces which honestly look for a principled unity. In this sense we agree with PC when it says: "... one can not allow the debate (over Vieques, ed.) among the advanced sectors of our people to hide the real differences which underlie such a discussion. These differences point to more fundamental differences over what is the actual state of the struggle and the level of development of the different organizations which make up the country's revolutionary movement."

Broadening the Vieques Support Work

The debate referred to by PC is the one over the different conceptions within the Puerto Rican movement on how to massify the Vieques support work. It is important to point out that although the Vieques support work has been developed in great part by independentistas, they did not announce their political beliefs at first. It was only after several years of work, particularly in Vieques, and after proving themselves to the Viequeses as individuals committed to the struggle, did the fact that they were independentistas come to light.

But let us return to the point of broadening the movement. The broadness of any front of struggle is determined by the political objectives and principles that guide it as well



as by the sectors that want to mobilize through the front. All the sectors of the Puerto Rican left agree that to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques they have to go beyond the independentista sector, which up to now has participated in and directed this work. This work has to be broadened so that large sectors of the Puerto Rican people which belong to the colonial parties but sympathize with the justice of the Viequeses' struggle would be incorporated effectively until eventually achieving the Navy's ouster.

For those that direct the Vieques support work this objective implies—when dealing with the politics that will guide the struggles' fronts—a careful analysis of the level of consciousness and organization of the masses that they want to attract and incorporate into the work. Because of this we disagree with the compañeros of PC when they maintain that "... We understand that in order to attract the hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans that belong to or sympathize with the colonial parties—but who have real contradictions with imperialism and whose level of consciousness and/or intuition tends to recognize the justice of this struggle—it is not necessary or essential to hide the anti-colonialist nature of this struggle nor beg for the support of the colonial parties' leadership ... This objective could be reached as the existing organizations, the Crusade and the National Committee in particular, overcome their sectarian subjectivity, coordinate their efforts, and implement a structure that allows them to channel the participation of the people at all levels."

Anti-imperialist work, as we understand it, is directed towards the most politically advanced sectors. We believe that the compañeros of PC are confusing two different levels of work. On the one hand there's the Puerto Rican left's need to develop independent political activities around Vieques and through these pose the issues of

anti-imperialism and independence. On the other hand, there is the problem of how to win over the broad masses of Puerto Ricans to the support of Vieques.

The strong ideological control that imperialism maintains over Puerto Ricans—which in the last few years has been reinforced by the great sums of money for food stamps and other programs designed to perpetuate this ideological dependence—is a factor that should not escape the independentistas' analysis of the reality of the Puerto Rican masses. The compañeros in PC only propose that the Puerto Rican reality is that of a colonized people and so in the Vieques support work, one has to talk about colonialism and imperialism. But they ignore the level of consciousness and organization of the Puerto Rican masses. That is why we totally agree with *Ira Popular's* position: "... Everyone recognizes the vast moral support and sympathy that the Vieques struggle has in significant sectors of our people. Our organization believes that the central task of a broad Vieques support front is to transform this sympathy and moral support into concrete and material support. One thing is how revolutionaries view the Vieques struggle and a different thing is how our people, particularly the Viequeses, view it. It's clear to us that to get the Navy out of Vieques is an integral part of the struggle to expel from our shores all the economic, political and military apparatus of U.S. imperialism and its backyard puppets. But we cannot confuse our level of consciousness with that of the masses since this could easily alienate us from them, divorcing our actions from theirs."

Vieques Support Work in the United States

Those of us in the U.S. involved in solidarity work around Vieques are faced

with a very complex reality. The discussion on broadness, on the different conceptions of developing solidarity work, on the role of Republicans and Democrats in this work, and on how to incorporate the religious and student sectors that are neither anti-imperialist nor socialist, are all part of our reality.

The existing conceptions in Puerto Rico on Vieques support work have their counterparts here in the U.S. The experiences of the solidarity movement here with Puerto Rico and other Latin American countries have shown this. We will cite some recent examples of our experiences in Vieques solidarity work.

There are still sectors in the U.S. proposing that the Vieques support movement cannot grow or meet its responsibilities without raising the struggle of Vieques as an integral part of the struggle for independence against U.S. imperialism. Other sectors maintain that support for the armed struggle is an indispensable part of education and agitation around Vieques.

These sectors separate their analysis and their work from a concrete understanding of the level of consciousness and organization of the U.S. people and the Puerto Rican community in particular. But they also confuse the responsibility of the most advanced and left sectors to develop their own independent work on the Puerto Rican national liberation struggle. In addition, they do not recognize in their practice the need to support and contribute to the development of a mass movement capable of giving the people of Vieques the political and material support that is possible and necessary.

The differences on the concepts of broadness—of participation and attitude towards the tactical fronts of struggle—are not as clearly manifested in the U.S. as in Puerto Rico. In the Vieques solidarity work here in the U.S., these debates have taken place in a roundabout way, i.e., the debate on lobbying work whose focus is to get the support on paper of "celebrities and personalities" among the politicians, the religious community, unions, etc. This has been presented as a priority area of work, counterposed to mass work in the community and with the rank and file of the institutions mentioned. Though we do not deny the importance of working with the leadership of churches, unions and others, we in MINP think that rank and file and community work is fundamental if our goal is to create a mass movement in support of Vieques among working people in general and the Puerto Rican community in particular.

As in Puerto Rico, the progressive sector in the U.S. that supports the island's independence is the guiding force of the Vieques solidarity work. Such is the case with the National Network in Support of Vieques and the N.Y. Committee in Support of Vieques. The difference lies in the fact that

through the practice of local groups, and their debates and discussions, it is clear that their priority is rank and file and community work. To achieve a movement in support of Vieques that is really broad and effective, it is indispensable to have coalitions, committees and collectives that implement their work plans with a clear understanding of the level of consciousness and organization among workers and other sectors in the U.S.

Although it is true that in Puerto Rico Vieques support is almost exclusively carried out by the left and the independence movement (as shown by the PENAV conference) the situation is different in the U.S. Here the progressive and left circles are an integral part of the structures that support Vieques, but only those sectors that historically have supported and mobilized for the Puerto Rican solidarity movement have been the back bone of support for Vieques at a national level. These forces, both political organizations and non-affiliated

individuals have been able to incorporate sectors to take up the issue of Vieques even though they have not been active around other issues related to Puerto Rico. This is seen through the resolutions and work that has been accomplished. A good understanding of the current reality in the U.S. as well as an understanding of the nature of the Vieques struggle and the kind of support work needed has been at the core of the work in the U.S.—particularly the work of the N.Y. Committee in Support of Vieques and other similar local groupings.

Our organization, MINP-El Comité, will continue its active support of the Vieques Solidarity Movement in the U.S., in particular the efforts of the N.Y. Committee. This work will be guided by the conceptions and priorities outlined above as well as by our understanding of the need to develop independent work around Vieques which addresses the broader political questions of independence, national liberation and the struggle against U.S. imperialism. □

Nicaraguan children now face a future free from hunger and ignorance.



Salute to Nicaragua

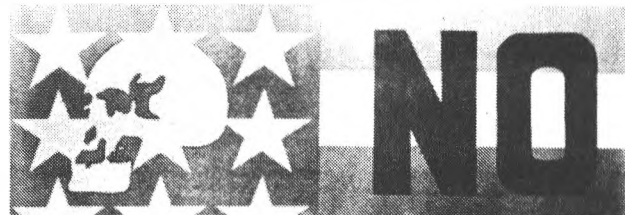
One year after the triumph of its Revolution, Nicaragua glows with the flame of social liberation. In a delicately balanced unity with liberal bourgeois forces, the Frente Sandinista de Liberación (FSLN) is beginning to lead the nation out of the underdevelopment left by more than 40 years of a dictatorship, and the devastation caused by the war.

Today 51% of the arable land and 150 businesses—the most basic sectors—are publicly owned. Workers in the public sector play a role in decision-making. Popular participation in the government is insured through the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS): Each CDS (block committee) elects a representative to a neighborhood committee which has direct links to the government ministries. Further mobilization and political education take place through the mass organizations, specifically the Nicaraguan Women's Association and the Sandinista Youth. Since over half of the population is illiterate, the national literacy campaign has become the first major task for the revolution. The FSLN has explained the importance of the campaign: "the literate person learns his intrinsic value as a person, as an historical subject ... as an individual with rights ... and obligations. ..." Internationally, Nicaragua has joined the Non-Aligned Movement and established relations with the socialist countries.

MINP-El Comité salutes free Nicaragua on its first anniversary, recognizing it, together with Cuba, as the vanguard of the Latin American Revolution. □

El Salvador:

Revolutionary Unity Prepares the Way to Victory



A LA INTERVENCION YANKI

EN EL SALVADOR

A revolutionary insurrection for the seizure of state power is only a question of time in El Salvador. In October of last year, a coup overthrew the bloody military dictatorship of Carlos Humberto Romero. The coup was backed by the 14 families which own most of El Salvador's wealth, their representatives in the military, and the U.S. State Department. But it also had the support of the progressive forces in El Salvador—the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats and the Communist Party. However, in less than two months, the contradictions within the junta formed by these two camps—the military and the progressives—exploded. The refusal of the military to let up on its repression of the mass movements and grant some concessions led the honest forces in the government to resign. A new civilian-military junta was formed with the participation of the same military men and the right-wing of the Christian Democrat Party. Similar to what happened during the Nicaraguan revolution, the middle forces in El Salvador began to join the revolutionary camp.

The First Junta Stumbles

As the crisis deepened within the civilian-military junta that replaced the Romero dictatorship, several of the progressive civilian members met with Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. They pleaded with him, as leader of the country's Catholic Church and spokesman for the millions of oppressed Salvadoreans, to call for and chair a meeting between the progressives in the junta and the hardline military men. For the civilians, the meeting represented an eleventh-hour effort to convince the military of the urgent need for reforms.

The meeting was called for January 2nd at a seminary near San Salvador, the capital. In an interview shortly before his assassination in March by right-wing ter-

rorists, Archbishop Romero described the meeting: "These colonels demonstrated their great contempt for the civilian officials who formed part of the first junta . . . They said 'the enemy is everywhere . . . It's in the so-called popular organizations . . . What do you people think, anyway? Remember that you're in the government because we put you in there . . . We don't need you for what has to be done in this country . . .'"

Shortly after this meeting, the civilian members resigned. The first junta collapsed. Salvador Samayoa, a young philosophy professor who had served as Minister of Education, joined the guerilla organization, Popular Liberation Forces-Farabundo Marti (FPL). In a clandestine press conference, he explains his motives: ". . . the key factor was coming to the realization that the regular army of El Salvador is utterly pledged to defend the interests of the oligarchy through force . . . I don't see how you can stand up to a military power unless it is with another military power . . ."

The Christian Democratic Party, which just ten years ago had been the largest mass party in the country, split over continued participation in the junta. When the second junta was formed in February, the right-wing sectors of the party joined the military as the junta's only civilian participants.

The Second Junta Drowns in Blood

The first public moves of the second junta were to announce the nationalization of the banks, revision of the labor code and implementation of an agrarian reform. But it soon revealed its true face: repression.

Using the promised reforms and the participation of the right-wing sector of the Christian Democrats as a cover, the military has escalated repression of the Salvadorean people to new levels of savagery. It has murdered 3,000 people in the six months of

its rule, outdoing the best efforts of the former military dictatorship. The Salvadorean Human Rights Commission has labeled the current repression the worst since the 1932 massacre of 30,000 peasants. The military chiefs have created a secret Supreme Center of Direction which coordinates the different repressive activities between the legal armed forces and the right-wing terrorist bands. Just as Nicaragua's ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza did in his final days, the military has made violence its reason for existence and has identified all Salvadoreans as the enemy.

Nothing illustrates best the current situation in El Salvador than the events surrounding the assassination of the Archbishop Romero. Early one morning in March, the Archbishop was saying mass in the National Cathedral when four masked men stormed in and riddled his body with bullets. A few days later, several hundred thousand people turned out for the funeral. When the papal representative began to deliver his message to the crowd, soldiers, hidden in government buildings surrounding the plaza, began to shoot. Foreign dignitaries and journalists rushed into the cathedral for cover. Members of the revolutionary organizations helped people retreat from the plaza by shooting back at the soldiers and burning parked cars. After two hours of shooting at the crowd with machine guns and fragmentation grenades the soldiers stopped. They had killed one hundred people and wounded over three hundred. In an official communique, the junta blamed the deaths on the revolutionary organizations. Twenty three bishops from Latin America present at the funeral-turned-massacre testified to the contrary.

Parallel to the government's crumbling of power and its desperate acceleration of violence has been the growth of the unity and support of the revolutionary forces.

In Unity There is Strength

Just as the second junta was being formed, the Popular Liberation Forces-Farabundo Marti (FPL) and the National Liberation Armed Forces (FARN) and the Communist Party formed a Coordinating Council; they began the process of uniting their efforts. A week later the revolutionary mass organizations—Revolutionary Popular Block (BPR), the Popular Leagues-28th of February (LP-28), the United Popular Action Front (FAPU) and the National Democratic Union (UDN) announced the creation of a Revolutionary Mass Coordinating Council (CPM). These announcements were met with jubilation by

the Salvadorean masses: In San Salvador, a city with a population of less than a million, 300,000 people turned out to celebrate the unity of the revolutionary organizations.

In early May, several professional associations, labor federations, and the progressive forces which had formed part of the first junta joined with the 4 mass organizations to form a Revolutionary Democratic Front. Led by the revolutionary forces, the Front is seen by its leadership as a "political instrument created by the Salvadorean people to advance its struggle for liberation and for the construction of a new society—just, human, democratic and independent." By mid-July, representatives of the Front were visiting the governments of Latin America and Europe to seek recognition as a government-in-exile and support for the struggle against the junta.

In recent weeks the unity of the revolutionary forces has consolidated. The people's Revolutionary Army (ERP), the second largest guerilla group in the country, joined the Coordinating Council. The member organizations then announced that

from simple coordination they were moving to a unified strategy and command. Up until then the separate guerrilla groups were able to attack military posts and convoys, take over government buildings, villages and sections of cities. Their combined numbers will now give them the strength for more open confrontations.

El Salvador: Dilemma for U.S. Strategists

As the revolutionary movement continues to gain strength, the U.S. nervously shuffles its options. Officially it has adopted a policy of supporting the "middle" forces, i.e. the Christian Democrats. The U.S. was one of the forces that pressured the second junta to promise reforms, specifically, the agrarian reform. It has twice stopped the extreme right-wing elements in the army from toppling the junta. Nevertheless it has not ignored its military options. Carter's current ambassador to El Salvador is Robert White, long-time confidant of Paraguayan dictator Stroessner and an expert in counterinsurgency tactics. The U.S. sent the junta

\$5.7 million in military hardware; it has looked the other way while illegal arms merchants in Miami have a field day arming the right-wing groups; the U.S. made sure that the junta mined large sections of the border between El Salvador and Honduras; and it has encouraged invasion sentiments among the Guatemalan army ("better to kill the revolution next door, than wait until it gets home" has been their philosophy).

Events are making it clear for U.S. strategists: the only way to stop the revolutionary forces is through armed intervention. Salvador Cayetano Carpio, Secretary-General of the FPL, spoke of this possibility: "The United States has expressed its inclination towards intervention . . . It can do so with the armies of Guatemala and Honduras or ultimately with its own troops . . . If imperialism intervenes directly, El Salvador will become a second Vietnam and a grave for the marines."

We in the United States must continue to show our support for the struggle of the Salvadorean people and demand: "NO U.S. INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR!" □

South Africa:

Workers and Students Strike Apartheid



Black workers and students are planting the seeds of unity.

After the liberation of Zimbabwe earlier this year, South Africa remains as the last stronghold of racial oppression in all of Africa. For several months in the spring, black, "colored," and Indian students went on strike against the school system that maintains the brutal inequalities of South African apartheid. This boycott has its roots in protests begun by African students four years ago.

On June 16, 1976, thousands of students sparked an uprising against the shackles of apartheid. The South African regime smashed the rebellion by indiscriminately killing protesters. In two months it murdered 700 children and jailed thousands more. Soweto, the township where the rebellion began, became ingrained in our minds as a symbol of heroism. Since then the 91% of the South African population which is victimized by apartheid gathers each June 16th to commemorate the Soweto uprising.

On June 1st of this year, the African National Congress, an organization struggling for the national liberation of South Africa, blew up three oil refineries. This act was significant because it defied the extreme security measures of the racist regime and gave impetus to the swelling popular resistance. On June 16th the regime banned all demonstrations, yet hundreds of thousands turned out to commemorate the day. Demonstrations were accompanied by strikes, boycotts and skirmishes with the police.

Below we reprint major excerpts from an article in the June issue of Southern Africa Magazine which details the background to the events of June 16th and the intensification of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

In the four years since 1976, a new annual ritual has emerged in South Africa. As the June 16 anniversary of the Soweto uprising approaches, South African blacks and their supporters around the world plan memorial rallies, while the apartheid regime braces for the possibility of a new wave of protests.

This year, though, the government hasn't had much time to worry about that possibility. Since early April it has been up to its neck in the reality of what the British weekly, the *Economist*, predicted could become "the most comprehensive racial confrontation it has yet experienced."

It all began innocuously enough back in February, when students at a single "colored" high school in Cape Town launched a campaign of protests against the "gutter education" offered in South Africa's separate and distinctly unequal black, "colored," and Indian school systems. By the time the Soweto anniversary neared, a school boycott has spread to every corner of the country, involving not only "coloreds" but African and Indian students, and not only high schools but every one of the country's non-white universities.

The student rebellion wasn't the only new wave of resistance to apartheid. It coincided with the largest and most militant surge of strikes by black workers since 1973. And in both schools and factories, renewed resistance struck a damaging blow at Prime Minister P.W. Botha's claims that apartheid reformed can mean apartheid preserved. For the high school and college students and urban factory workers who were marching and picketing represented precisely those sectors of the black population envisioned as a buffer against rebellion in Botha's "total strategy" (so-called reforms—*Ed.*)

Compounding the dilemma for Botha, the protests spread to several of the rural black "homelands," where the apartheid regime has dangled the promise of "independence" as an antidote to dissatisfaction with white supremacist rule.

Botha Policy Vacillating

Botha clearly recognizes a dilemma when he sees one. He proved it by vacillating. From one day to the next, Botha, Police Minister Louis le Grange and Minister of Colored Relations Marais Steyn bounced back and forth between conceding the existence of "justifiable grievances" and blaming the protests on "outside agitators"

"No bullets were used to quell the largely peaceful protests, though tear gas and batons were," South Africa's leading business magazine declared happily in its May 16 issue. Less than two weeks later, police opened fire with automatic weapons on a crowd of Cape Town teen-agers, killing two and seriously wounding three

others. . . .

Lessons From Soweto

While the government received praise for having learned certain lessons from the Soweto rebellion, the striking black students and workers were demonstrating that they had learned more. Most of all, they showed their understanding of the decisive importance of unity.

From the start, student boycotters in Cape Town established a collective and clandestine leadership, known as the Committee of 61, which guaranteed both coordination of activities and a degree of protection against wholesale arrest of leaders. And from the start, statements and pamphlets issued by the Committee revealed a clear-sighted analysis of how, as one pamphlet explained, "short term demands are linked up with the political and economic system of this country."

The students "short-term demands" targeted "the general low standard and poor conditions surrounding colored education." They called for an end to discriminatory funding that allots white schools three times as much revenue per student as it does "colored" schools and ten times what it does for African schools. They insisted that pay for teachers in "colored" schools be raised to equal that in white schools, that "colored" students receive free text books as white students do, that the war damage of 1976 be repaired.

In these areas Botha and Steyn were prepared to concede "legitimate grievances." They were even prepared to cough up some extra funds to improve a school system described by an official committee just six months earlier as "a mess . . . headed for collapse."

But the students were not to be bought off with promises of extra funds and study commissions. Referring back to the Soweto rebellion, they vowed "not to be fluffed a second time." . . .

"During 1976 the students revolted against an inferior education system," their representatives charged in a statement, "and similar promises—as are now being made by Mr. Steyn—were then also made that the situation would be rectified once order had been restored at the school.

"After four years nothing has been done and the situation has deteriorated instead."

At the same time, the students made it clear that they saw their struggle as inextricably bound up with the broader struggle against "apartheid and the economic system it is maintaining." Rejecting an offer of negotiations from Steyn, the Committee of 61 explained, "We cannot negotiate our principles away. Our interests are opposed to the interests of those whom Mr. Steyn represents."

In keeping with the black consciousness philosophy that helped inspire Soweto, the "colored" students explicitly rejected their special status, identifying themselves as

blacks, workers, and as implacable foes of apartheid. Ominously for the government, most of their teachers have walked off the job in support of the boycott. In addition, the British Financial Times pointed out, "colored parents appear to be firmly behind their children. Parent supported committees have been established in most major centers. In addition, the protest has spread to most Indian secondary schools and a handful of black schools, suggesting a growing identity of interest across ethnic lines."

Durban Strikes

The Durban area, known as a center of militant black union activity since a wave of strikes began there in 1973, is living up to its reputation once again. The Frametex textile mills, scene of one of the earliest 1973 strikes, recently fired 6,000 blacks who had gone out on strike.

Other strikes have hit a Cape Town clothing factory and meat packing plants. And the strikers have won firm support from the surrounding communities and boycotting students. In townships outside Cape Town, even butcher shops have joined a consumer boycott against red meat. Boycotting "colored" students have raised funds for the strikers and have also invaded white suburban supermarkets, overturning meat coolers and jamming checkout counters with dozens of loaded shopping carts.

Meanwhile, . . . recent strikes have demonstrated a growing unity among black workers across racial lines.

Much the same analysis has been offered by the boycotting students, both in their actions and in a series of pamphlets emphasizing the ties between their struggles and those of "our parents the workers."

"We must see how the fail/pass rate in schools are linked up with the labor supply for the capitalist system, how low quality school buildings are linked to the unequal allocation of funds to education for children of the oppressed and children of the oppressor, how inadequate library facilities are linked with the need to confine and limit the thoughts of the oppressed, how distorted history text books are linked with the need to obscure and propagandize against the proud history of resistance of the indigenous people against economic slavery, how, in fact, the whole educational system which we are rebelling stems from the fact that we are denied basic political power."

Several weeks and more than 1200 arrests later, the students were still in the streets, demanding both better quality school buildings and basic political rights. And in spite of the widest sweep of detentions the government has attempted since its crackdown on Black Consciousness Movement organizations in October 1977, the wave of protests still appeared to be gathering, rather than losing, momentum. □