

# OBREROS EN MARCHA

POLITICAL ORGAN OF EL COMITE M I N P

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# OBREROS EN MARCHA

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

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

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

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

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## First Assembly:

On October 27-29, our organization, El Movimiento de Izquierda Nacional Puertorriqueño (The National Puerto Rican Left Movement) held its First Assembly. The Assembly evaluated our social and organizational practice over the past 3½ years. It defined our programmatic goals and tasks, established our strategical and tactical line and elected a leadership to guide the implementation of all its mandates. The starting point for the evaluations and projections of the First Assembly was the program agreed to by the Formative Assembly of our organization held in January of 1975.

The Formative Assembly culminated the transition of El Comité—the community organization—into a Marxist-Leninist formation. That assembly approved as our long-term principal objective the destruction of capitalism and the construction of socialism in the United States. It also established as one of our central commitments our responsibility to render concrete support to the national and social liberation of Puerto Rico.

In keeping with our long-term objective, the Formative Assembly recognized the necessity of building the revolutionary party of the multinational proletariat in this country. Within this context, the Formative Assembly approved a set of minimal objectives and established as our central task the training of dialectical-materialist cadres. This definition of our central task was based on our understanding that without tested and trained cadres equipped with a consolidated understanding of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the building of a new communist party would be unrealizable.

Since January 1975, our organization has been engaged in a variety of efforts to implement this central task. The First Assembly concluded that our organization has taken a qualitative step forward in consolidating among our cadres a sound grasp of the cornerstones of Marxism-Leninism: dialectical and historical materialism. Our membership has consciously accepted materialism as its philosophical world view and dialectics as the method of studying and interpreting phenomena. Our cadres are deepening their understanding that social being determines social consciousness. This has been reflected in the pages of our principal organ of propaganda, *Obreros En Marcha*; in the ability of our cadres to sum up and evaluate critically their experiences in order to be more effective in their work; and in the positions our organization has assumed, particularly on the Puerto Rican National Question and party-building. Moreover, our application of materialist dialectics is reflected in our growing influence in mass movements, our presence nationally within the left, our work with respect to Puerto Rico, and in the increased capacity of our cadres to assume leadership in these situations.

In summing up our mass work, the Assembly concluded that we have maintained an active presence, often in a leadership role, within the struggles of the Puerto Rican communities where our organization is present. The Assembly recognized this as one of the main strengths of our work. However, it also identified as one of our weaknesses our failure to develop long-term plans for our

**EDITORIAL**

## Program for the Coming Period

community organizing. We have not yet been able to develop or consolidate organizations capable of accelerating the level of struggle and militancy of the people in these communities to fight more effectively for their demands. This planning will enable us to develop the mass organizational forms and the necessary consciousness and militancy that will facilitate effective political organizing.

In addition, we have been limited in the degree to which we have developed class-consciousness among the people. In part, this has been due to our failure to develop independent propaganda which would convey a deeper class analysis of the issues.

The First Assembly also recognized that although we have a strong presence in the democratic struggles of communities, our experience in trade union organizing is still limited, though significant advances have been made in our trade union work, reflected in our leadership roles in some of the shops where we are present. We have fallen short of establishing the correct correlation between organizing in the communities and organizing workers at the work place, at times creating a false dichotomy between the two. We now understand that the task is to establish the relationship between work shop organizing and community organizing and not to create artificial distinctions.

The First Assembly recognized the inroads its cadres have begun to make in the democratic struggles of women. This was reflected in our participation in the Latin Women's Collective, in various coalitions such as Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) and International Working Woman's Day (IWWD), and in many conferences, forums and demonstrations.

Our growth over the past few years in the area of solidarity work is perhaps most evident in the role MINP has played in its support for the national and social liberation movements of Puerto Rico and Latin America. Our deepening relationships with progressive and revolutionary forces in Puerto Rico have enabled us to more effectively provide direction to the Puerto Rico solidarity movement in the U.S. As we have grown politically, our increasing understanding and concrete application of proletarian internationalism has been reflected in our work to aid the struggles of Chile, Argentina, Nicaragua, etc. As the anti-imperialist struggles in Africa intensify, we heighten our efforts to provide aid and support to these movements. This has been reflected, particularly in relation to Southern Africa, in organizational forums, demonstrations, coalitions, etc.

The most significant conclusion of the Assembly was the clarity and agreement reached on the implications for our social practice of our position on the Puerto Rican national question which, in brief, views Puerto Ricans in this country as integrally part of the socio-economic life of the U.S. We also understand the pervasive character of racism and national chauvinism in this society and the divisive consequences that these aspects of bourgeois ideology have on the working class. In the next period, our organization will take up the task of developing organizational forms and types of political activity which will facilitate

the effective defense of the Puerto Rican national minority as well as their incorporation into the working class struggles in this country. This is an essential aspect of providing the mechanisms to bring about the voluntary unity of the working class. If we are to contribute to achieving the strategic objective of uniting the working class, particularly its most advanced elements, then we must take up the democratic rights struggles of the oppressed nationalities and raise the class content of these struggles. This task is key if the destructive consequences of racism and national chauvinism that maintain the working class divided and the Puerto Rican national minority and other oppressed nationalities subject to oppressive conditions are to be overcome.

Within this framework, our program for the next period calls for our membership—militants, affiliates and sympathizers—to continue to deepen their work among the working class and oppressed minorities, focusing particularly on Puerto Ricans and Latins. This will be undertaken based on a two-pronged strategy, organizing both in the shops and in the communities.

In the shops and service sectors, we will work with like-minded communists and advanced workers in the development of effective workers' organizations. In communities where predominantly Puerto Ricans and Latins reside, we will aim to develop organizational forms which will aid us in the effective integration of the Puerto Rican national minority into militant and conscious class struggle.

In addition, we will become more involved in the struggles of women, youth and students in defense of their democratic rights.

Besides these tasks, our organization will continue to strengthen its cadres in the areas of ideological formation and theoretical preparation building on the advances we have already made. We will continue to strengthen our ties with the revolutionary left in the U.S. Our efforts to develop these relations will be based on our capacity to reach unity on political perspective and social practice with other formations. Furthermore, consistent with the proletarian internationalist practice of our organization, MINP in the coming period will continue its work of strengthening and consolidating our relations with revolutionary and progressive forces internationally, particularly in Puerto Rico, Latin America, and the Caribbean and Africa. To orient our work in this area, MINP will study the tendencies of imperialist development and foreign policy in order to be able to render effective solidarity to those forces and countries which are in the lead in the struggle against imperialism.

In the pursuit of party building, the destruction of capitalism and the building of socialism in the U.S., the concentration of MINP in the coming period will be to consolidate its cadres ideologically, politically and organizationally, through deepening its roots within the working class, particularly within the Puerto Rican national minority. We are guided in this period by our organizational slogan—

**"FORGE THE CADRE AMONG THE MASSES"**

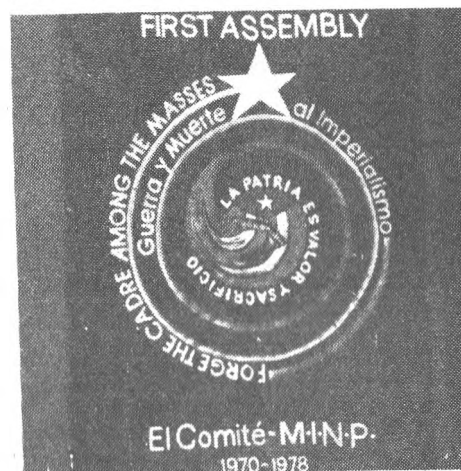
Movimiento de Izquierda Nacional Puertorriqueño



## EL COMITE-M.I.N.P. COMPLETES ITS FIRST ASSEMBLY

Lora left the United States a year and one-half ago to integrate directly into the revolutionary process in Puerto Rico. During this period, the comrade maintained his position of leadership within the organization. With the convening of the First Assembly, however, the organization officially accepted Compañero Lora's resignation from El Comité-M.I.N.P.

The dedication expressed the organization's deep appreciation of the contributions Compañero Lora has made in the past 8 years, both to El Comité-M.I.N.P., in particular, and to the revolutionary process in the U.S. in general. While the dedication emphasized Federico's key role within El Comité, it also made it clear that Federico's contributions could not be separated from the overall growth and development of El Comité, first as a community organization and then as M.I.N.P., a Marxist-Leninist



formation. Federico himself made this point during his speech to the Closing Session when he said: "I understand that all you have said are my contributions to El Comité...are in reality contributions from all of you to me. In the process, you made of me a better person, you made of me a revolutionary...."

The program continued with the introduction of 7 members of the new Central Committee, including First Secretary, Victor M. Quintana, and Sub-Secretary, Frank Vergara.

During the course of the program, the names were read and thanks given to all those organizations and individuals who had submitted solidarity statements to the Assembly. Several of the messages were read, in particular the message from Miguel Cabrera, a Teamsters organizer in Puerto Rico, presently being framed for the murder of corporate lawyer, Alan H. Randall. A statement of solidarity was also presented by Miguel Bacz, a member of the Central Committee of the Movimiento Socialista Popular (M.S.P.).

On November 4th, our organization completed its First Assembly by inviting all of its membership, friends and comrades to attend the Assembly's Closing Session. The main purpose of this session was to present a general summary of our work in the past three years, an outline of our new political program, and to introduce a representative body of the organization's newly-elected leadership. November 4th marked the culmination of the formative stage of El Comité-M.I.N.P. At the same time, it set the base for the next stage in our organization's growth and development, a stage characterized by our slogan, "Forge the Cadre Among the Masses." This is the conception that will guide our organization in the next period.

The following paragraphs are taken from the Welcoming Message to the Assembly by the outgoing Central Committee:

"...In October of 1977, our Central Committee evaluated the situation of our organization and made the decision that we begin the process of preparation that would culminate in our organization's First Assembly. In February of this year, we entered into the pre-Assembly period, a period of intense study and discussion throughout the entire organization. At the same time we continued to share in the lives and struggles of the people in our work places and in the communities where we lived.

In these past nine months we have evaluated and summed up the work and experiences of El Comité-M.I.N.P. since our Formative Assembly in January, 1975. Based on this evaluation, and in accordance with our understanding of the national and international situation today, we have determined the program, strategy and tactics to guide our organization for the next period of time.

The period since our Formative Assembly has been a period of growth and maturation for our organization, a period in which we have broadened our ranks and increased our respect and influence among the masses. All present here today are witnesses to an event of great significance for our organization, for today we begin a new stage in which we will deepen our integration among the struggles of the working class and oppressed sectors as well as further contribute to the process of building a revolutionary party of the Proletariat in this country. It is this party that will lead the working class and its allies to the only political alternative that upholds their interests and aspirations: socialism...."

The program of the day began with the dedication of the assembly to our outgoing First Secretary, Federico Lora. Compañero

In February, 1978, the first issue of a new theoretical journal appeared in Puerto Rico, *Pensamiento Critico*. Its purpose was and is to be a forum for comradely ideological debate on the key questions facing the revolutionary, independence and workers movements in Puerto Rico. Since that time, our organization has taken some responsibility for distributing *Pensamiento Critico* in this country as well as contributing several articles. Angel Agosto, editor of the journal and a former member of the Political Commission of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party was invited to the Closing Session and asked to utilize the opportunity to talk about present conditions in Puerto Rico. Agosto's presentation focussed on an economic-political analysis of Puerto Rico today.

There were several cultural performances during the activity. The first was the reading of a poem by Karen Slotnick, "For El Comité-M.I.N.P. on its First Assembly." The first verse follows:

"It's autumn and the earth is turning back into itself

for rest and renewal.

But for us,

this is the first day of spring,  
a new beginning in a universe  
of new beginnings...

A cultural group from the Union of Democratic Filipinos (K.D.P.) sang two songs, one from the revolutionary struggle in the Philippines, and the other composed by the group itself about the role of the masses in history. In addition, a movie was shown, "Rompiendo Puertas" (Break and Enter), which filmed the struggle of the squatters movement on Manhattan's Upper West Side in the early 1970s. It was this movement that in the summer of 1970 inspired a group of young Latins to form an organization dedicated to helping the community fight for its rights. This was the beginning of El Comité.

The final presentation of the day was the message from the Central Committee, which summed up the work of M.I.N.P. since its Formative Assembly and established the direction of its work for the next period.

The activity concluded by the singing of "La Borinqueña" (the national anthem of Puerto Rico) and the singing of "The International."

The following pages are excerpts from the presentations made at the Closing Session. Complete versions of the Dedication, Presentation from the outgoing First Secretary, and Message from the Central Committee will be available at the end of December in pamphlet form. The pamphlet will include both the English and Spanish translations. Angel Agosto's speech will be available in a separate pamphlet.



## FIRST ASSEMBLY DEDICATED TO OUTGOING LEADER

We have dedicated this First Assembly of our movement to our outgoing First Secretary, Federico Lora, in recognition and revolutionary appreciation of the many contributions that he has made to our organization as a whole, and to each one of us as individuals. But his contributions have been made not only to the development of our movement, M.I.N.P., but also to the entire revolutionary process in this country, as well as in Puerto Rico where he is presently living and struggling.

This assembly will culminate the formative stage of El Movimiento de Izquierda Nacional Puertorriqueño and will commence what we understand will be another period of qualitative growth and consolidation for our organization. It is important to point out that this entire period of formation was led by our First Secretary, comrade Federico. Secondly, it is a time when our First Secretary will officially depart from our organization and from the revolutionary process in this country, to continue and deepen his revolutionary activity in Puerto Rico...

We are not here concerned with elevating him above the organization, the masses, or the period in which he lived and struggled in this country. Our intentions are the complete opposite. Our intentions are to place him within a historical moment, a determined time and space in which he acted and, based on an understanding of that historical moment, analyze his contributions in order to add to the arsenal of knowledge and experiences from which our organization can draw...

His first contribution was as...originator and driving force behind the formation of this new organization in the summer of 1970 called El Comité...The type of organization that Federico understood to be necessary was one that would be linked to the Puerto Rican community and which would struggle in defense of its interests. From the very first days of our formation, he pushed for members to incorporate into the struggles for better housing, education and health services.

One of the major strengths that began to characterize Federico's work was his ability to make the necessary adjustments in his political conceptions in order to bring his view into correspondence with changing reality. This was to prove crucial during the development of the organization's newly-awakened national feelings. His promotion of nationalism within the organization was a positive step forward in the political development of El Comité. Yet after a time, these nationalist tendencies developed to the point of reaching extreme levels.

When Compañero Federico came into contact with Marxism-Leninism, he soon learned that the future of the Puerto Rican people, of the exploited and oppressed and, consequently, of our organization, lay with the study, acceptance, internalization and application of this science. Convinced of the tremendous value of this science, he gathered the process of transforming our community organization into a Marxist-Leninist formation.

The underdeveloped ideological formation of El Comité created serious problems within the organization. Of particular importance was the danger that in our new-found enthusiasm to become Marxist-Leninist, we would liquidate our revolutionary nationalism. This liquidation was represented by the dogmatic application of Marxism to the national question of Puerto Ricans here, particularities of culture, language, etc. Having developed an

advanced understanding that these conceptions were incorrect, comrade Federico was able to lead a struggle against these ideas, both within the organization and outside. At the same time, Federico articulated the incorrectness of forces who described Puerto Ricans in the U.S. as being part of a divided nation.

" " "

Another one of Federico's contributions is his example of revolutionary morality. Throughout the process of developing our organization, our Compañero First Secretary has proven his capacity to lead. His vision, humanity, commitment and sacrifice have been an example to us all. He has always shown sincere respect and love for the masses and his comrades...

Throughout the years in our organization, he has maintained a critical attitude toward himself and a critical attitude to the organization and the membership.

" " "

A fourth contribution is his defense of the principles of Marxism-Leninism...At a time when Marxism-Leninism was beginning to again spread in this country, the defense of this science became a task of immeasurable significance...

This our Compañero did against the attacks of the opportunists, the ultra-nationalists, the dogmatists, the revisionists, the ultra-leftists and the economists. Our organization has always been in the forefront of the defense of the principles of Marxism-Leninism in this country. Compañero Federico has been the guiding element of this process. He has become known both in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico for his consistent and principled defense of Marxism-Leninism. This has won him the respect and admiration of many true revolutionaries and the dislike of those that claim to be revolutionaries, but who refuse to purge themselves of those conceptions, attitudes and work methods that are alien to Marxism-Leninism.

Those who recognize that revolutions involve the transformation of individuals, or that see the need to become the new men and women that Che Guevara spoke about, have respect and admiration for Comrade Federico Lora and recognize in him a true revolutionary and a real comrade. Those who refuse to change, who refuse to revolutionize their lives and give up backward views, see in him a class enemy.

We of the developing Movimiento de Izquierda Nacional Puertorriqueño see in you, Compañero Federico, a guiding example. You have molded the path for our organization to follow in the many long and difficult years to come, before we reach our final victory...

**Federico Lora**  
**Founder of El Comité M.I.N.P.**  
**— Exemplary defender of —**  
**Marxist-Leninist principles**

Banner dedicating Assembly to Compañero Lora



## Outgoing First Secretary Leaves. Says Goodbye To Organization

From the bottom of my heart, I thank each cadre, affiliate, sympathizer and the honored guests with us here today. This day, and this entire Assembly period, will forever be remembered. I hope that I never fail any of you and most important, that I never fail the ideas that you represent.

For me it is a very difficult moment in our all-embracing moments to build a society free of all forms of exploitation. I know that the intentions of the dedication are motivated by the confidence you have in me provided by knowledge and experience. But I also know that you have the understanding that no one individual is above the collective effort and that in essence, we, the individuals, are nothing but a reflection of the complexities that lie behind all human efforts. Nevertheless, even with this understanding I know I do not merit the attributes presented to me today.

In this respect, I understand that everything you said were my contribution to El Comit e and to the revolutionary process in general are, in reality, contributions from all of you to me. In the process, you made of me a better person, you made of me a revolutionary. Furthermore, your efforts during these eight years not only had profound effects upon me, in the transformation of me the individual, but also upon my family. Through your work you have been able to transform many others as well. . .

At the end of the internal aspects of this First Assembly, the cadre of El Comit e-M.I.N.P. placed upon me my last task as a member of the organization. I was to summarize those days of very heated debate, those days which were characterized by respect for differences and the drive of wanting to come out with one whole organization, capable of moving the struggle forward. As I began to think in terms of making the summary, I remembered that the laws of historical materialism have taught us that learning is a process in which the present conditions are determined by previous experiences, by social developments in the historical context. In this respect, it is crucial that we build upon those experiences, internalizing the lessons, the achievements and the errors. . .

As we know, there is a current, a trend, a thought, a view among Marxist-Leninists that holds in different degrees that Marxism-Leninism is a science so complex and so profound that it can only be really internalized by the intellectual elite or by those with a highly developed cultural or intellectual background. To some of us, only engaged in the struggle for some two or three years or



Compa ero Federico Lora addresses the Assembly

even for much longer periods of time, this view might seem an American monopoly, a view that only exists in this country. But it is not an American monopoly nor is it a question of recent development. It has been a question of long intense struggle among Marxists, among Marxist-Leninists, throughout an entire historical period, going as far back as the 19th century.

How does this present and historical struggle relate to our organization, relate to El Comit e, to the individuals that make it up and the experiences we had? Understanding the crucial importance of studying our history, of building on our history, I remember many different things about El Comit e and its people during its first eight years. . . How can I forget the grandfather within the organization, who came to El Comit e in its first days and who today is recognized by the membership as one who exemplifies the firmness and integrity that defines a communist—a person who has received awards from revolutionaries and communists outside this country precisely for those characteristics as well as a willingness to work and a willingness to struggle in a principled manner. How can I forget the comrade also with us here today, who by the time he was 26 years old, had been in prison 32 times? How can I forget the boldness, the courage that this individual

brought into the formation of El Comit e? Today he probably would not define himself, and I probably would not define him as a communist, but I would define him as a worker and a respected man in his community who knows what is happening. A man who because of those 32 times in jail barely learned to read basic words, yet today is struggling, and developing, and studying Marxism-Leninism. How can I forget his contribution to this organization?

How can I forget a 17-year old youngster, high school graduate from the South Bronx, a black Puerto Rican, who in her first day of college, and the very first time that we met, stressed to me that she wanted to be a doctor. How can I forget that today we find her in a school of medicine where she dedicates much of her time to the study of job and health conditions of workers at the plant? How can I forget the first experience of one of our leading members who went to a plant, was elected to be a representative on the negotiating committee for the striking workers, immediately let the bosses know he was a communist and was fired two days later. How can I forget the efforts of rectification of that individual?

How can I forget the efforts of an individual who, when we first came into contact with her, was a hippie on her way to becoming a yuppie? How can I forget that today this individual is known as a communist by her fellow workers, is opposed by the bosses, is opposed by the shop's backward union, and yet was unanimously elected as shop steward? How can I forget her? How can I forget an individual who was pushed out of school in the ninth grade and today leads discussion groups on the philosophical works of Konstantinov, Lenin, and Harnecker? How can I forget this individual in the formation of the organization and in the formation of all of us?

Are these the intellectual elites? Are these the people with highly developed cultural backgrounds? Is the experience and history of these people something separate from their development as revolutionaries, as communists? Weren't these people the "advanced workers" that many today talk about in the abstract but have little understanding of what it means in the practice? Aren't these people today known and respected as Marxist-Leninists? Yes, they are.

These experiences prove once again the validity of Marxism-Leninism as a science not outside the realm of understanding of workers, but in fact as a science which guides and is in the direct service of the working people, the working class.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE



Message from the Central Committee delivered by First Secretary of M.I.N.P., Victor M. Quintana,

Compa eros and compa eras,

In this next period, we will continue our efforts to advance the process of forming a revolutionary party of the proletariat in this country. All our work will take place within this context. For our organization, this will mean deepening our roots within the working class, consolidating our presence within the democratic struggles of the oppressed Puerto Rican National Minority and uniting, within the context of social and political unity, with other Marxist-Leninists.

We take up these tasks from the premise that our work must be guided by the need to unite the working class of this country, for we understand that this is an indispensable condition for the eradication of capitalist exploitation.

In the United States the voluntary unity of the working class assumes particular characteristics and importance due to the historical development of the U.S. as the world's foremost imperialist power. Within this context and as a cornerstone of the strategy of imperialism, the division of workers and peoples of the world insures the continuous dominance of U.S. imperialism. Within the U.S. itself, racism and national chauvinism—pervasive aspects of bourgeois ideology—promote rivalry and foster divisions within the working class and present obstacles in the struggle to build the necessary unity of workers and oppressed sectors of U.S. society.

The effects of racism and national chauvinism pervade the ranks of the masses and of its most progressive and leading sectors. From a historical perspective, these aspects have influenced the social practice of North-American radicals and communists to the extent that open manifestations of racism and national chauvinism, or its counterpart paternalism, are all too often present within the ranks of those who are otherwise defenders of the rights and interests of workers and oppressed peoples. As a consequence, communists and progressive elements

from the oppressed nationalities have too often rejected participation in formations composed predominantly of white northamerican communists. The advanced elements of the oppressed nationalities have for the most part resorted to organizing themselves in their own particular forms of national and racial formations to develop their political work. To transform this situation in which racism and national chauvinism are the principal conditioning elements in the contradiction between national and multinational forms of organization, it is essential that, within the context of social practice, we develop the organizational forms and political activities that will contribute to overcoming this present limitation. These organizational forms and political activities will provide the mechanisms for integrating the oppressed minorities into the class struggle as well as furthering the process toward the building of the revolutionary party of the proletariat.

If strides are to be made in the revolutionary process in this country, then the strategic significance of the national minorities must be internalized by the progressive and revolutionary forces as well as an understanding of the grip that racism and national chauvinism have over the hearts and minds of a significant sector of Northamerican white workers.

The divisions that exist among U.S. workers along racial and national lines constitute the most debilitating and self-destructive divisions within the class. These divisions are created, nurtured and maintained by the consciously-institutionalized aspects of bourgeois ideology in North American society. Failure to understand in the social practice the divisive role that racism and national chauvinism play within the working class and the impact they have on



the lives of the oppressed nationalities has led communist and progressive forces to foster paternalism or white skin privilege positions among white workers, and to promote narrow nationalism and inflated racial or national pride among the oppressed nationalities. Communists cannot combat the question of racism and national chauvinism with moralism but rather have the responsibility to address the question of unity by *confronting* the divisions and particularities that exist among the class. Consequently, in order to set the basis for the voluntary unity of the working class, communists must address the particularities among the national minorities—their particular histories, problems and concerns.

Our organization, El Comité-M.I.N.P., has to be viewed within this context. El Comité arose as a response and a product of the spontaneous struggles of the Puerto Rican and Latin communities in New York City to confront their oppressive conditions. Throughout the eight years of its existence, our organization has attempted to grapple with the questions and conditions facing Puerto Ricans in their daily social existence in this country. In the process of our development, and as a direct result of our experience and the study of Marxism-Leninism, we have come to understand that the presence of nearly two million Puerto Ricans in the U.S. is a direct result and manifestation of decades of imperialist exploitation of Puerto Rico which today continues to be one of the few remaining colonies in the world.

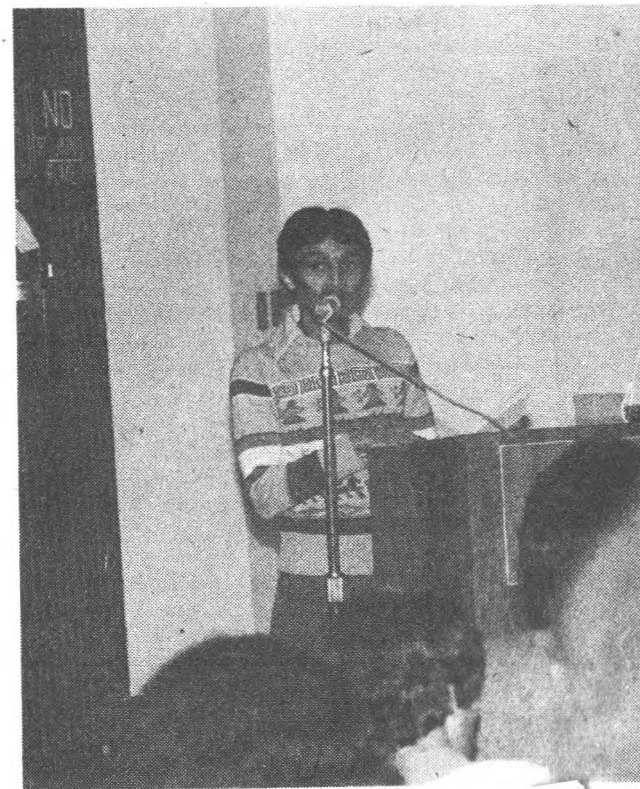
Puerto Ricans were forced to abandon their land of origin and migrate to this country as a result of imperialist exploitation. Once here they have developed under the socio-economic structures of this country with its particular social, political and economic dynamics. For the Puerto Ricans who have lived in this country for years, with the passage of time, there has been a transformation of their social consciousness. They have incorporated as part of their way of being the proletarian and dominant cultural elements of U.S. society and have redefined their nationality within a new social reality. Predominantly working class, the Puerto Rican community in this country is confronted by conditions of social oppression (high levels of unemployment, inadequate housing, health and educational services etc.) and the pervasive effects of racism and national chauvinism. This has led to the strengthening of the sense of nationality, national identity, and national solidarity as Puerto Ricans. These factors cannot be negated if we are to understand and address the relationship between this sense of nationality and the reality under which Puerto Ricans must live and survive in this country. Most Puerto Ricans in this country are workers but they are Puerto Rican workers with particular concerns and problems. This is important to understand not only with respect to Puerto Ricans, but also with respect to other oppressed nationalities in this country if the voluntary unity of the working class is to be achieved.

Compañeros/as: If we can speak of one major accomplishment which our organization can claim to have achieved in the process of our First Assembly, it has been that our organization has been able to grapple with and reach clarity and agreement on the implications of our theoretical formulations on the Puerto Rican national question. This achievement marks for us an important ideological and political victory, and surely an organizational victory for our movement. Moreover, it manifests, on the one hand, that we have been able to overcome and understand the incorrect formulations put forward by those forces who, from a narrow nationalist perspective, have viewed the Puerto Ricans in this country only from the perspective of Puerto Rico. These forces have over-emphasized national differences, fanned chauvinism and raised nationality over and above the class struggle. On

the other hand, our victory manifests that we understand that we have to translate into social practice the need to develop organizational forms and types of political activity which will facilitate and, allow the effective incorporation of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. to the proletarian struggle in this country. As we discussed in our dedication of the Assembly, this view combats those who negate the particularities of the Puerto Rican national minority under the umbrella of viewing everything from the perspective of the class question. In the practice, what these forces do is blatantly liquidate the relationship between the struggles of the oppressed nationalities for their democratic rights and the struggles of the working class. As a result, these forces are always addressing the question of uniting the working class from an abstract perspective and not by confronting the objective divisions that divide the class.

In the next period, our organization will concentrate on the further articulation and deepening of our understanding of the correct relationship between the legitimate demands of the oppressed Puerto Rican National Minority for their democratic rights and the overall class struggle. More fundamentally, we will direct our efforts toward the translation of these theoretical premises into our social/political practice.

As defined by our First Assembly in its approved objectives for the coming period, we will continue our organizational efforts at the point of production and overall trade union work, and the further development of our organization's presence within the Puerto Rican and Latin communities. In addition, our work in the communities will for the first time take up the question of organizing among and addressing the questions and problems confronting youth. In all our work, we will attempt to overcome the false and incorrect dichotomy between the struggles of the oppressed national minorities and the working class as a whole. Concretely establishing this interrelationship will be the basic premise which will guide our social practice. . . .



The representative from the M.S.P. presents message of solidarity to the Closing Session.



...The magazine arises during a time of crisis within the revolutionary movement in Puerto Rico, one which is affecting practically all of its organizations. It is a theoretical/ideological crisis, a crisis of political practice, of leadership, and consequently, a crisis of organization. It encompasses the most detestable forms of political practice and personal subjectivity, combined with growing display of arrogance and resentment among those sectors who for a long time had been the most influential in the Puerto Rican left.

The class structure in Puerto Rico, deformed and transformed by an economic penetration of enormous magnitude on the part of imperialism defines the character of the crisis in which our revolutionary movement actually finds itself. The almost absolute control that the imperialist bourgeoisie has exercised for the last four decades upon the means of production on the island has had as one of its consequences the development of a petit-bourgeoisie of a relatively high magnitude numerically and with objective antagonistic contradictions with the bourgeois monopolist.

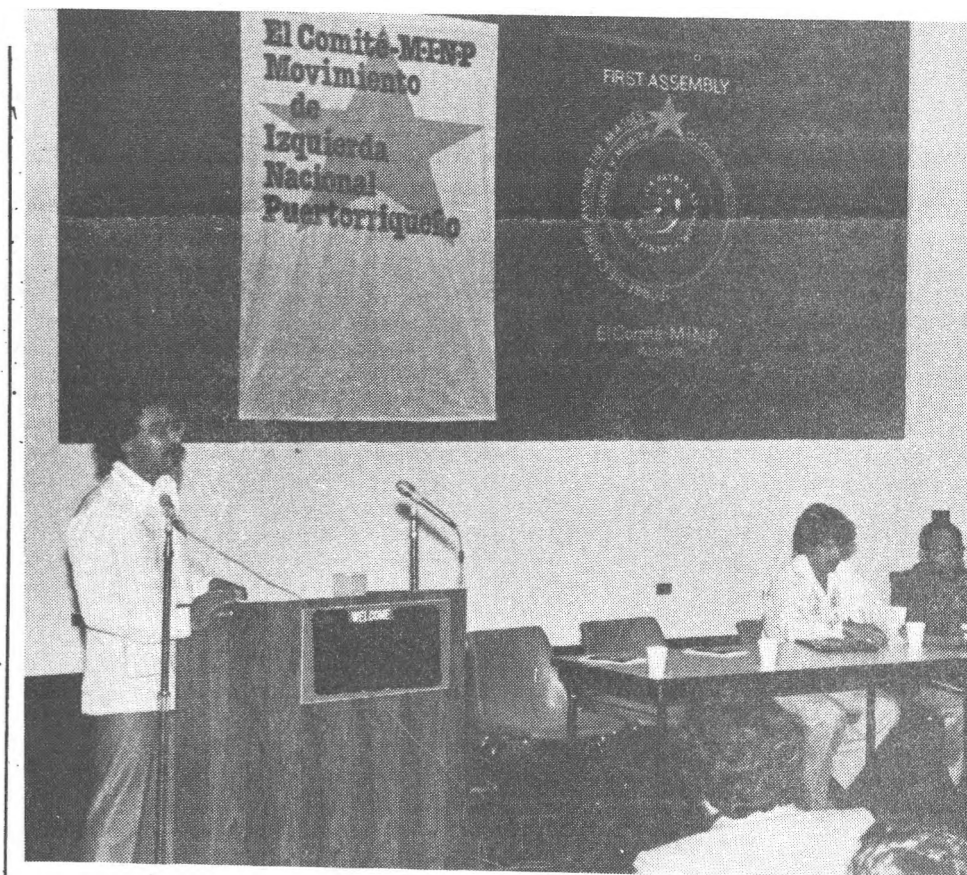
This has reflected itself within the revolutionary movement, as much in its social composition, as by the character of its conceptions of struggle, its political/strategic aspirations, and its attitudes and work methods, all conditioned by petit-bourgeois ideology. While the present independence and socialist movement was increasing its contact with the workers' movement and deepening its study of Marxism-Leninism (principally during the late sixties), diverse ideological differences developed among the different organizations who fundamentally engaged in internal struggle and struggles with the various other formations. . . . We give great political importance to the progressive nationalist currents within the revolutionary movement.

...In countries like ours in which, in the words of Mariategui, "the idea of nation has not yet fulfilled its trajectory nor exhausted its historical mission," nationalism can express projections not only progressive but socialist as well.

From the political/strategic perspective, this understanding is crucial since the nationalist slogans "in general" seek to unite the workers and bourgeoisie within a determined country, while maintaining them separate from the workers of other countries. Revolutionary nationalism, on the other hand, is internationalist. It understands as its own the political and social claims of other oppressed people in the struggle against a common enemy, the imperialist, trans-

## Editor of PENSAMIENTO CRITICO

### Addresses Closing Session



Compañero Angel Agosto

national bourgeoisie and its local allies, the creole and intermediate bourgeoisie.

...Translating the Leninist formula to our concrete reality—*each concrete national culture, as an oppressed nation, is national in its form and socialist in its content*—the national independence of Puerto Rico is the vessel of socialism. This is of vital importance for two reasons. 1) as socialism is the essence (content) of national independence, the slogans of the proletariat must be those which lead the independence/social process and 2) as the national question is not yet being taken up by the proletariat (since it has not yet achieved consciousness that independence is a part of its class interests), we must try to maintain the burning flame of the progressive-nationalist aspect of our emancipatory struggle among the broadest popular sectors possible, including particularly the petit-bourgeoisie.

...the progressive national struggle against imperialist aggression must be placed firmly within the context of the political program of the proletariat as this struggle forms part of its long range demands for social revindication. It is, in addition, a point of convergence of the objectives of the rest of the oppressed sectors of the country.

...Statehood would be the culmination of a period of imperialist penetration in P.R. and the beginning of another phase even more ferocious and destructive in terms of our collective values and personality.

...The fundamental objective of our revolutionary movement is the radical transformation of the present social, political and economic order of things, so as to allow for the reorganization of society under the supreme control of the proletariat and in accordance with its class interests. Such a thing is inconceivable in Puerto Rico without first conquering our national independence. It is in this sense that the objective of independence marches alongside and cannot be differentiated from the objective of socialism. No *real* political independence is possible without socialism and socialism is not possible unless we have total political sovereignty.

...Now, in spite of the serious threat which statehood represents to our country, and the fact that this is the platform of the political party which at present controls the colonial administration, we do not understand statehood to be the predominant alternative being considered within the power spheres of U.S. imperialism. At the present

time, we are lacking the objective information that would indicate to our revolutionary movement with precision which are the economic forces and class sectors that are supporting each of the different alternatives to status. We can state, however, that the economic crisis and the political bankruptcy facing the commonwealth is forcing Washington and the intermediate bourgeoisie of Puerto Rico to search for new alternatives. As far as the political power game in P.R. is concerned, it is evident that the annexationist trend is gaining even greater support among sectors of the population.

... In P.R. unique political and economic conditions can be observed which are different from any other colonial systems of the past. More than half of the population of our country depends on funds that come directly from imperialism, through the Food Stamps Program and other federal programs. They have created an ever greater parasitic mass of individuals who have developed a constantly growing dependency on imperialism. This has allowed the monopoly bourgeoisie to, on the one hand, avoid any qualitative change of the economic crisis of the ELA into a social and political crisis, and on the other, it has permitted the PNP to, in the meanwhile, cash in on the crisis in favor of its own immediate

political interests.

... The Marxist Puerto Rican left has been alert to the danger that the annexationist menace represents, but it is cautious in the sense that their priority consists in establishing the foundations for the construction of the party of the proletariat which will permit our class to assume (when the time comes) the leading role of the overall revolutionary movement.

... Puerto Rico is a classical colony in its form and an industrial colony in its content. Its atypical character is determined by the high level of development that certain sectors of our productive forces have achieved. One of the political-strategic consequences is that, as opposed to other anti-colonial and national liberation struggles, in Puerto Rico we find that the working class is the class called upon to lead the national liberation struggle and constitutes the principal force in the struggle.

It is this reality that determines that the Puerto Rican national liberation struggle must flow into an uninterrupted struggle towards socialism.

... The political program of the proletariat of present day Puerto Rico cannot have the same emphasis as that of the proletariat of other colonial countries, in which

the socialist revolution was conceived as the product of a series of historical epochs. This forced the Marxists of those countries to concentrate during specific periods on the development of the struggle for independence and national liberation,

... From a judicial-political viewpoint, we are a classical colony in our external form. There is no fundamental aspect of our political structure that is not controlled directly or indirectly by the power structures of US imperialism. ... On the other hand, the working class, which is the only class with the potential to bring about any revolutionary change, has not yet achieved minimal class consciousness and lacks the ideological unity in order to take on the task. This deficiency is also present in other classes and oppressed sectors of society.

... Within the contradiction classical colony-developed capitalism the last is dominant. This reality assigns an hegemonic role to the political program of the proletariat. ... The objective conditions of the country leave no other alternative than the development of a struggle for independence that carries within it a socialist program in one inseparable process.

## MIGUEL CABRERA: FRAME—UP CONTINUES

The orchestration of the frame-up of Miguel Cabrera continues. Just a year ago Cabrera, a militant labor leader and socialist, was accused of murdering Allan H. Randall, a CIA-linked corporate lawyer who specialized in labor relations.

The police's attempts to carry out the frame-up have been conspicuously incompetent. Initial proof of Cabrera's complicity was the alleged fingerprint in a second communique issued by the "comandos obreros", the group that took responsibility for the execution of Randall. But later the story was changed so that the fingerprint appeared on the first communique issued by the commando group.

The key witness in the case is Angel M. Hernandez Tanco, alias El Negro Tanco, who mysteriously escaped from a maximum-security prison shortly after the death of Randall. Tanco, who has confessed to three homicides, two attempted homicides, five robberies and five cases of illegal possession of firearms, admitted that during his "escape" he met with police and representatives from the district attorney's office to discuss his cooperation in the Cabrera frame-up.

Just last month, Tanco's cooperative efforts bore fruit. For all the crimes listed above, to which he pleaded guilty, he received a sentence which gives him parole after eight years.

In early November, the defense for Miguel Cabrera and two others also accused of Randall's murder, was denied a motion challenging the jury selection process. In Puerto Rico a judge selects jury commissioners—"respected community leaders"—who then choose prospective jurors. This process, the defense argued, results in a non-representative jury and therefore an unfair trial. The defense allegation was substantiated by one jury commissioner, who declared that he did not select independence individuals for they "create problems for the government," nor people under 25 for they are "insolent." A social psychologist, testifying on behalf of the defense, presented the results of a study on the jury selection process which showed that those picked for jury duty were, in most cases, male, college-educated and in the higher income bracket.

Notwithstanding all of these arguments, the judge denied the defense motion and set January 22 as the date for the beginning of Miguel's trial.

## ARGENTINIAN MOTHERS DEMAND NEWS OF THEIR CHILDREN

"We are a small part of a great number of mothers of those known as the "DISAPPEARED," those young people who are kidnapped, and then, are unaccounted for. It has already been a long time since we pledged ourselves to find our daughters and sons. We have scoured all the official agencies without obtaining any positive result and have exhausted all the legal channels within our reach. Our strength weakens with this prolonged anguish, but our hearts push us forward day after day."

These are the words of that small group of Argentinian mothers who today are struggling desperately to uncover the whereabouts of their children who have been dragged to their death by the repressive forces of Argentina.

### A BRIEF HISTORY

At the beginning of 1977, they began the struggle. Silently, but with great firmness, "We began to meet in the month of May to ask for an audience with President Videla (...). The first time, there were 14 of us, so innocent that we met on a Saturday without realizing that the president isn't in his office on that day. After, we began to meet on Fridays, and now, it is every Thursday," one of them said. Since then, every Thursday, the Plaza de Mayo, right in the center of the city of Buenos Aires, is transformed into the

scene of a silent demonstration of women. At 4:00 they gather, as in a ritual, their hair covered with white kerchiefs, and on their breasts, little signs which read, "where is my son," "let me see my daughter again," etc. The military disdainfully calls them "the crazy women of the Plaza de Mayo," with the same scorn that they feel towards the life of the children of the people.

And yes, these women are crazy, but crazy with anguish, pain, uncertainty. The repressive forces have entered their homes, carried away their children, husbands, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. Without any explanation, violently they destroy everything in their way, spreading the terror which has been trying to establish itself as a macabre institution in Argentina since the military coup of March 24, 1976.

"We cannot understand what motivates the authorities of our country to deny us the right that our loved ones be given due process of law, deny us the knowledge of how and where they are, and most importantly, of whether they are alive or dead," says one of the mothers in a letter. Because after the abduction, comes the silence. The military authorities deny due process of law, and they do not respond to the writs of habeas corpus which the families present. They don't say where the kidnapped are taken or what they are doing with them. And the fathers and mothers, the spouses and children, scour the precincts, the military garrisons, and the courts in search of some sign to nurture the

hope that their loved ones are still alive in some dark and hidden place in the country.

The mothers have said very clearly, "Now, the eyes of the world are focused upon this plaza." And it is so, because they, with their perseverance, gather in the Plaza every Thursday, even with strong rain and cold weather, even when the repressive forces had threatened them and dispersed them the last time, even when some of them had been abducted. In spite of everything, they have succeeded in attracting international attention for their movement.

The defamation campaign which the government has launched against them calling them subversive and anti-patriotic, has been worthless. Such a repressive government can not tolerate the crimes it commits to be thrown in its face. And less still, can it tolerate that the international press becomes the voice of the silent, firm, and unhalting action of the mothers of the disappeared.

They are ready for anything. They were present in the Plaza denouncing the infamous repression unleashed upon the Argentinian people when Terence Todman visited Argentina in August, 1977. They made themselves heard when Cyrus Vance came to Buenos Aires, carrying with him a list of 7,500 of the disappeared which he presented to the military government. They show up at marches and official ceremonies and in the religious ministries. They are everywhere demanding justice for their children. They have transformed themselves into the shadow





Madres argentinas en demostración en La Plaza de Mayo

hicieron escuchar cuando Cyrus Vance viajó a Buenos Aires llevando consigo una lista de 7,500 desaparecidos que presentó al gobierno militar, aparecen en los desfiles y actos oficiales, en los oficios religiosos, están en todas partes reclamando por sus hijos. Se han convertido en la sombra del régimen, la sombra de los miles de desaparecidos, muertos y torturados.

La represión que les ha quitado sus hijos también las golpea a ellas. Bástenos un sólo y significativo ejemplo: El 8 de diciembre de 1977, alrededor de 13 personas fueron secuestradas en el atrio de una iglesia a la que habían acudido para asistir a un oficio religioso. Entre los secuestrados figuran madres, hermanas, novias de desaparecidos, integrantes de grupos de derechos humanos y de organizaciones creadas por los familiares de los desaparecidos y dos monjas francesas, Sor Leonie de 61 años y Sor Yvonne de 41. Nunca más se supo de ninguno de ellos. De nada sirvió la presión internacional, las enérgicas protestas y reclamos del gobierno francés y del mundo entero. La tortura y la muerte fue la respuesta a sus ruegos, a sus diligencias por conocer el paradero de sus seres queridos, a la acción solidaria y humanitaria de incorporar su presencia, su voz, su denuncia, su demanda, su resistencia a toda esa otra resistencia que el pueblo entero viene ofreciendo a los militares desde el golpe de marzo de 1976.

El movimiento fue creciendo. De 14, el primer día, ahora son centenares. Vienen de todas partes. Llegan del interior para incorporarse a la lucha, a la "marcha del silencio" que todos los jueves conmueve la Plaza, entre los canteros de flores y las palomas. El dolor las une y se vuelven cada vez más fuertes.

Se enfrentan a las ametralladoras de los soldados con el coraje que les proporciona la

certeza de saber que están defendiendo una causa justa, ¡la causa de la vida!, como ellas mismas dicen "como madres de una hermosa e inteligentísima generación que está siendo diezmada sin justicia y sin responsabilidad por parte de quienes asumieron el poder."

Este movimiento, el constante accionar de las *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, forma parte de la resistencia activa que el pueblo argentino viene desarrollando en contra de la dictadura militar desde el primer día del golpe. Y además, es una de las tantas formas de lucha que se dan los pueblos de América Latina para derrotar a sus opresores, en busca de la paz y la democracia.

#### TESTIMONIO DE UNA MADRE

Matilde Herrera, en una carta abierta dirigida a diferentes países, a todas las Iglesias, a los partidos políticos, a las organizaciones que en todo el mundo se ocupan de la defensa de los derechos humanos, narra los hechos que en pocos meses destruyeron a su familia: "El 26 de julio de 1976 fue secuestrado mi hijo Martín Belaustegui Herrera de 20 años y su esposa María Cristina López Guerra de 21, embarazada de dos meses. Unos 15 hombres armados, de civil, los aguardaban escondidos en el patio de la casa. Apresados los dos jóvenes dentro de la casa, se prohibió a los vecinos asomarse a puertas o ventanas. Después de un rato largo, los vecinos vieron como los jóvenes eran obligados a subir encapuchados a un automóvil. A los pocos minutos, un camión del Ejército se detenía frente a la casa y tropas de uniforme se encargaron de saquear absolutamente todo lo que había en ella."

Los hechos se siguen sucediendo de manera escalofriante y el 13 de mayo de 1977, una vez más, la familia se ve golpeada. Ese

día, desde una clínica de la provincia de Buenos Aires, comunican por teléfono a la abuela paterna que ha sido abandonada en ese establecimiento, una niña de un año, con un cartel que dice: "Soy la hija de Valeria Belaustegui." "Es la niñita de mi hija, Valeria Belaustegui Herrera—aclara Matilde Herrera en su carta—y de su marido Ricardo Waisberg." Cuando llega la abuela paterna a la clínica, se le informa que la bebida ha sido llevada a la comisaría donde, por fin, se la entregan.

La prosecución del testimonio se asemeja a miles de otros: "Todas las averiguaciones y pedidos de informes sobre el paradero de Ricardo y de mi hija han sido inútiles. No sabemos que les ha sucedido, quien los secuestró o los detuvo, si están vivos o muertos."

Pocos días más tarde, el 30 de mayo, las fuerzas conjuntas de seguridad detienen en un departamento céntrico al tercero de los hijos de Matilde, Rafael José de 23 años y a su esposa Electra Irene Lareu y se los llevan maniatados. Dejan en la casa a un bebé de escasos 20 meses. 20 días después, los abuelos paternos son advertidos por medio de una llamada telefónica que el niño está en el Ministerio de Bienestar Social, donde un juez se los entrega. El bebé presenta signos de gran nerviosismo y aún no está recuperado de su tristeza."

"En menos de un año ha desaparecido toda una familia. No creo tener el monopolio del dolor en la Argentina—advierte Matilde Herrera—Quiero hacer mío el dolor de todas las madres argentinas que están pasando por las mismas circunstancias. Matilde Herrera no pide demasiado: "Es fundamental que se exija al gobierno argentino la difusión de las listas con los nombres de los secuestrados y desaparecidos, las listas de los muertos."