

# OBREROS EN MARCHA

POLITICAL ORGAN OF EL MOVIMIENTO DE IZQUIERDA NACIONAL PUERTORRIQUEÑO—EL COMITE

Vol. IV No. 1

March 1979

## Puerto Rican Nationalist Dies

### ANDRES FIGUEROA CORDERO: EXAMPLE OF COURAGE AND COMMITMENT



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*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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### ANDRES FIGUEROA CORDERO: EXAMPLE OF COURAGE AND COMMITMENT

On March 1, 1954 Andres Figueroa Cordero, Lolita Lebron, Irving Flores and Rafael Cancel Miranda attacked the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., in an attempt to bring world-wide attention to the cause of Puerto Rican independence. For their militant and courageous action, the 4 Puerto Rican nationalists were sentenced to life imprisonment. These 4 Puerto Rican Nationalist patriots then joined Oscar Collazo, another nationalist activist in jail. In 1950, Collazo along with Griselio Torresola had attacked Blair House, residence of President Harry Truman at the time. Torresola was killed in that action.

On March 7, 1979, Andres Figueroa Cordero died of terminal cancer at the age of 54 in the Regional Hospital of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

Andres began to suffer from cancer several years ago while serving his life sentence in Leavenworth Federal Prison. Once the information concerning Andres reached the outside world and realizing, as in the case of the great nationalist leader, Don Pedro Albizu Campos, that the U.S. government was not going to provide the needed medical assistance, the Puerto Rican people began to organize and demand that Andres be set free.

In October, 1977, Andres was granted a presidential pardon. With this act, the U.S. government attempted to rid itself of the responsibility for Andres' death and once again put on its mask of a government concerned for human rights.

But this so-called concern did not extend to the 4 other Puerto Rican patriots imprisoned for their actions on behalf of Puerto Rican independence. Nor did this concern extend to the Puerto Rican people as a whole, who do not live in a free independent country—a human right belonging to all the peoples of the world—but are a colonized people, dominated economically, politically and socially by U.S. imperialism. Because of this reality Andres Figueroa Cordero continued to fight until his very last day for Puerto Rico's independence.

In the example of the great leader of the Puerto Rican people and of the Nationalist Party, *el maestro* Don Pedro Albizu Campos, Andres Figueroa Cordero is a patriotic martyr. His entire adult life was dedicated to the struggle for the independence of his country. His life in struggle provides a heroic example for present and future generations to follow. His example, his spirit and the ideas for which he fought continue to live. It is these ideas that have and will continue to reach other minds, and through conscious struggle on the part of Puerto Rican revolutionaries, be generalized among the Puerto Rican masses to bring about the future of an independent Puerto Rico that Andres envisioned.

Once Andres understood that his country, Puerto Rico, was suffering from colonial domination, he realized that he must enlist himself in the ranks of those people committed to changing this situation. He also understood that to bring about an end to colonialism, his people had to use all means necessary to achieve their goals and be willing to sacrifice everything, even their lives.

Therefore, when the time came in 1954 to put these ideas into practice, to pick up arms, travel to Washington, to attack the House of Representatives and risk his life in doing so, Andres was ready. As a result of this action, Andres spent most of his adult life in prison.

But his struggle did not end in 1954. Andres had the dedication, commitment and courage to continue his struggle in prison. Molded in the belief of Don Pedro and the nationalists that "La patria es valor y sacrificio" ("the homeland is courage and sacrifice"), Andres implemented his ideas to his last day.

He confronted the weight of the imperialists and never weakened. When he was released from prison, he ignored his worsening and extremely painful condition, and continued his involvement in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence. Every activity in which he participated and in every city he visited he brought his message: that only with bullets could the Puerto Rican people kick out the U.S. imperialists. Andres Figueroa Cordero invested every drop of energy in his struggle for independence. His example is worthy of emulation by revolutionaries and progressive people the world over.

We here in the United States must implement his example and, in our support for the national and social liberation of Puerto Rico, increase our efforts to free his compatriots still in prison. To this end, M.I.N.P. participated in a demonstration on March 3 that drew more than 2500 people to Washington demanding the immediate release of the 4 Nationalists. Actions like this must continue. We also must increase our daily efforts at organizing among the Puerto Rican community and supporters from other minority groups, among the working class in general and all progressive peoples. We must continue these tasks following the example of Andres, and applying the same dedication, commitment and courage. We call upon our entire membership, friends, contacts, and comrades in the struggle to increase all efforts to free the Nationalist prisoners. We honor Andres' death by reaffirming our commitment to struggle.

**FREE THE 4 NATIONALIST PRISONERS  
QUE VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE Y SOCIALISTA  
GUERRA Y MUERTE AL IMPERIALISMO**

### Women in the Working Class Struggle Today

March 8th, International Working Women's Day, celebrates the heroic struggles waged by women everywhere in defense of their right to safe and healthy working conditions, decent living wages, equality and freedom. It was the particular struggles of North American working class women that led to the establishment of this important day. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, women in the U.S., particularly those in the textile and garment industries, fought in the shops and in the streets against long back-breaking hours and starvation wages. Women fought against child labor exploitation and in 1848 launched the 72-year long battle for the right to vote.

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

We have written before in *Obreros en Marcha* about the history of International Working Women's Day (Vol. 2, No. 2; Vol. 3, No. 3) and in particular its significance for our work with women today. This year we print a letter that was shared with us. The letter describes one woman's particular situation, but it speaks to all women who historically have struggled in different ways for a better life. This woman's letter to her friend depicts her experience within her daycare center; it reflects her development and growing awareness of herself as a political person, one who actively and consciously works to change the conditions of her life. This woman is not a revolutionary. Perhaps she would not yet even consider herself a fighter for a better society. But in the process of dealing with the very real conflicts she experiences about being a woman, a mother and a wife—all while learning how to fight to keep her daycare center open—she has begun to understand the connection that exists between her own individual growth as a person and the changes she wants to see at her child's school. This has broadened her vision of life and society; she has begun to develop relationships with others based on the firm ground of a united struggle for a common cause. This process of development is a very important part of the significance of International Working Women's Day. Her growth is particular to herself and at the same time, it



exemplifies what we mean when we state that the liberation of women takes place within the context of the struggle of the entire working class.

Following we reprint excerpts from her letter:

Dear Juanita:

I hope when you get this letter everything is fine with you and your family. I just finished a long day and finally got the kids to bed. . . .

With the problems at Papito's daycare center my day gets longer and longer. It seems the city might close Papito's school because the landlord has not fixed the violations in the building. As a result we can't get a two-year license and will have to pass an inspection every six months. The landlord refuses to do anything but collect the rent; nothing is getting fixed. Because of this the parents have been forced to get together to deal with the situation. We have to fight the closing as well as force the landlord to do the repairs.

Most of us know that our husbands don't make enough money to pay the rent and buy enough food, if we have to quit our jobs and stay home with the kids. For women without husbands, the situation is even worse. We're just beginning to see how important the daycare center is for everyone; without it we couldn't make ends meet.

Of course, this means that we have to go to meetings. In the beginning this was very hard for me. I didn't really know anyone well and I was afraid to ask questions or talk. Papito's teacher is really nice and she helped me to feel more comfortable in the school. At a meeting with all the parents and staff, one of the teachers explained what was happening, why, and what we could try to do about it. Through understanding, I began to feel a little less nervous. Now when I talk about what's happening to mothers who are new to the center, I see how much I have changed in the past few months. Talking to other people and being involved in all this questioning, thinking and doing has helped us all.

But then of course, we have to go to meetings with the Agency for Child Development (NYC's daycare agency, Ed.) and that is something else. These people aren't our neighbors or friends even though they say they want to help us. But we have had to confront them and demand from them what we need. Talking with the mothers at the center (and some fathers too!), helping each other learn, helps us deal with the agency people we have to fight.

But even though this is all good, it is still very hard. With me working during the day and the kids at school, I feel like I don't spend enough time with them. And at night I go to meetings, so I don't get to see Jose or do any of the house work. At least Jose helps me at home now. This was a big struggle because he didn't want me to go out at night. But now he understands the importance of the center and I'm even trying to get him to come with me.

I get worried that my kids will suffer if I'm not around all the time. But I also know all our lives will suffer without the school. A lot of the mothers at the school have the same reaction as me. We talk about this problem

all the time. We try out ways to strengthen the understanding that we're in this situation not because we are bad parents but because we have to work to make a living and we don't get help with raising the family either. Knowing this helps us when we're speaking to the landlord or in front of lots of people. We feel stronger because we are fighting together for what we need and have a right to. What better example could we set for our children?

Throughout this fight the teachers have also made us see the importance of the center for the children themselves. It's not just a babysitting place, but a place where they meet other children, play games that help them learn, etc. The children need the school too, not just the parents. It helps to know this especially when we start to worry that we're neglecting our children because of so many meetings and so much work to be done: visiting parents, writing leaflets, talking with politicians, etc. Loving and caring for our families is not just spending time with them, but also struggling to make our lives better.

One interesting thing that happened was

that in one of our meetings, a mother began to relate how her daughter's bilingual program at the public school was going to be ended because of the budget cuts. So many of us at the center are Spanish-speaking and had experienced feeling stupid because we didn't know English too well. We want our kids to know English but we also want our kids to be able to speak and read Spanish too. We told the *señora* that she should get together with some of the other mothers in the school and talk about how they could fight the budget cuts. It was wonderful for all of us to see that what we were learning in *our* struggle could be used in other areas too.

Although sometimes we all feel frustrated because our families and our lives aren't the way the magazines paint them, we have learned that we have much to give ourselves and our children. You should see us planning meetings with the city agency and with the landlord and deciding who should speak. Juanita, you wouldn't recognize me! Through this fight I have developed so much strength. We all have, personally and as a group. Then it's not so bad, because we are not alone. . . . ●

## M.I.N.P. Celebrates I.W.W.D.

On March 11th, el Movimiento de Izquierda Nacional Puertorriqueño (El Comité) commemorated International Working Women's Day with a celebration honoring "Women in the Working Class Struggle Today." The organization brought together its membership, their families, friends with whom M.I.N.P. has worked closely in different communities and workplaces, and comrades from the revolutionary movement. Nearly 350 people filled the room to its capacity.

The theme of the activity, as indicated by its title, was the struggles of women within the context of today's economic crisis and the consequent attacks on the standard of living of the working class. The activity focussed on the struggles of minority women, in particular, Puerto Rican women.

The activity consisted of speeches by activists in different democratic rights struggles; cultural performances by Teatro Cuatro, a Puerto Rican theater group, and a singing group from the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP); a film entitled "With Cuban Women"; a presentation from M.I.N.P.; and a delicious dinner cooked by many people present.

Three women activists spoke on their experiences. The first was a parent in a daycare center, who has been involved in a three-year battle to wrest control from a Board of Directors concerned only about their own interests and not the interests of the center's parents, children, or workers. The woman

spoke of the tremendous difficulties the parents had to develop a strong, militant and united parent body. She also spoke of her own process of development and how she had grown in the struggle. At the end of her speech, the many parents and staff also at the activity led a standing ovation for this woman who had given so much to the struggle and who also had learned so much.

The second speaker was a worker in a small factory of mainly Latin women. For almost two years she and several co-workers have struggled to build a rank and file. Although the group has gone through many ups and downs, it was able to win 15 more minutes of lunchtime on payday, the printing of union notices in Spanish, and most important of all, it forced the union to hold new elections for shop steward, something which had not happened in 14 years. This worker's honesty, leadership and true revolutionary dedication won her the respect of her fellow workers, which they showed by electing her as the new shop steward.

The third speaker was a parent whose child attended a junior high school in District 3, and who was elected to the local community school board in 1976. She discussed her experiences in the public education system, first as a child, and then as a parent and a school board member fighting for quality education. She emphasized the rampant racism and sexism she saw and experienced throughout the school system. She posed that the most important thing she had learned in her years as a fighter was the need to keep on fighting to

change the unequal system and also the need to keep on fighting together with others.

The speaker from M.I.N.P.-El Comité, Azalia Torres, opened her brief presentation with a salute to women everywhere who today were fighting to change oppressive and exploitative conditions. In particular, she spoke of the women of Nicaragua, fighting against U.S. imperialism and the Somoza dictatorship, and the women of Iran, fighting the oppressive laws of the Islamic religion. The compañera also saluted the 3 activists and said that these were the women, women struggling to change the world, that we must honor as we commemorate International Working Women's Day.

The comrade discussed the economic conditions confronting the working class today and the ways in which women in particular were affected: cutbacks in daycare, loss of jobs, no access to free abortions, etc. She discussed M.I.N.P.'s participation in the struggles against the cutbacks and the difficulties women faced in incorporating into these struggles. She also discussed the strengths and weaknesses of M.I.N.P. in dealing with the women question within the organization. She closed her presentation by calling upon all to implement the conception that the liberation of women could only take place in the context of the working class struggle.

The activity ended with the reading of a poem written especially for the activity and dedicated to all women and their process of growth. ●

## VIEQUES: AN ISLAND IN STRUGGLE (pt. 2)

In the last issue of *Obreros En Marcha*, we presented a brief analysis of the situation of the island of Vieques.

Seventy-five percent of this island is owned by the U.S. Navy. The waters surrounding the island are utilized by the Navy for bombing practice, thereby destroying the local fishing industry, the main source of the island's economy.

We stated that the objective of the Fishermen's Association of Vieques and the Crusade to Save Vieques was "to oust the Navy from Vieques and in the meantime continue to curb naval operations."

In this article we discuss the latest developments and analyze more in depth the relationship between the struggle in Vieques and the overall struggle in Puerto Rico for national liberation and socialism.

The court suit which the people of Vieques brought against the U.S. Navy to end once and for all the bombing of their island is still pending. Judge Juan R. Toruella, who is hearing the case and who has consistently ruled in favor of the Navy, was to have handed down a decision in December 1978. Instead, he postponed it until March at the earliest.

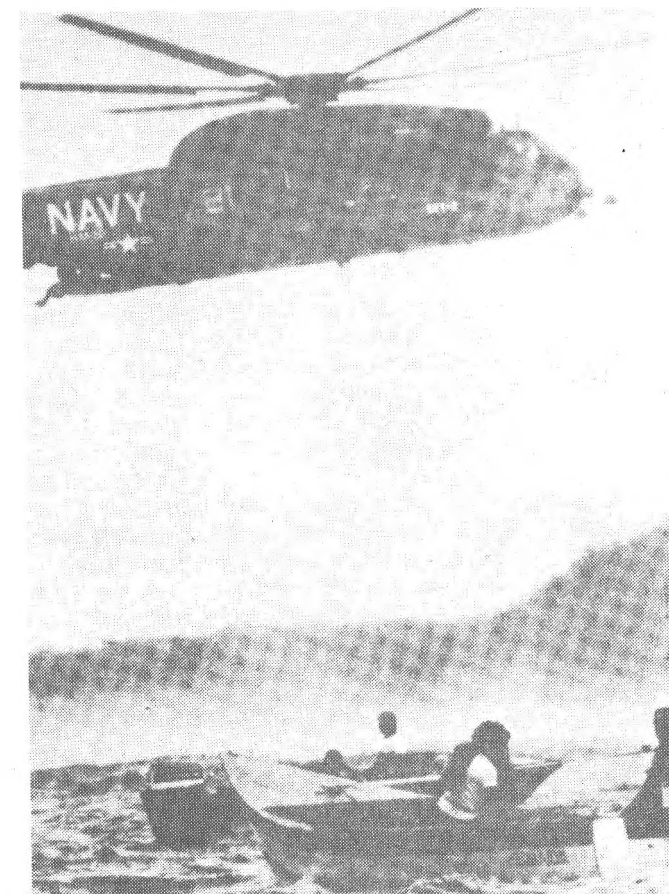
This type of harassing tactic on the part of Toruella was expected by the Viequesens. Prior to his court appointment by ex-president Richard Nixon, Toruella had been active in anti-worker campaigns as a labor lawyer in Puerto Rico and was associated with U.S. intelligence forces. His actions against the workers of Vieques are consistent with his anti-worker history throughout Puerto Rico.

The waiting period imposed by Toruella has been tense and difficult, but the Fishermen's Association, the Crusade, and their sympathizers have continued to carry out acts of protest. They are not waiting for a decision by a court that has consistently ruled against them.

### THE STRUGGLE BUILDS

On February 3rd, the people of Vieques and a group of supporters led by the Association and the Crusade took militant action against the Navy. Instead of confronting them on the water, the Viequesens invaded the U.S. naval base on the island to show their determination to stop naval bombardments. The Viequesens surprised the security guards who were stationed at the entrance gate and moved quickly on to the restricted compound. Once there, they pitched tents and set up camp in a marine bivouac area. A similar action took place on the northern part of the island.

The Navy obtained a temporary restraining order against the fishermen, but they remained on the base for two days; the Navy made no arrests. This is significant and underscores the strength of the Viequesens, the increased level of anti-Navy activity on the island, and the growth of support throughout Puerto Rico for their struggle. Besides the continuing consolidation of the Fishermen's Association and the Crusade for Vieques, there are other groups contributing to the developing struggle. Key among these forces is the Fishermen's Wives Committee. The formation of this committee has guaranteed that the women of Vieques participate in the struggle against the Navy. It has



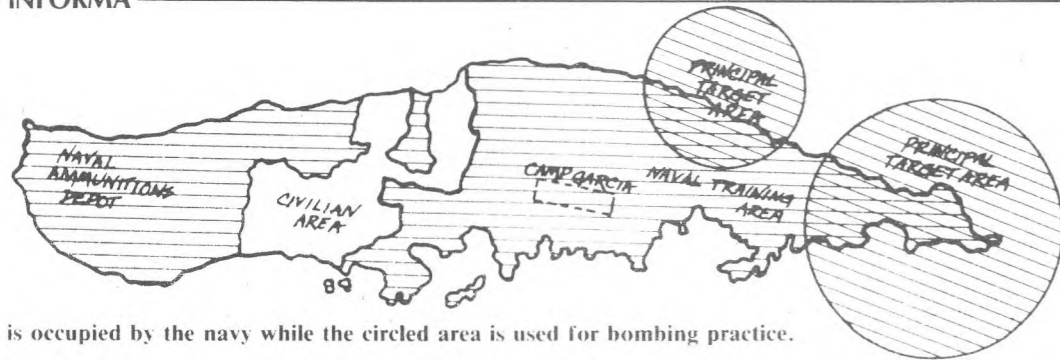
Not even the Navy provocations prevent the fishermen of Vieques from exercising their right to fish off the coast of Vieques.

organized pickets, car caravans, confrontations with Navy officials and public meetings demanding the ouster of the Navy. In addition, there is also the National Committee for the Defense of Vieques. The importance of this group lies in the fact that it operates from the larger island of Puerto Rico; it has helped to organize support committees in several other cities in Puerto Rico. In the context of this growing movement, for the Navy to have ordered arrests when the base was temporarily taken over would have meant a serious confrontation with the Viequesens and with Puerto Rican people in general.

### VIEQUES AND LATIN AMERICA

We stated in our last article that Vieques as well as the rest of Puerto Rico has much strategic value for the U.S. military. The particular importance of Vieques is its function as a military installation which monitors, assists and directs military operations of aggression and intervention in Latin America. The situation in Vieques, therefore, has to be viewed within the context of U.S. imperialist strategy for Puerto Rico and for Latin America in general.

Latin America is "the backyard of U.S. imperialism." It is an integral part of the U.S. imperialist economic system. U.S. multi-national corporations dominate the economies of Latin America. A considerable portion of U.S. corporate profits come from the superexploitation of the Latin American workers. In order to maintain control over the



The shaded area is occupied by the navy while the circled area is used for bombing practice.

people in these areas and to suppress their struggles to transform their oppressive conditions, U.S. imperialism has maintained indirect neocolonial relations with the countries in Latin America. In the last two decades, neocolonial relations has meant the establishment and support of ruthless military dictatorships, such as in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. These dictatorships share the common purpose of attempting to squash and suppress all mass democratic and revolutionary movements. The scepter of U.S. imperialism is always present in these attempts.

One way the U.S. provides assistance to these countries is in the form of training of their military forces. Within this context, Puerto Rico plays an important rôle for U.S. military strategy by serving as a training ground for these

forces. Vieques is the arena when the practice of more complex military maneuvers takes place. Sometimes joint exercises between U.S. and Latin American Navies take place on Vieques. The most recent instance was in 1976. Chilean ships participated in this set of exercises.

**VIEQUES: COLONIAL DOMINATION OR LIBERATION**

This is the backdrop against which the anti-Navy movement in Vieques has been developing. Although the struggle of the Viequeses represents the immediate aspirations of the people, it is also a struggle against the long-range military interests of U.S. imperialism. The struggle of the Viequeses against the Navy brings to the fore the imperialist relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. ●

**END OF A FARCE: MIGUEL CABRERA ACQUITTED**

After less than three hours of deliberation, a jury found Miguel Cabrera and two co-defendants innocent of all charges. The three were charged with the slaying of Allan H. Randall, a corporate lawyer linked to the CIA who specialized in labor relations. Shortly after the execution of Randall, a communique was found, issued by an unidentified "labor commando", taking responsibility for the act.

This event was used by the colonial government of Romero Barcelo to step up its repressive campaign against the developing workers' movement. The government declared publically that it was declaring "war on subversive elements". The Teamsters union was singled out as the main objective of this war. The union was chosen because of its history on the island as militant defenders of interests of the working class.

The offices of the union were placed under constant surveillance; leaders and organizers of the union began to be followed everywhere; their families faced continued harassment and intimidation. This wave of government terrorism reached its peak on October of 1977. Juan Rafael Caballero, a teamster organizer, was kidnapped by the police and tortured to death. Shortly after, Miguel Cabrera, also a Teamster organizer, was accused of murdering Randall.

The government's case against Cabrera was nothing more than a crude and incompetent frame-up. The first pillar of the government's case was a "hopping" fingerprint. The police stated that they had found Miguel Cabrera's fingerprint in a first communique issued by the "labor commando". Then they reversed themselves and stated that they had found it in the second communique. Finally they reversed themselves again and stated that it was in the first communique. During the trial it was revealed that the police's handling of the communiques had violated legal procedures for handling of evidence. The second pillar of the state's case was the testimony of Angel M. Hernandez (alias el Negro Tanco). He has been convicted of three homicides, two attempted homicides, five robberies and five cases of illegal possession of firearms.

Because he has agreed to testify in several cases, (including Cabrera's) the Justice Department has reduced his sentence to less than eight years. During Cabrera's trial, he backed down from testifying and it took the Justice Department several days to "persuade" him to testify. His testimony was easily refuted by other witnesses.

The government's case was so weak that the trial became a defense of the state's evidence rather than a defense of the accused. At the end, the prosecutor had to resort to over-generalization, rumor and prejudice. In a longwinded closing statement the prosecutor emphasized Mafia infiltration of the Teamsters, the evils of terrorism and the virtues of the late A.H. Randall.

Although the government's frame-up did not succeed in convicting Miguel Cabrera it succeeded in tying up the resources of the union and of support groups. But even this is not entirely negative since the defense of Cabrera brought diverse groups together and thus increased communication and cooperation of progressive organizations. Of particular importance was the role of organizations in the U.S. which lent support to the defense.

The organizations which provided support were the Trade Union Committee Against Repression in Puerto Rico (TUCAR), the Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee (PRSC) and the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Miguel Cabrera. M.I.N.P. (El Comite) participated in all three organizations. Both TUCAR and PRSC were instrumental in educating and fund-raising work. TUCAR was very effective in reaching unions throughout the country and educating the workers about the repression of the labor movement in Puerto Rico. The Ad Hoc Committee was made up of PRSC, TUCAR, progressive legal organizations and M.I.N.P. (El Comite). It was instrumental in developing the defense strategy and particularly the work around jury selection.

The work that these organizations have done provides us with an example of the concrete support that the solidarity movement can offer. ●

**South Bronx Housing Plan Crumbles**



Devastation in the South Bronx

It was October, 1977 and President Jimmy Carter was in New York City on a visit to the United Nations. While there, his public relations team advised him that he could get plenty of good political mileage by visiting an especially devastated section of the South Bronx and pledging his help. "Get me a map of the whole area and show me what could be done." With these fateful words the Charlotte Street Project was born. Carter had projected the New York City's South Bronx into national prominence. As we shall see, his comment initiated a series of events, both locally and nationally, which resulted in the exposure of the government's inability to provide housing for its people.

**THE CHARLOTTE STREET PROJECT**

What exactly is this project which has sparked so much controversy? On Carter's trip to New York he stated that a rebuilding

effort in the South Bronx would be "the cornerstone of my urban policy." Mayor Koch and his administration wasted no time in preparing a plan to present to Carter. In fact, Koch developed a grandiose plan—the South Bronx Development Plan—in which the Charlotte Street Project was only a small part.

Under his plan the mayor envisioned a seven-year program that called for the rehabilitation or construction of 27,000 housing units in the South Bronx area. This plan also outlined the allocation of \$135 million for stores, industrial facilities and other economic assistance for the area, \$90 million for transit facilities, \$61 million for job training and \$32 million for new parks and recreation areas.

The opening salvo in Koch's plan was to have been the Charlotte Street Project—732 housing units of "low priced" cooperative housing to be built by the city for \$32 million. Yet despite the stark poverty of the area, the

housing was aimed at families with incomes from \$11,000 to \$15,000. Even with uncertain government subsidies, few families in the South Bronx would have been able to benefit from this housing. This fact alone immediately raised questions about the purpose of Koch's plan.

At a time when the federal government is expanding its policy of cuts in social services and aid to the cities, Koch requested close to \$2 billion to implement his South Bronx Development Plan. Furthermore, he requested it precisely when the Senate Banking Committee was pushing New York City to make even more budget cuts to deal with its financial problems.

When the time came to vote in the city government on whether or not to start building Charlotte Street, the project didn't have a chance. The Board of Estimate, which is made up of the mayor, the comptroller, the president of the city council and the five borough presidents, voted 5 to 3 against allocating money for the housing project. The basic point of contention was that these politicians wanted some concrete assurance from the federal government that it would back up Charlotte Street by committing millions of dollars for the rest of Koch's plan. But this assurance was not forthcoming. Ever since Carter uttered his empty words standing in the middle of a burnt-out block in the South Bronx, his administration has done nothing to concretize its promises.

**THE SOUTH BRONX: ONLY AN EXAMPLE**

These are some of the basic facts about this devastated area of New York City: almost 2,000 once livable buildings now stand as vacant shells, victims of abandonment and arson; almost 10,000 more buildings, which should be condemned, are on their way to becoming empty shells; the area has some of the poorest health and educational facilities in the country as well as the highest drug and crime rates. The concentration of people is stifling. And about 250,000 people live in the core of the South Bronx and 350,000 more live in outlying areas. This equals the population of Boston living on one-third the land size. But the most significant facts are an unemployment rate reaching 40%—and higher among the youth—and a per capita income of \$2,340, 60% below the national average. These conditions of living are inflicted upon a population which is 90% Black and Puerto Rican.

What is the South Bronx? It is a depository for the most oppressed and exploited group



Mayor Ed Koch

in our country, the national minorities. But the situation in the South Bronx is not unique. In New York City, there is also Harlem/East Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Brownsville, etc. These are the major ghettos in New York. In other cities, the ghettos have different names, but the same conditions exist, and they are inhabited primarily by the same group of people, the national minorities: Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Asians, etc. These areas contain the concentrations of unemployed, unskilled and non-unionized people who are part of this country's potential labor force.

As the economic crisis in this country continues and the possibility of recession comes closer, this unskilled portion of the working class becomes more and more unnecessary to the capitalist. When the capitalist doesn't need more workers for his factories, their basic living necessities—decent food, housing, healthcare, education—become less and less important. These services are quite literally withdrawn from the communities where the "unneeded workers" live. This is what has happened in the South Bronx.

#### KOCH IN TROUBLE WITH MINORITY COMMUNITY

What reasons might have motivated Koch to take on such a grandiose plan as rebuilding the South Bronx? At the moment, the mayor is getting increased pressure, especially from

the Black community, because of his lack of responsiveness to the needs of minority communities. Koch could use his plan to deflect some of the growing protest and charges of racism which have been mounting against him. But this was not accomplished. For while Koch portrays himself as a fighter for the South Bronx, he simultaneously has enacted and projected a series of budget cuts in the education, health and other services of New York City. These cuts have most drastically affected the minority communities. Thus the wave of anger continues to grow. As for Carter's motives, he desperately needed some gesture to give his failing "national urban policy" a shot in the arm. His subsequent vacillation toward Charlotte St. exposed the meaninglessness of his promises.

At the moment Charlotte St. and the South Bronx Development plan are on ice. As for as Koch and Carter are concerned, the plans will remain in limbo indefinitely. ●

## COALITION FORMS TO DEFEND HISPANIC RIGHTS

With the budget cuts to fundamental services gaining momentum, we see the seeds of unity attempting to develop in minority communities. The latest development has been the birth of a broad coalition calling itself the Coalition in Defense of the Puerto Rican and Hispanic Community of New York.

The groups which have united under the coalition are very diverse. They include church groups such as the Hispanic Church of God and political organizations such as ourselves and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. There are also tenants groups and students, organized and unorganized workers among others. The coalition also includes city council members, state senators and assemblymen from the Latin communities. The conditions which brought the coalition into existence are glaring. Mayor Koch's strategy for easing the fiscal crisis of New York City is to make wave after wave of budget cuts, especially to the minority communities. No essential service has been spared. The disastrous situation which exists in the public schools will worsen as Koch seeks to divert more education funds to "balance the budget." The future of our youth is grim. The entire municipal hospital system is in jeopardy as Koch threatens to either close outright or sell these hospitals to private institutions. Thousands of families will have no medical services. The housing situation facing the poor and minorities is

reaching critical levels. New York City has become the biggest slum lord in the city, if not the country. What is Koch's solution? "Sell" as many of the buildings as possible back to the private slum lords who lost them because of tax delinquency. The list goes on and on.

This situation in the Latin communities is what has made the coalition see the need to aim its thrust at the vicious budget cuts that attack our living conditions. But to live decently we must not only struggle against the budget cuts, but demand that all services be improved.

The recent *New York Post* editorial which attacked the Puerto Rican and Latin community as the major cause of the budget crisis reveals the increase of the ideological offensive by the corporate owned media. The news media in specific will attempt to turn the tables and try to justify these merciless cuts. The experience of the demonstrations against the *Post* was a lesson for the coalition in the necessity of this type of work.

The coalition has taken positive steps in forming a broad fight back against the mayor's offensive against the minorities. Naturally, because of the diverse character of coalitions an effective and principled manner of functioning must be worked out. But this has not yet been an obstacle. As the coalition matures it must continue to reflect the real needs of the communities, as this is what will make it a powerful force for the city to contend with. ●

## CARTER: "MORE CUTBACKS IN 79-80."

On January 23, 1979 Carter delivered the annual "State of the Union" address to the nation before a joint session of Congress. Carter appealed to the people of the United States to work together to solve the problems of the country. The theme running through his speech was that he, together with the cooperation and support of all Americans, would build "new foundations"—for peace, for a strong economy with reduced inflation and unemployment, for a "stable world community" and global cooperation. Though Carter tried to make his words ring with optimism, he could not ignore the harsh reality of today's "state of the union" for millions of working and poor people; nor could he sidestep the vivid indicators of a worsening economic situation such as rampant inflation, unemployment, and a looming recession. And he could do no more than paint a thin cloud over the bare fact that politically U.S. imperialism has lost prestige and is in a weakened position throughout the world and that it is increasingly unable to squash the many movements for national social liberation around the globe.

At the outset of his speech, Carter declared that "there is every sign that the state of our union is sound." He supported this by stating that the U.S. economy offers greater prosperity for more people than ever before, proven, he claimed, by a substantial increase in business profits, real per capita income, a rise in farm income and the existence of a strong military force. It is true that profits of most major corporations have risen to their highest point in history. Yet inflation, rising unemployment (especially among the oppressed minorities, particularly youth), cutbacks in social services, deteriorating health and housing conditions, and attacks on affirmative action programs across the country have all served to worsen the living and working conditions of most working and poor people. For the most part, Carter's speech to the people of this country contained little more than grandiose statements about the U.S. worldwide mission to be the "world's peacemaker", applauding government domestic and foreign policies as those of a benevolent, trusted carrier pigeon of equality, liberty and justice. Though he acknowledged rising inflation and the possibility of a deepening recession, Carter dismissed the critical state of the economy by referring to his recent "anti-inflation" program (See *OEM*, Vol. 3, #11), the "cooperative efforts" of business and labor, and government restraint in federal spending as the solutions to these problems.

#### GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

According to the budget Carter presented to Congress, the military budget is one of the few major programs which will receive a substantial increase in funding. Most other programs, relied upon by millions of people for vital services, are either decreased, remain the same, or receive increases so minimal that they do not make up for inflation, which is rising almost at 1% per month. Military funding will be increased to \$125.8 billion next year (the highest in U.S. history) and to \$148.2 billion by 1982—an increase of 41 percent in 4 years. This means that nearly one-fourth of all tax dollars will go for military spending. All other non-military spending combined will grow just enough to cover inflation, with no real increase at all. Many programs face substantial cutbacks in real dollars.

A striking example of the cutback campaign comes under urban aid. Funds for local job-creating public works will be slashed from \$2.1 billion to \$319 million. Money for public service jobs will be drastically reduced and the number of public jobs will shrink from 450,000 last September to 358,000 by this coming September and to 200,000 thereafter.

Welfare and education outlays will increase slightly more than inflation; but given the deteriorating conditions in our schools and communities, particularly in the major cities, there would have to be a massive infusion of funds into these areas for any notable impact or improvement to occur.

#### IMMINENT ECONOMIC RECESSION

The real "state of the union" is a picture quite different from the one Carter attempted to paint. Most economists today—bourgeois and radical alike—project that an economic recession, deeper than that of 1973-75, will set in by the latter part of this year. Inflation continues to rise and unemployment will undoubtedly increase as the major companies seek labor-saving devices to reduce production costs as the recession draws nearer. The cuts in social services and job programs will most severely strike the millions of poor and working people who live in the major cities, where the majority of Blacks, Puerto Ricans and other oppressed minorities reside.

Instead of moving steadily toward equal opportunity as Carter proclaims, minorities in this country will be hit hardest of all by the deepening economic crisis, as the already in-

adequate educational facilities are decreased, as municipal hospitals are shut down by local governments "in fiscal crisis" and as jobs for youth are slashed. The swelling 50% unemployment rate among Black and Latin youth will go even higher in the coming period. Desperately needed low-income housing projects and renovation plans are being dropped. In general, the standard of living of the working class, and in particular the oppressed nationalities, will undergo an even greater decline as the recession hits.

Thus, Carter's talk about "new foundations" is merely an attempt to cover over the real meaning of his "State of the Union" speech. After the rhetoric is weeded out, the facts and proposals contained in Carter's speech had only one message for the vast majority of people in this country, the working class: that his administration will continue 1) to do everything in its power to support and facilitate the interests of the major corporations and businesses in this country at the expense of the majority of people; 2) to use its power to obstruct the efforts of workers and poor people who seek to organize and fight the conditions which decrease their standard of living, and 3) to strengthen and expand the military forces of the country in order to try to regain the loss of strength internationally and re-establish stronger than ever the presence of the U.S. capitalist interests around the world. ●



President Jimmy Carter

## INTERNATIONAL

Argentina:

## 3 YEARS OF DICTATORSHIP AND RESISTANCE

VOL. CXXV . No. 43,159

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NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24,

## MRS. PERON OVERTHROWN BY MILITARY IN ARGENTINA AND REPORTED ARRESTED

### JUNTA WILL RULE

President Is Expected  
to Be Held During  
Corruption Inquiry

By JUAN DE ONIS  
Special to The New York Times  
BUENOS AIRES, Wednesday,  
March 24—Air force officers  
reportedly arrested President  
Isabel Martínez de Perón at an  
air base here early today as  
the armed forces overthrew  
Argentina's Peronist Govern-  
ment.  
Mrs. Perón, the 45-year-old  
widow of Juan Domingo Perón,  
founder of the populist Peronist  
movement, left the Casa Rosada,  
the government house, in



Isabel Martínez de Perón



Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla

## GOVERNOR ASSAILS SOME BUDGET CUTS AS 'NOT FEASIBLE'

Says Legislature's Action  
Poses Threat of Losses  
in Federal Funds

By LINDA GREENHOUSE

ALBANY, March 23—Governor  
Carey warned today that  
the cuts the Legislature made  
last week in its budget re-  
quests for state agencies and  
departments were "unworkable  
and counterproductive" and  
could "make it impossible for  
us to do the job" of running  
the state.

Breaking a public silence on  
the subject six days after the  
Legislature adopted the \$10.78  
billion budget, Mr. Carey said  
that some of the cuts "were  
simply not feasible" and that  
others could lead to the loss  
of accreditation for some state  
facilities or to the loss of Fed-  
eral funds for insufficiently  
staffed departmental programs.  
Mr. Carey made his com-  
ments at an impromptu news

## REAGAN FOR F CART



Judiciary as something independent from the Executive arm of the government, centralizing in the hands of the latter the execution of the law. Through the Law of Association of Professionals, the military attempted to eliminate the CGT in order to weaken the unity and strength of the workers. They also decentralized the unions within the same area of production by subdividing them into different sections: for example the metal workers, originally belonging to a single union (the Union of Metal Workers—UOM—one of the strongest in the labor movement) would re-group themselves into smaller unions according to the different occupations in the metal industry: latherers, welders, foundrymen, etc.

The attacks on broader and broader sectors of the population, such as university students, intellectuals, the Church (even affecting its hierarchy with the assassination of the progressive Bishops Angelellis and Ponce de Leon) paved the way for a generalized resistance as well as for an international solidarity. International isolation was added on to domestic isolation.

### THE LABOR MOVEMENT: MAIN OBJECTIVE

The military dictatorship hoped to wipe out the labor movement before it was able to unite with other sectors beginning to resist and before international solidarity began to take shape. It concentrated on beheading the labor movement, intimidating the workers, debilitating the union structure (considered one of the strongest and best organized in Latin America), obtaining cheap labor and thus increasing the level of profits demanded by monopoly interests.

But the labor movement was not frightened by its enemy. A long history of struggle for the defense and recovery of its rights, and repeated confrontations with military dictatorships and repressive governments, armed it with the experience and strength to oppose the plans of capitalist superexploitation, to confront and protect itself from the cruel persecution launched against it.

### WORKERS' RESISTANCE

The Argentinian worker put up resistance in a thousand ways: after the coup there was sabotage in production, work actions inside the factories not specifically declared illegal by the military such as slow-downs, "working in sadness" due to the kidnapping of fellow workers (something that occurs frequently in production) and strikes of "hands at rest." In 1976, barely a few months after the coup, the first important strike was staged by the auto workers, caus-

ing severe losses for the businesses involved. In addition to this strike, there was the following September a work stoppage by the Union of Metal Workers that paralyzed important factories in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. Similar actions were carried out by workers in textile, rubber and electricity and power. The workers demanded the freedom of union leaders detained or kidnapped by the armed forces and the defense of their right to work.

In October, an important conflict was begun by the workers of Electricity and Power that lasted until 1977. More than 35,000 workers had partial work stoppages that led to a cut in electricity in various sectors of Buenos Aires. Simultaneously 10,000 longshoremen began a work action, generating similar actions by employees from commerce and other sectors.

### QUALITATIVE CHANGE IN WORKERS' RESISTANCE

With various work actions, partial strikes, and resistance within factories, the labor movement started to recuperate its strength. From then on it mobilized not only for the defense of those rights that were hampered and for the life of its leaders and activists but also began, step by step, an offensive to recover those rights that were taken away.

During 1977 the conflicts involved various locals such as those in railroad, auto, ceramic, water and energy, mail and telecommunications, maritime, oil, etc. The year 1978 was characterized by its rise in union activity that could not be stopped by the military. On the contrary, strong internal pressures, added to the international ones, gave the military no option other than to have a "dialogue" with the representatives of the labor movement. The participation of Argentinian unions in the annual meeting of the International Labor Organization (OIT) extracted promises of normalization of union activity from the military junta.

### A POLITICAL FORCE

The Argentinian working class is the fundamental force in the anti-dictatorial resistance and, by its concentration and weight in the society, has great powers of mobilization. It has had a profound experience in the past ten years. It has built revolutionary political organizations with which it pushed its independent political line, deepening also its experience of union struggle with the formation of "clasismo", (a tendency within the labor movement that fought successfully for union democracy) defeating the bureaucratic machinery that maintained itself in power with the open support or approval of the government. This was the situation until a few months before the coup d'etat.

Today, the balance of all these aspects of the labor movement's experience allows it to

foresee the limits of its union struggle. It can see that though it could defeat and expel the union bureaucrats from numerous unions, federations, and even regionals of the CGT, it could not maintain these victories for long. It's become clear for the mass of organized workers that the victory of union democracy placed it in direct confrontation with the real enemy: the repressive apparatus of the state that the imperialist monopolies have at their disposal. There has been a real leap in the political consciousness of the working class in understanding concretely the connection between the union struggle and politics and in identifying its strategic enemy and the methods and instruments with which to combat it. This experience and consciousness has extended to the Argentinian people. This phenomenon shows that the Argentinian

labor movement has forged powerful political tools through the class struggle of the last few years. This explains, to some extent, its ability and strength to confront such fierce, steadfast and bloody repression from the military junta.

Today all the people are impelled by the growth and strength of the labor movement. Resistance mounts in the farmers' organization, the political parties, the organizations of small and middle-sized businesses, the church, and the human rights movement. The fascist plan of the junta finds obstacles that are more numerous and stronger each time. The resistance of the working class and the Argentinian people will nail to the ground this attempt at fascist domination by the reactionary Argentinian military, the oligarchy, and imperialism. ●

## Zimbabwe:

### DAYS OF UNCERTAINTY

An attack by the Patriotic Front guerrillas on a huge oil storage complex lit up Salisbury, capital city of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) this past December. The fire burned for several days as huge clouds of smoke darkened the sky. Not until fire fighters from South Africa arrived were authorities able to put out the fire. Ian Smith, Prime Minister of the Rhodesian white supremacist regime, called this action one of the biggest setbacks to date. This attack, which destroyed half of the complex and 20 million gallons of oil for a total damage of \$10 million, marked the beginning of a new offensive by the Patriotic

Front. The Patriotic Front is an alliance between the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). It is the leading force in the struggle for Zimbabwe's liberation.

Up until December, Patriotic Front assaults had been limited to military targets. The attack on the oil complex initiated an offensive against important economic targets—electrical installations and fuel complexes—while stepping up attacks on military installations. The emphasis shifted from hit-and-run attacks to conventional confrontations. The key element of the front's offen-



Leaders of the Patriotic Front, Robert Mugabe (left) and Joshua Nkomo (right) and Mozambique President Samora Machel looks on (center).

On March 24, 1976, the Argentinian Armed Forces carried out a coup d'etat that immersed the Argentinian workers and people in one of the most difficult stages in their long history of struggle.

The following is a reprint of an article by Raul Vallejos, a member of the Anti-Imperialist Movement for Socialism in Argentina (MASA). The article synthesizes the reactionary plans of the military junta, as well as the resistance that the Argentinian workers and people have put up since the coup.

The most infamous days in Argentinian history began March 24th, 1976 when the Armed Forces, both representatives and members of the oligarchy and finance capital, overthrew Isabel Peron in order to bring to power the most repressive and the bloodiest military dictatorship the country can remember. The increasing intensification of the class struggle and the radicalization of greater and greater popular sectors incited the military to take all sources of power into their own hands. Afraid of finding themselves in a revolutionary situation that would frustrate their designs for greater monopoly concentration, the military staged the coup d'etat. They immediately intervened in the General League of Workers (CGT), the central union that has more than 6,000,000 members. The military prohibited and punished all forms of union activity, such as the right to strike, all work actions that would interrupt or diminish the pace of work, all assemblies, elections and collective

bargaining between workers and bosses. At the same time they declared 6,300,000 job sites as areas of military concern; abolished laws that favored workers; kidnapped and arrested without cause or due process trade unionists and activist workers; and repressed all signs of protest. The excuse given by the military was the infiltration of "leftists" in the labor movement that threatened—according to them—the "Western and Christian" values of Argentinian society itself.

### THE REPRESSIVE PLANS OF THE DICTATORSHIP

The repressive plans of the military dictatorship combined two central aspects: on the one hand they tried to neutralize and immobilize the middle sectors and democratic parties; on the other hand, they tried to liquidate the workers' movement, fully aware that once destroyed, no other force was powerful enough to stand in the way of their plans. But due to the firm resistance of the workers, the dictatorship began to attack other sectors as well.

At the structural level the plan would allow the total domination of the economy by the monopolies, in addition to repressive legislation that also tried to subjugate the working class. At the same time the dictatorship began to elaborate the legal and political instruments via a "National Reorganization Plan" that was a design for a fascist-style state that sought the decentralization of the unions to facilitate their subordination to the government. The plan also eliminated the

sive has been to encircle the cities, the last bastion of Smith's authority.

The Patriotic Front guerrillas, which now number between 12,000 and 15,000 inside Zimbabwe, have managed to set up liberated and semi-liberated zones in 80% of the rural areas. Land transportation and communications have become almost impossible for the government's armed forces. Smith's regime thus has had to rely more and more on its overtaxed air force. Recently, in spite of a UN embargo, 11 American-designed Bell helicopters were obtained by the Rhodesian government. Although it is still not certain, preliminary reports are that either Israel or Italy supplied the helicopters). The thrust of the government's strategy is to step up the bombings of Zimbabwean camps in Angola, Zambia and Mozambique to pressure these countries to withdraw their support for the Patriotic Front. In its almost daily bombings, the regime's air force has attacked both guerrilla camps and refugee camps.

The deteriorating military situation, coupled with a deepening economic crisis caused by the burdens of the war and the UN embargo, have led the Smith interim government to look for ways of legitimizing its authority in the eyes of the country's black population and the international community.

#### Superficial Changes

For several months the United States and Britain have attempted to stem the tide of the Patriotic Front offensive by arranging an all-party peace conference. Their plans called for minimal concessions: blacks would have formal control of the government, while the white bourgeoisie would retain some form of veto power, control over the state bureaucracy, control over the economy and some control over the military. But even with these concessions the Smith-led government has been rigid in its refusal to negotiate with the Patriotic Front forces.

Instead, Smith and the three black leaders in the interim government—Reverend Sithole, tribal chief Chirau and Bishop Muzorewa, who prop up the myth of black-white rule—developed a plan to implement black majority rule. A constitution was drafted and voted on by the white majority in a referendum held January 30th. Over 85% of the white electorate voted to approve the new constitution which calls for "one man, one vote" parliamentary elections to be held April 20th. One hundred members will be elected to the parliament: 72 blacks and 28 whites. This means whites will have veto power since any constitutional change requires 78 votes. Furthermore, whites will maintain control over the judiciary, civil service and the military. At least one-fourth of the cabinet seats will be reserved for whites.

The interim government's main purpose with these superficial changes is to induce Britain and the U.S. to lift the economic sanctions and provide more material and moral support in the war against the Patriotic

Front. Rhodesia's lobbying efforts in Washington have been stepped up and it is reported that already 42 senators favor the lifting of sanctions. In England, the Conservative Party has pledged to lift sanctions should it come to power this spring.

Only two years ago Smith was affirming that whites would never give up their power in Rhodesia. Despite the fact that his latest plan would not institute real black majority rule, its existence represents a complete turn-about, testifying to the precarious military and economic situation of Smith's regime. The new constitution is his latest move in an effort to win politically and diplomatically what his regime is losing militarily. As a back-up strategy, should the constitutional maneuver fail, Smith is supporting the creation of private armies by Sithole and Muzorewa, thus increasing the possibilities of a civil war among the different black organizations.

Whether Smith manages or not to hold on and re-establish a consolidated imperialist post in Zimbabwe depends to a great degree on the forces of the Patriotic Front.

#### Victories with Problems

The successes of the Patriotic Front in the battlefield have been matched by its diplomatic successes. Cooperation between the Front and the "Front-line" states, particularly Angola, Zambia and Mozambique, has grown despite Rhodesia's increased

bombing of these countries. Workers in Mozambique are donating a day's wages each month to help sustain the refugee camps. Both Robert Mugabe, leader of ZANU, and Joshua Nkomo, leader of ZAPU, have recently finished international tours in which they received many pledges of support.

However, differences between the two organizations have created tensions. ZANU regards armed struggle as the fundamental means to achieve the national liberation of Zimbabwe. Within the Patriotic Front, it has called for the integration of the armed forces. ZAPU too is committed to armed struggle, but it has a history of negotiation with the white supremacist regime, particularly without consulting with its partner in the Front. Within the Patriotic Front it calls first for a political merger of the two organizations to be followed by a unification of their guerrilla forces.

Recently there have been reports of friction between the leadership of the two organizations and worse, of armed clashes over control of territory. U.S. and British imperialism have played upon these differences with the goal of splitting the Front.

At this moment, the ability of ZANU and ZAPU to settle their differences and carry through their new offensive is the greatest hurdle before their goal (encirclement of the cities) is achieved. Should they fail, Smith and his puppets may pull off their electoral charade and succeed in getting economic and military sanctions lifted. ●



Remains of Rhodesian aircraft downed by guerillas earlier this year.