

¡QUE VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!



Speech by Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, representative of Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña, Chicago, March 4, 1978

This speech by Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña representative Angel Rodriguez Cristobal was delivered at a March 4th demonstration and rally in Chicago demanding independence for Puerto Rico, freedom for the four Puerto Rican Nationalists, the imprisoned grand jury resisters and all political prisoners, and support for the Chicano/Mexicano liberation struggles. The Chicago event was one of a number held across the country as part of a national mobilization sponsored by the National Committee Against Grand Jury Repression, a formation which includes the Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano forces which have been leading the struggle against the repressive grand juries. Through these grand jury investigations, the US is attacking the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN), a clandestine Puerto Rican independence organization which has carried out over 60 bombings in the last four years, as well as the Puerto Rican liberation struggle as a whole, and its strongest supporters in the Chicano/Mexicano movement.

The Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano movements united firmly in the face of

these attacks, to pursue an aggressive strategy of defending the right of their peoples to engage in all forms of struggle necessary to win their liberation. As a result, the government attack was turned on its head, into a victory. The subpoenaees remained steadfast in their refusal to collaborate in any way with the grand jury witchhunt, and nine Latino activists were jailed as a result. But the FBI could gain no information from them, nor from anyone in the Puerto Rican communities of Chicago which they harassed in their search for the FALN. Nor could the government break the unity of the Chicano/Mexicano people and the Puerto Rican people. So the March 4th mobilization marked a number of victories in the struggle; Maria Cueto, Raisa Nemikin, Jose Lopez, Roberto Caldero, and Ricardo Romero were all released from jails, and many of them participated in the various demonstrations around the country. The demonstrations also marked the 24th anniversary of the attack on Congress by the Nationalists. Andres Figueroa Cordeiro, released after 23 years to return to Puerto Rico, has led in demanding the release of his compañeros still imprisoned,



credit: Workers World

Jose Lopez, Roberto Caldero and Ricardo Romero upon their release from jail. The release of these comrades was a victory of resistance against the grand jury repression which has been aimed at national liberation movements.

and in comparing the grand jury subpoenas to them, as a new generation of political prisoners committed to Puerto Rican independence.

As this issue of **BREAKTHROUGH** goes to press, the four remaining subpoenaees, Pedro Archuleta from New Mexico, and Julio, Andrés, and Luis Rosado, are coming up for a hearing demanding their release from jail in New York.

The speech which we are reprinting here was delivered against the backdrop of escalating revolutionary struggle within Puerto Rico itself. In January, commandos of the Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Popular captured the town offices and police station of Manatí, leaving slogans calling for independence, revolutionary struggle, and victory to the militant strikes going on in Puerto Rico, by the electrical workers union (UTIER), the bus drivers union (TUAMA), and others. Late last year, Alan Randall, a CIA operative responsible for coordinating anti-labor and anti-“terrorist” planning for the colonial administration, was brought to justice and executed by a group called the Labor Com-

mandos. Ever since, both counter-revolutionary violence and armed forms of struggle by the popular forces have escalated. Juan Caballero, a Teamster organizer, was tortured and killed by a police-based Death Squad. Miguel Cabrera, another Teamster, was arrested and accused of Caballero’s death and that of Randall. As the strikes continue, marked by increasing militance and police attacks, numerous acts of sabotage have been carried out. The generators of the San Juan airport were bombed. The colonial administration advised all tourists in the city to remain within the tourist quarter, El Condado, or on board the cruise ships, as their safety couldn’t be guaranteed.

Within the US, the leadership of the National Committee Against Grand Jury Repression has pushed people to recognize that the Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano peoples must not stand alone in their struggles or in the face of escalating attacks and violence by the State and right-wing forces (like the Klan patrolling the border with Mexico). The attempts by the imperialists to crush the resistance of the Puerto Rican people or to pick off the

leadership of their struggle for independence and self-determination, must be decisively repudiated and defeated. Active and concrete solidarity with Puerto Rican independence means making a fundamental break with white left politics that wrongly try to impose their own timetables and definitions on the struggles of oppressed nations. Instead, we need to identify the forces within the oppressor nation who can begin to unite *now* on the basis of internationalist solidarity.

The Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña, whose representative made this speech, was founded in 1962 by Juan Antonio Corretjer, a former vice-president of the Nationalist Party under Don Pedro Albizu Campos. The Liga was a proponent and participant in the Frente Revolucionario Anti-Electoral at the time of the colonial elections in 1976, a united front formation which also included the Puerto Rican Communist Party and the Movimiento Socialista Popular (MSP). In discussions after the elections,

this led to the formation of the Frente Revolucionario Anti-Imperialista (the FRAI) which has included the Liga, the MSP, as well as other non-party organizations, such as independentista women from MIA-Mujeres Integrete Ahora. The Liga Socialista, a Marxist-Leninist organization, believes that in order for Puerto Rico to be free, an anti-imperialist front of all revolutionary forces on the island must emerge, and that a vanguard party will emerge out of the armed and clandestine struggle rather than the mass struggle.

The National Committee Against Grand Jury Repression can be reached at 2403 West North Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647. There are also local chapters throughout the state of Colorado, in New Mexico and Arizona, and in New York City.

The Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña publishes a number of pamphlets and periodicals, available from Aptdo. 283, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 00657.

Compañeros y compañeras,

Before I begin I would like to extend fraternal greetings to the compañeros who are here tonight and to those who imperialism has prevented from their being here tonight. The Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña is grateful for the Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano compañeros for having invited us here to participate in this very important act. I think this act is well dedicated to the compañeros Oscar Collazo, Lolita Lebron, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irvin Flores, and Andrés Figueroa Cordero, as well as the compañeros Andrés Rosado, Luis Rosado and Julio Rosado and Pedro Archuleta. It is evident that this act as well as the names I have just mentioned clearly demonstrate how two peoples can unite under immense oppression and capitalist exploitation, in the manner that intense heat binds metals. Those that exploit us are enemies of the world, and they are equal in their exploitation regardless of whether they are called Puerto Ricans, Chicanos/Mexicanos, Venezuelans, Panamanians, Iranians, Blacks or Native Americans. This evening I would like to relate particularly to the case of the exploitation and oppression of Puerto Rico. Our people have been repressed and terrorized by Yankee imperialism [since] prior to military occupation of Puerto Rico in 1898. I will attempt to give you an account of some of the acts of terrorism and violence on our people. The Yankees destroyed our economy by controlling more than 85% of it. The Yankees disbanded our people by the forced emigration of 2 million of our brothers and sisters. The Yankees have sterilized more than 1/3 of our women. The Yankees have used more than one-half-a-million Puerto Ricans to fight and die in their vicious wars of imperialist pillage and destruction. The Yankees have destroyed or substituted our wildlife and to some extent our language. The Yankees have conducted all sorts of criminal experiments, such as the experiments with napalm and other defoliants upon our territory before using them on our brothers in Viet Nam. The Yankees have experimented with all sorts of contraceptives upon our women. The pill was first distributed for experiments in Puerto Rico in 1955.

They are desperate with the stoic resistance of the Puerto Rican people. In this fit of desperation they intend to escalate the terror and violence to our people. So they announce their attempt of statehood for Puerto Rico. The purpose of statehood was none other than the authorization to

rob us of our natural resources such as copper, nickel, petroleum, the air, our land, and so on. All these maneuvers, compañeros, are geared towards the conversion of Puerto Rico into a military and industrial embankment from which they can continue exploiting and encroaching on the entire world, particularly our Latin American and Caribbean brothers. But inside the United States, these maneuvers are geared to strengthen the oppression of the Chicano/Mexicano, the Black, Native American and Asian people.

In order to give all these plans a legal character they announce statehood for Puerto Rico. Under imperialism, Puerto Rico will always be a colony; only by statehood it becomes a legal colony. And this [is] where I would like to begin to denounce the repression that the shareholders of Wall Street are carrying out as part of an escalation of violence and terror against the Puerto Rican workers in order to satisfy their colonial accomplices. This account is in reference to the [UTIER] workers' strike of the Autoridad de las Fuentes Fluviales [Water Resources Administration] or the electric company. Wall Street also tells its colonial bosses "You want to be Americans, then prove your loyalty to us. Repress the workers of the Union de Trabajadores de la Autoridad Metropolitana de Autobuses [TUAMA] also, and see if you can convince us." To prove this, the Yankees have given the colonial bosses all the assistance they need because they want to demoralize these two strikes. For in doing so they will also demoralize the independentista sector. This will enable them to continue their plans for the exploitation of Puerto Rico. Wall Street has also told the colonial bosses, "You have petroleum. Help us get it, because we need it."

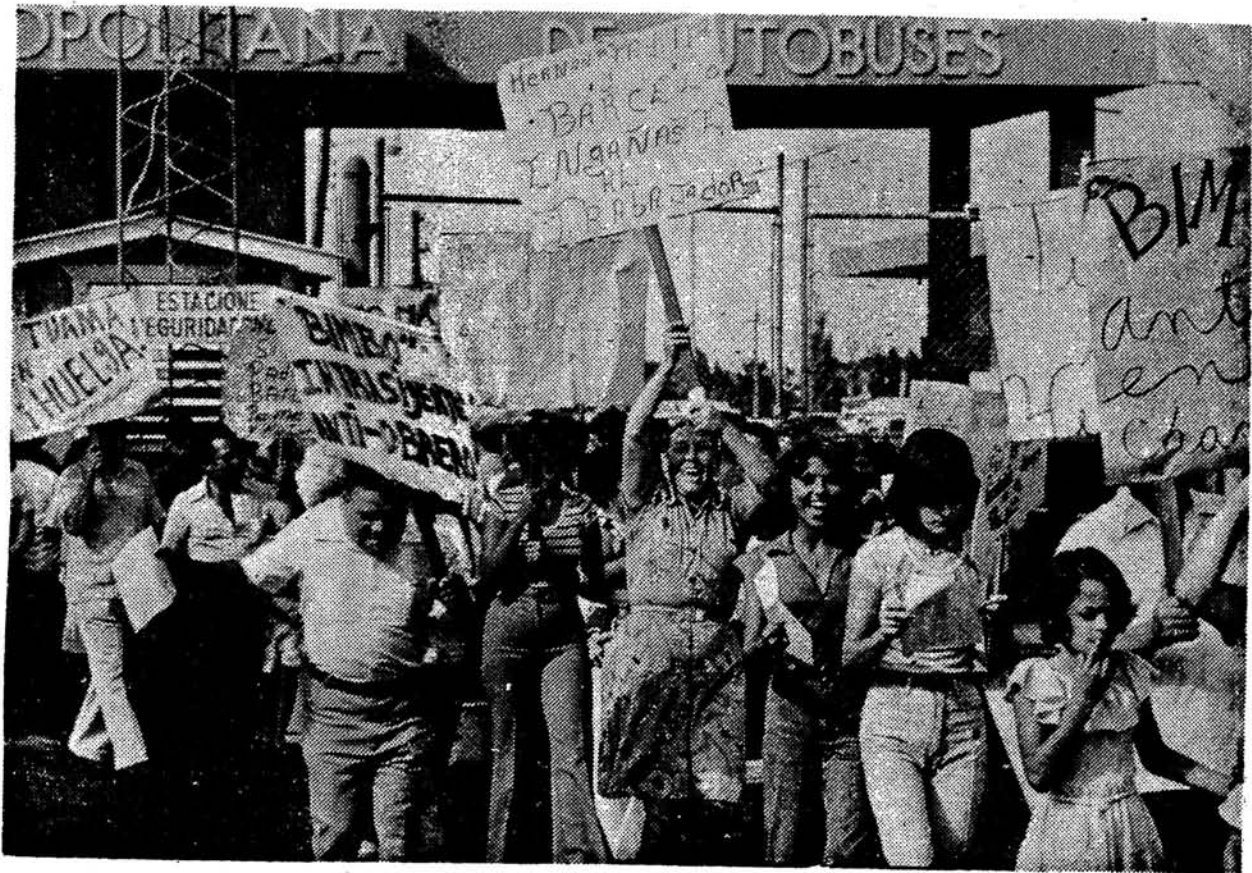
The colonial bosses, in order to prove that they are more American than Nixon, readily accepted the plan of the executioners of the imperialist plan. This is why they refused to settle the strike, hoping the strikers would eventually give in. But the strikers have learned many lessons from previous experiences. The AFF strike is two months old. Over 200 acts of sabotage [have been committed] which have resulted in the loss of over \$4 million. Out of these 200 acts, 65 of them were with explosives.

The strike has captured the attention of all the Puerto Rican people. Practically all the working class sectors have unconditionally supported the strike. Simultaneously, the independentista sector has begun to reorganize in such a way that they are able to strike at the enemy without being repressed.

"Los golpes enseñan" or: "The whacks teach you a lesson" is a Puerto Rican saying, and a good example of this is the Popular Front that was organized against the Marine forces in Vieques. The people of Vieques have learned their lesson well, as was evidenced by their recent demonstration with courage and dignity, when 40 fishermen, along with their families, were able to interrupt the operations that imperialist forces carry out on Vieques. I will relate more to this later.

There is a popular imperialist saying that goes, "The big fish will swallow the little fish." But the reality is another thing. The big fish will swallow the little fish if the little one is not organized, and only if the little fish allows the big fish to choose where and when to confront each other. Evidence that midgets can struggle against giants is the heroic example of Vietnam. The Chicano/Mexicano and Puerto Rican can struggle together to avoid precisely that imperialism swallow us up one by one. The ants are little but they come together and they drag big worms to their caves, and there consume them. The Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano people along with the Latin American and Caribbean countries can do the same to defeat the enormous imperialist worm.

Unfortunately at the present time the Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano people do not have sufficient support within the North American left. The left in this country is intoxicated with Marxist theories that they learned at imperialist universities. At the present time this left cannot see what is going on in Puerto Rico as a result of a plan which is not simply historical or theoretical speculation but a concrete reality. This concrete reality is the massive genocide of the Puerto



credit: Claridad

Striking bus drivers and their supporters in San Juan. Puerto Rican workers are conducting a militant and unified defense against repressive colonial violence directed at the public employee strikes.

Rican people at this moment, which the U.S. armed forces intends to intensify to benefit the exploiters of Wall Street.

It is unbelievable that in 1978, even after the experience of Vietnam, and after the terrible experience of Nazi Germany, the North American left can still sleep peacefully, and remain peaceful while Vieques is being used night and day by the Marines as a target practice area, not taking into account the residents of that little island.

Not only are they using us as target practice, but also they have invited the Brazilians, Chileans, Argentinians, Norwegians and French gorillas to do the same. It is hard to believe that the North American left has remained calm when a group of fishermen along with their families with the support of the people of Vieques are willing to collectively risk their lives and occupy the area of operations of the Marines as a protest to the oppression of their people. I would also like to add that while this was going on, helicopters of the Marines were trying to capsize the fishing boats by flying low and they criminally succeeded in overturning one of the boats.

It is hard to believe that they can remain calm when the Grand Jury in a fit of hysteria drags from one jail to another a compañero Chicano like Pedro Archuleta. These things are hard to understand by oppressed people. An Iranian student was telling me the other day, "Something must be going wrong or happening to North American society when apparently it is only moved when it watches television or when it is reading some science fiction novel, while it remains quiet and indifferent when they see it in reality." The destiny of a society, whose emotions and sensitivity can be programmed in computers every year and distributed so that they can be manifested in speeches and cries against imperialism on May Day and afterwards sit and eat turkey to give

thanks to a great nation on Thanksgiving Day, is certainly tragic. We the oppressed people cannot wait for this cycle to break to begin the struggle for our liberation.

It is for this reason that the Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña considers it an obligation and a commitment to unconditionally support the actions of clandestine organizations that are struggling for independence and socialism for Puerto Rico and for the cause of the Chicano/Mexicano people, until the real vanguard of our struggle is initiated. We know that this will expose our leadership and our organization to sudden attack by our enemies but this is preferable to becoming a part of the impotent and indifferent cycle of the so-called North American left and their alleged allies.

¡VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!

LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE OF THE CHICANO/MEXICANO PEOPLE!

DOWN WITH THE IMPERIALISTS!

—Angel Rodriguez Cristobal
Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña
March 4, 1978



Mexicano activist Ricardo Romero emphasized the uncompromising solidarity between his people and the Puerto Rican independence movement at a March 4th rally in San Francisco.