

Political Thesis of
the
Puerto Rican Socialist Party
THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE



¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre y Socialista!

The long and militant history of class struggle in Puerto Rico has led to the recognition that only socialism can guarantee true independence. In the last decades, the process of imperialist penetration in Puerto Rico has shown that capitalist development cannot solve, but can only accentuate, the problems of social injustice and economic inequality.

The history of Puerto Rico is that of a people in continuous struggle against the changing forms of imperialist domination and against the native bourgeoisie. This history is our history. As North Americans conscious of the nature of imperialism and the importance of internationalism, we must recognize that the fight for independence and socialism in Puerto Rico is part of a world-wide struggle against capitalism. The particular relationship that has existed historically between the United States and Puerto Rico, since the military invasion of 1898, and the present escalation of class struggle make it imperative for North Americans to understand and define their role in this process.

Over the past few years, in particular, a rapid succession of events has dispelled all illusions that Puerto Rico will continue indefinitely on the course of "commonwealth" exploitation and capitalist development. It has also become apparent that the U.S. bourgeoisie will not relinquish its "island paradise" passively—that it will resort to all types of military-police repression, racist propaganda and right-wing terrorism to preserve its hegemony over Puerto Rico.

In the 1970's, the escalation of class struggle in Puerto Rico and confrontation between independence forces and the colonial authorities have heightened consciousness about Puerto Rican independence and made the U.S. and colonial governments aware of their threatened political status. In the past two years, the National Guard has been mobilized twice against workers and students in a series of militant strikes. In 1973, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution supporting the Puerto Rican people's right to self-determination. On October 27, 1974, 20,000 people came together in Madison Square Garden to express their solidarity with the cause of Puerto Rican independence.

Most recently in Puerto Rico, workers at the Aqueduct and Sewers Authority staged a 6-week strike in November, 1974. Union leaders were jailed and the United Labor Movement (MOU) called for a general strike. The colonial government was ultimately forced to release its prisoners, but compensated with a wave of repression against workers, students and political groups. The level of struggle continued to escalate as water authority facilities were sabotaged and U.S. businesses bombed. The climate of tension culminated in the mobilization of the National Guard, police search-and-seizure operations and intense FBI activity, including right-wing terrorist attacks and bombings.

The intensity of these events must be considered in light of the changing character and forms of the independence movement in Puerto Rico. In its early stages, the independence struggle focused on formal separation from first Spain and then the

United States. Neither the Nationalist Party of the 1950's nor the Pro-Independence Movement (MPI) of the 1960's envisioned a socialist alternative to the years of colonial exploitation. Within this context, the emergence of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), a Marxist-Leninist party committed to the overthrow of colonial rule and the establishment of socialism, is of major historical significance. PSP, an outgrowth of the Pro-Independence Movement, was established in 1971 and organized its U.S. branch in 1973. The party, through its organizing work in factories, universities and communities and through the now daily publication of its newspaper, Claridad, has made pro-independence, socialist militancy a political force on the island.

The Political Thesis of the PSP, The Socialist Alternative, was approved by the Party Congress in February, 1974 and is a significant step in addressing major issues and raising important questions facing the struggle for socialism in Puerto Rico. Part I of this document offers an analysis of the economic and class structure of Puerto Rico, as a product of decades of imperialist penetration; Part II presents the program of the PSP for the transition period between capitalism and socialism; and Part III represents PSP's vision of strategy and tactics for the revolutionary seizure of power. While this double-issue of the NACLA Report does not include a translation of the PSP Thesis in its entirety, we believe it does provide a good representation of the analyses made and positions taken on a wide range of issues vital to the discussion of a "socialist alternative."

NACLA's decision to translate and publish this Thesis reflects our solidarity with the struggle for socialism in Puerto Rico as a whole, and not an endorsement of any one political group. It is our hope that by making major sections of the Thesis available in English we will be contributing to a more comprehensive political debate around the very issues that need clarification and further study. We hope this document will be read in conjunction with those of other groups on the Left in Puerto Rico and the United States, and we urge those who read Spanish to examine the PSP Thesis in its entirety.

In conclusion, we reiterate the invitation made by the PSP in its introduction, "to continue discussion of this thesis in the best spirit of improving it. In that way, this guide for revolutionary work will become more effective each day."

—NACLA-East

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introduction

This Political Thesis now submitted by the Puerto Rican Socialist Party for consideration and discussion by all the people, particularly the working class and its vanguard sectors, must be seen as a document in transition. We have done it this way for several reasons. First of all any document that hopes to analyze and study the overall reality of a people, the basis to project into the future, must necessarily be a transitory document because this reality is constantly changing. This is even more evident in our country, which is beginning to experience a period of deeply rooted transformations, and where the development of revolutionary practice will accelerate these changes.

Secondly, we hope that this Thesis will mark the beginning of a fruitful process of discussion that will culminate in the elaboration of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party program to be submitted for final approval in the Ordinary Congress to be held at the end of 1975. This program will bring together the conclusions of a process of discussion that we are now initiating and that will involve submitting all of the premises of this First Thesis of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party to profound and constructive criticism. It will gather the conclusions drawn from an analysis of our reality and the lessons drawn from a constantly growing revolutionary practice.

Part One

The National Reality

I. ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

In the last quarter of the 19th century, all capitalist nations entered the scramble for colonies. The younger ones, such as Germany, Japan and the United States, were late-comers to the division of the world, since their capitalist development took place after that of England, France and other countries. The United States, however, arrived in time to take possession of Hawaii, the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico between 1895 and 1898.

The capital accumulation process in these countries had exceeded their capacity for capital investment within their own national boundaries at a maximum rate of profit, forcing capitalists to seek new areas for investment. They also needed raw materials, such as minerals and agricultural products, and an available supply of cheap labor, in order to achieve a higher rate of profit. Similarly, capitalists wanted to establish new markets in the conquered territories, since productive capacity had exceeded demand within their own countries. Puerto Rico was, and still is, one of these conquered nations.

U.S. capital investments in Puerto Rico during the first half of the 20th century were concentrated in the sugar industry, tobacco and related activities and clothing manufacture destined for the domestic market. Of these,

The fundamental points of this Political Thesis have been developed over a period of many years through a fulfilling discussion process both on the base level and among the leadership of the PSP. The different aspects of the Party's political position, its tactical and strategic conceptions, have arisen from responsible practice, the study of Marxism-Leninism and its creative application to the Puerto Rican reality, and an ongoing process of discussion on all levels. This came to fruition at the beginning of this year when the Central Committee submitted the Thesis project for consideration by the base. The Thesis brought together the primary aspects of discussion and the points of agreement reached up to that time. Finally the Thesis was approved in the Extraordinary Congress of the PSP which took place in February 1974.

In spite of the intense process of discussion which collects the experiences of intense political practice and of all completed research, there are still parts of this document that demand more study and greater discussion. Important aspects of our reality and of the alternative that we offer for the Democratic Workers' Republic require more discussion and research. Neither can the strategic and tactical statements made in this document be seen as something static that will remain unchanged in the process of our struggle. The fire of practice will mold and shape them until the very victory of the Revolution. At this moment, they serve as a guide on the long road that stretches before us...

sugar cane production was by far the dominant economic activity. By 1932, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Cuba and Hawaii supplied 75 per cent of total sugar consumption in the United States.¹

Both sugar and tobacco production are based upon the existence of cheap but highly fertile land, and an equally cheap labor force. For nearly four decades these conditions permitted enormous amounts of surplus value to be exported and, to a large extent, realized as capital outside of Puerto Rico.

Capital is invested in Puerto Rico, as in any capitalist colony, to obtain the largest possible profit. To a very large extent, these profits are taken out of the country because ownership of the means of production in these activities lies mainly in North American hands.

The economic activities of a colony are always determined by the interests and needs of the dominant classes of the colonizing countries. Thus, throughout its history, the Puerto Rican economy has been characterized by the uneven development of its component sectors.

The Sugar Industry

Examples of uneven development abound among the different sectors of the Puerto Rican economy since 1898.



During the first three decades of the 20th century, the predominance of sugar production and its rapid expansion nearly eliminated food production and provoked a serious deterioration in our people's health. Technological development in the sugar industry was much faster than in other agricultural sectors, including tobacco. In non-agricultural activities, technological development was very slow or, in most cases, non-existent until the late 1930's. The clothing industry, a technologically backward and domestically-oriented sector, was almost the only economic activity outside sugar and tobacco that attracted foreign capital.

Based on the above, it is obvious that economic sectors undergo a process of uneven development and that those sectors characterized by a more rapid technological development are linked to capital imports. For this reason, the pattern of economic development in Puerto Rico is not necessarily compatible with national characteristics nor with rational planning; rather, it corresponds to the capitalists' drive to maximize the extraction of surplus value and, hence, the rate of profit.

For the same reason, investment in light industry, particularly since 1948, has gone hand in hand with the stagnation of sugar production in Puerto Rico. To ensure a steady development, both sectors depend on U.S. capital investment. However, in that period, the rate of profit in the Puerto Rican sugar industry had declined in relation to prevailing rates in Santo Domingo, Cuba and Hawaii. Puerto Rico's position as a captive market for food and industrial products from the United States has always tended to raise the price of labor on the island above that of other colonies and neo-colonies. Due to its low organic composition of capital (low capital-intensity in industry), the sugar industry depends on cheap labor to obtain an attractive rate of profit. The existence of larger territorial expanses suitable for sugar-cane production in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, combined with a cheaper supply of labor, contributed to the decline of the

Puerto Rican sugar industry. Furthermore, in the case of Hawaii, an accelerated process of mechanization raised the productivity of agricultural labor to a much higher level than that in Puerto Rico. The decadence of the sugar industry was due to a declining rate of profit and, hence, to the fact that U.S. capitalists refrained from further investment in that activity.

To this must be added the situation of the U.S. capitalist economy at the end of World War II. The United States accumulated enormous reserves of capital during the war from the sale of armaments and other goods to Europe. At the same time, the economies of the European capitalist countries were virtually destroyed by the war, leaving their own internal markets as well as the foreign markets supplied by them in North American hands. The United States, therefore, had to find new investment areas for its surplus capital and for the development of a light industry large enough to supply and capture the available markets.

In view of these conditions, the sugar industry in Puerto Rico flourishes or declines in response to the interests of a small group of yanqui and Puerto Rican capitalists, and by no means according to the real needs of our people.

Light Industry

It is within this framework that the economic policies of the colonial government, particularly its industrialization program, must be examined. The growth strategy based on light industry began during the 1940-1945 period, with the colonial government's attempts to generate a system of state capitalism. This strategy prompted the growth of three basic industries: cement, glass and ceramics. However, it also entered into contradiction with the interests of imperialism and a sector of the commercial petty bourgeoisie. The colonial government responded to this conflict by taking the line of least resistance. The economic sell-out to big foreign capitalists continued.

initiating the second stage of industrialization.

After 1945, capital imports and the transfer of the few state-owned corporations to the private sector were greatly increased. With the colonial government's economic policy totally subordinate to imperialism, Puerto Rico entered the era of light industry based on foreign investment.

Economic activity flourished while the low cost of labor, freight and other factors provided investors with a much higher rate of profit in Puerto Rico than in the United States.

By the mid-sixties, however, the rate of profit began to decline. Labor costs rose, in part, due to a rise in the price of U.S. industrial and agricultural goods (which directly affected Puerto Rico as a captive market) and the growing struggles of the working class over demands for meeting immediate basic needs. The rise in freight and transportation costs and the Kennedy Round tariff agreements, which made many products of European light industry more competitive on the U.S. market than Puerto Rican goods, also contributed to the stagnation and even decadence of light industry. For these reasons, U.S. capitalists stopped investing and reinvesting at the same rate in Puerto Rican light industry, while initiating such investment in other Latin American, Asian and European countries.

The fact that Puerto Rico is a captive market for the United States and that it must rely on the U.S. merchant fleet means that products which determine the value of labor-power get more expensive and wages tend to rise. Wage-increases, in turn, reduce the rate of profit in light industry, since it has a relatively low organic composition of capital. Here again, it is evident that under the colonial-capitalist regime the fundamental activities of Puerto Rico's economy depend on the rate of profit for yanqui capitalists and not on the realities and needs of the Puerto Rican people.

The Oil Industry

During the 1960's, Puerto Rico embarked on stage three of its industrialization strategy, this time importing U.S. capital for heavy industry. This stage is characterized by large-scale investment in constant capital (raw materials, machinery, buildings, energy, etc.) and a low level of investment in the purchase of labor power. Thus, although investment during the sixties and early '70's has been very substantial, the number of new jobs created has been minimal. For example, in the case of refineries and the petrochemical and chemical industries, only 7800 new jobs have been created despite an investment of 1500 million dollars.²

The proximity of Venezuela and the geographic location of Puerto Rico on the oil route to the United States greatly facilitates the utilization of Puerto Rico as a refining center to supply intermediate petrochemical products for large U.S. industries. Other encouragements for this type of investment include large tax exemptions and the fact that wages paid to Puerto Rican workers are much lower than those paid in the United States for an equal amount of labor. Unconsidered is the fact that the refining of high-sulphurated petroleum in Puerto Rico creates very serious environmental problems.

Heavy industry in Puerto Rico is highly polluting. In

addition, it utilizes enormous amounts of drinking water and electricity, it penetrates into large expanses of agricultural land and provides very few jobs. To a large extent, the development of heavy industry constitutes the objective basis for heightened consciousness about the environment—as evidenced in Puerto Rico during the 1960's at many levels, including the political.

Puerto Rico's environmental problems include the destruction of beaches by sand-extractions and oil spills; the elimination of fishing due to the destruction of swamps; the destruction of fertile agricultural valleys; the contamination from the pharmaceutical industry, especially in the Barceloneta region; the proliferation of garbage dumps that pollute the waters, air and soil; the pollution of rivers, lakes, bays and coasts by disposal of sewage waste, particularly acute in the bays at Ponce and Mayaguez ravaged by wastes from the tuna fish industry. All this creates serious health problems, such as the high incidence of respiratory illness in Playa Guayanilla (19 per cent of the population suffers from obstructive respiratory illness) and Catano (where 50 per cent of the population suffers from throat illnesses, particularly in the communities of Amelia and Sabana).

Heavy industry uses large quantities of surface and subsoil waters, for which it pays nothing to the Puerto Rican people. The establishment of more petrochemical, pharmaceutical, chemical and related industries would further aggravate the destruction of water reservoirs, which has already begun in Barinas de Yauco, and would reduce water supplies for agriculture and home use. It would also worsen the problem of inefficient utilization of energy. The superport and petroleum complex projects that the yanqui capitalists plan to locate in the Anasco-Rincon-Aguada area would enormously increase these serious problems.

These projects would also imply a considerable increase in the use of highly fertile agricultural lands for industrial purposes, while land scarcity is already a serious problem (the construction of horizontal dwellings has already taken up 20 to 25 per cent of Puerto Rico's flat terrains). In order to process 3 million barrels of petroleum daily, the superport and petroleum complex would require about 25 thousand flat acres of the best agricultural lands,³ such as the valleys of Anasco, Culebrinas and Corcegas.

In addition, the best agricultural land in Puerto Rico is taken over by U.S. military bases. When we add up the 25 thousand acres of the oil complex, the 36 thousand requested by the mining companies in Utuado, Lares, Adjuntas, Jayuya and northern Ponce, the 13 per cent of arable lands occupied by the U.S. armed forces and other U.S. government agencies, and the continued, chaotic construction of land-extensive private homes in the agricultural valleys, the serious threat posed to Puerto Rico's agricultural as well as political future is clear.

Presently, the size of the Puerto Rican population has become an obstacle to the capitalists' economic plans for the island. Frequently heard are the persistent ideological assertions of so-called over-population in Puerto Rico. This will be increasingly stressed as the economic and political crisis of the colonial-capitalist system deepens. While it is said that the country is over-populated, foreign immigration to Puerto Rico is actively encouraged; already more than 150,000 North Americans, Cuban "refugees" and others have entered the country.

In this stage of heavy industry, the Puerto Rican colonial-capitalist system faces the deepening of old contradictions and the appearance of new ones. Among these, the energy problem, inflation, unemployment, the public debt and environmental colonialism stand out.

This stage has required an annual increase of nearly 15 per cent in the supply of electrical energy, primarily for the pharmaceutical, petrochemical and chemical industries. Of these, the Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG) and Union Carbide together consume about 10 per cent of all the electricity currently generated in Puerto Rico. The PPG consumes as much energy as all of Puerto Rico consumed in 1950. Taken as a whole, the industrial sector consumes about 42 per cent of the electricity annually produced. Only three or four years ago, it consumed only 35 per cent, an index of how heavy and semi-heavy industries (highly mechanized) consume increasing relative and absolute amounts of energy.⁴

Most of Puerto Rico's heavy and semi-heavy industries utilize industrial processes that require large amounts of energy, while their output is channelled to the United States for use in industrial processes that require much less. Similarly, the elaboration of individual consumer goods in the United States, making use of raw materials produced in Puerto Rico, generates many jobs that no longer exist on the island.

Furthermore, since the United States employs more living labor (i.e. labor force), the value-added is greater than it is in Puerto Rico. Recent studies show that Puerto Rico uses energy more inefficiently than most countries of the world, measured in terms of the Gross National Product (GNP) per unit of total energy consumed (usually electrical energy). However, if we consider only that part of the GNP that remains in Puerto Rico, mainly in the form of wages, this inefficiency is even more pronounced. Moreover, the study shows that Puerto Rico and Holland tend toward steadily decreasing efficiency in the field of energy, Puerto Rico being the worst among the 16 countries under study.⁵ This situation is due to the increase in the relative importance of highly mechanized industry and the decreasing relative importance of light industry in the Puerto Rican economy over the last ten years.

Recent changes in the petroleum industry on a world-scale have worsened the energy problem in Puerto Rico. The drive for super-profits by the big oil companies has forced the United States to ration drastically the use of petroleum derivatives. This rationing includes Puerto Rico and is threatening to reduce the supply of fuel for the Aqueduct and Sewers Authority (AFF). Furthermore, all U.S. refineries were recently ordered to reduce the production of gasoline by 25 per cent and to increase the production of residual oil and other fuels needed for the winter. Despite the fact that Puerto Rico does not have harsh winters, the island could face the possibility of being forced to control the sale of gasoline as a result of this measure.

Recent increases in oil prices at the international level, as well as those expected in the near future, will place the Puerto Rican economy in an ever more precarious position. This will be reflected in higher food prices, due to increased freight and transportation costs, and higher fuel prices for agricultural machinery in the United States. Puerto Rican workers will be greatly affected, since they

depend on public and private transportation to travel to work. Furthermore, price increases in residual oil have already led the AFF to announce substantial hikes in the electricity rates paid by households. Nevertheless, big industries pay much lower electricity rates than those levied upon households, which represents an additional subsidy to foreign capitalists paid for by the Puerto Rican people.

The increase in oil prices will make it much more difficult to attract highly mechanized industry to Puerto Rico, since it will be preferable to establish them in regions where alternative sources provide cheaper energy. Moreover, wage increases won through class struggle at the economic level, together with high freight costs, will dampen the prospects for survival of light industry based on U.S. capital investments. These last two developments will increase unemployment in Puerto Rico, with all its accompanying social tensions.

The prospect of economic crisis in Puerto Rico has made the colonial government cling to the super-port and mining projects as its last hope of salvation. It attaches particular importance to the job opportunities that the construction phase of these projects will create. However, recent political developments in the Middle East and strong popular opposition in Puerto Rico have, for the time being, caused the suspension of these projects. This, in turn, has increased pressure to begin mining activities as soon as possible. It has also accentuated the tendency to borrow large sums of money for public works, adding to the burden of Puerto Rico's public debt when the borrowing margin of the colonial government is nearly exhausted.

Structural Characteristics of the Puerto Rican Economy

Undoubtedly, the productive forces in Puerto Rico have developed to a degree unknown in the past. Such growth is an historical process that necessarily occurs in a dynamic world. Thus, we do not deny the development of the productive forces. On the contrary, our proposal seeks to develop them to superior levels, in order to solve the serious problems of our society.

Achieving this goal requires full consciousness of the nature and gravity of current problems and of the economic crisis in Puerto Rico. The crisis is due mainly to the development and workings of colonial capitalism, to its monopolistic, extremely dependent and erratic character, its persistent unemployment, continuous inflation and unequal distribution of income.

Capitalist development, both in Puerto Rico and on a world scale, has generated a rapid process of economic concentration. Production takes place in larger and larger enterprises that acquire ever-greater control over the country's economic and political life. Furthermore, ownership of the means of production takes on an increasingly concentrated pattern. That is, not only does production take place in large factories, but the ownership of several medium-sized enterprises belongs to a single monopoly. This situation is very common in Puerto Rico, where a handful of multi-national corporations own many medium-sized plants, and thereby control the basic structure of economic activity. A few corporations, exercising extensive control over the means of production, can impose their own conditions on sales,

production levels, prices and distribution of markets and profits among themselves.

The degree of concentration in Puerto Rican industry is very high. Since industry is the dominant sector, such concentration characterizes the entire economy. The rate of monopolization has been increasing continuously and "the over-all situation clearly reflects a general increase in the levels of concentration."⁶

Several studies show that in 14 types of industry, the top three firms control over 50 per cent of the entire market. (This does not include the export-oriented firms, where the degree of concentration is even greater.) In eight of these industries, the degree of monopolization exceeded 75 per cent. Furthermore, such cases involved the most important types of industries, such as cement and petrochemicals. A correlation was also found to exist between greater foreign capital penetration and a higher degree of monopolization. The study indicates that the monopolization of the Puerto Rican economy is greater than that in England and the United States.⁷ This high degree of industrial concentration results, among other things, from the presence of technologically advanced enterprises which realize greater economies of scale. Quite obviously, the monopolistic impact of these larger firms is greater when they are imposed on smaller economies. Pueblo Supermarkets, Inc., for example, is not a big monopoly within the U.S. economy, but in Puerto Rico it does function as one, given the relatively smaller size of the economy. Capital concentration and centralization co-exist alongside many small and medium-sized firms. Some of them belong to medium and small capitalists, nationals as well as foreigners, while others are owned by large corporations. Nevertheless, most of these small and medium entrepreneurs are subject to one or another form of exploitation and control by the monopolistic industrial enterprises, which control their lines of credit, supplies, prices and markets. These firms exploit workers to a larger degree, paying low wages and salaries and selling their products at high prices.

The problem of control reaches intolerable levels with respect to commodity imports and distribution, where monopoly control is very high and, at the same time, constitutes a fundamental cause of the high cost of living. A government report⁸ points out the degree of concentration in food imports and distribution: one firm (Carnation) handles 75 per cent of evaporated milk imports; one packaging plant distributes 95 per cent of pork fat; three firms account for 100 per cent of baby food imports; two firms import and distribute 79 per cent of the total rice supply; four firms import and distribute 77 per cent of potatoes; one firm distributes 86 per cent of corn meal; two firms distribute 92 per cent of canned beans; and one per cent of all the supermarkets realize 44 per cent of all sales. The list goes on, but this small sample is indicative of the general situation.

Monopolies take advantage of this almost absolute control by fixing high prices, raising them at will and exploiting workers and small producers and merchants.

The financial sector is also highly concentrated, dominated on a world-scale by a handful of families. This pattern manifests itself in Puerto Rico as well, where the financial sector is dominated by the Ferre, Carrion, Bird and Garcia families, in subordinate association with international bankers. There are fifteen banks in the country (including the **Banco Gubernamental de**

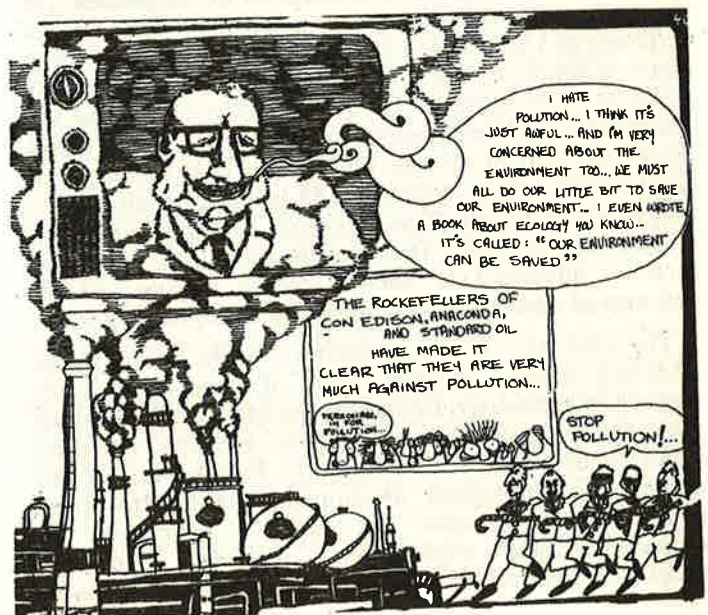
Fomento—Government Development Bank) with total assets of \$4,826 million as of May 1973.⁹ There is no sector more monopolized than the banking sector. These financial cliques utilize the degree of monopolization to obtain super-profits both in banking and industry. The Puerto Rican economy illustrates the close relationship between the financial monopoly and the commercial and industrial monopolies, most clearly expressed by the fact that the same economic groups and even families are present in both sectors.

The available evidence also shows that the agricultural sector; and related activities such as the dairy industry, food distribution and land ownership, are undergoing a process of greater concentration. Greater inequality in the distribution of land and resources has accompanied profitable land speculation by powerful firms and individual capitalists, the common bankruptcies and mounting debts of small producers, and other aspects of colonial capitalism.

In 1964, 15,426 farms realized total sales of \$1200 or more per farm. By 1969, only 7431 farms remained in this category. These farms, however, cover a total area of 1,001,333 acres, out of a total farming area in Puerto Rico of 1,334,800 acres. This means that 25,256 farms have an average size of 12 acres, since their total acreage is only 333,467. Thus, the general picture is one of a small number of very big farms with very high revenues. In fact, in 1964, 1060 farms of 260 acres or more controlled 46 per cent of all cultivated land.¹⁰ This tendency toward concentration in agriculture is steadily increasing.

A parallel phenomenon exists within the framework of agricultural crisis: decreasing land-utilization for agricultural purposes. In 1964, 585,444 acres were cultivated, while in 1969 only 362,642 were planted. Over the same period, farms with annual revenues of \$1200 or more reduced the number of acres destined to agricultural crops from 472,438 to 290,541.¹¹

Clearly, one of the fundamental causes of the total crisis in agriculture is its relatively monopolistic character. Landowners—individuals, families or large enterprises—plant or refrain from planting according to their profit expectations, without taking into account the objective consumer needs of our people.



In synthesis, the colonial-capitalist system gives rise to a process of capital concentration and centralization. Monopolies have a competitive advantage over small and medium-sized enterprises, their levels of productivity are higher and, hence, their rate of profit greater. Moreover, their economic power and control enable them to take over the surplus produced by smaller enterprises, leading many of them to bankruptcy.

The tendency toward monopolization has proceeded so rapidly in Puerto Rico primarily due to the economic policy of the colonial government and to foreign penetration; that is, due to the relations of dependency.

Dependency is an historical process which has developed as a consequence of capitalist expansion as a world system. The capitalist system is plagued by contradictions, by uneven development. Thus, dependency takes on a variety of characteristics in different historical moments and in different places. Today, it takes on its maximum expression under the hegemony of U.S. capital, rapidly penetrating the distinct aspects of social life: economics, politics, culture and others. Puerto Rican society is a case of dependency at its maximum level.

Capital concentration and centralization in the advanced capitalist countries, especially in the United States, provide the material basis for this process, by which the multi-national firms become the basic structure of monopoly capital. Of the 500 largest firms in the United States, at least 150 of them have branches in Puerto Rico.

The dependency of the Puerto Rican economy has been evident since the last century. But the content of this domination, as well as the form, have changed. Today, these relations of dependency affect all aspects of economic and social activity. The dominance of foreign capital, primarily North American capital, and its enormous political power have generated a system of domination in which domestic capital must adapt to foreign capital, and in which the national bourgeoisie gradually loses its identity. Its interests are no longer "national"; rather, they become identified more and more with the interests of big yanqui capital. Thus, our struggle must be to break these relations of structural dependency in favor of the interests of the working masses.

One of the clearest characteristics of this dependency is the progressive denationalization of the Puerto Rican economy as a whole. Among other things, foreign capital controls almost 81 per cent of manufacturing assets, 85 per cent of retail trade and 100 per cent of air and sea transportation. Furthermore, foreign enterprises account for 81 per cent of all jobs and 90 per cent of industrial products for export. Similarly, 88 per cent of all private investment in Puerto Rico is foreign, and this proportion is increasing annually. Denationalization of the economy is most advanced in sectors which require greater amounts of capital and which are also most profitable.

The dominance of yanqui capital over the Puerto Rican economy implies another form of dependency with respect to technology. Economic growth requires modern methods of production, but these methods must be subordinate to the socio-economic development of the country. Technological development in Puerto Rico, however, has become yet another instrument of domination and exploitation. Authentic technical progress, which would permit the domestic production of

basic commodities, has not taken place. The indiscriminate assimilation of technology not only implies the incorporation of determinate forms of production, but more importantly, limitations on what to produce.

Technological dependency is also evident in the distribution pattern of technical progress. In the case of Puerto Rico, technological penetration has not had a generalizing effect. On the contrary, technical assimilation has been concentrated in determined economic sectors, while others have remained on the margin—the most dramatic example being that of agriculture. The unequal distribution of technical progress is another basic cause of the structural imbalances of the Puerto Rican economy.

An additional indicator of dependency is our economy's high coefficient of foreign trade, which fluctuates around 0.58, one of the highest in the world. Few nations depend to such an extent on foreign trade for their normal operations. This situation becomes alarming when we examine the continual deficits in Puerto Rico's trade balance. For 1972, the trade deficit, that is the excess of imports over exports, reached the record level of 1,153 million dollars.¹²

Due to the deterioration of agriculture, production no longer matches consumption. This is reflected in decreased food production accompanied by rising consumption, which determine an economic structure dependent on the dominant economy. This growing dependency on external supplies has grave consequences for the economy in general. Continued reliance on food imports reflects the economic loss suffered by agriculture in Puerto Rico, due to its inability to satisfy the demand for high-protein goods.

The need to revitalize the agricultural sector is a fundamental priority, since we import approximately 68 per cent of all food consumed. Such dependency imposes an absolute limit on any policy of price-controls that attempts to better the living standards of the working masses. It is the basis for the failure of every attempt made by the Department of Consumer Affairs or its predecessor, ASERCO (Consumer Services Agency).

Financial dependency also signals the Puerto Rican economy's degree of subordination. Increases in the external debt, both public and private, represent another form of net indebtedness, and the payment of nearly 200 million dollars in interests.¹³ By 1973, the external debt approached 8,000 million dollars,¹⁴ that is, \$2,700 for every Puerto Rican. Moreover, the external debt is used to increase the wealth of a handful of capitalists.

The evolution of financial movement in our dependent economy has provoked spiraling debts that, in turn, require ever-greater amounts of external loans.

All of the above signifies the plunder of our economy, the growing loss of what our people produce. In 1971-72, 1,000 million dollars were sent abroad in the form of profits, interests and dividends—20 per cent more than the previous year.¹⁵ This quantity represents 21 per cent of the net income generated by the economy.

U.S. companies earn far greater profits in Puerto Rico than in the United States. Last year, for example, food sales accounted for 12.5 per cent in Puerto Rico and 1.9 per cent in the United States; for non-electrical machinery it was 32 per cent in Puerto Rico and 4.6 per cent in the

What would your profits be if you didn't have to pay any taxes?

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PUERTO RICO U.S.A. ?

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United States; for electrical machinery 26.1 per cent in Puerto Rico and 7.37 per cent in the United States.¹⁶

Due to the dependent relationship, the structure and productive capacity of the Puerto Rican economy have never been, and are not at present, consistent with the interests of the Puerto Rican people. This was evident when the economic structure was originally organized around sugar production for the benefit of the United States; later, to channel surplus capital into highly productive activities; and today, to resolve an energy crisis.

Other Fundamental Characteristics of the Economy

A. Unemployment

Every capitalist economy maintains a portion of the labor force unemployed. Puerto Rico's colonial status renders the problem of unemployment even more acute. Unemployment levels fluctuate between 12 per cent (colonial government figures) and 30 per cent (U.S. government figures). More than 400,000 workers without jobs or partially unemployed!

The bourgeoisie utilizes the weapon of unemployment—and maintains a standing reserve army of labor—to divide the working class and pay low wages. In Puerto Rico this situation is very pronounced, given the dependent structure of the economy and its uneven development in response to foreign needs. Thus, production techniques do not correspond to the employment level of the economy and surplus is not channeled to create new sources of employment.

The deepening crisis of world capitalism, which today is manifested by the "energy crisis," will produce a rise in unemployment. Many factories will never be actualized and many existing plants will be forced to reduce production or maintain current levels, while thousands of workers are laid-off and others remain unemployed.

It has been demonstrated throughout history that this politico-economic system is incapable of providing job opportunities for our people. The social and economic consequences of keeping part of the country's most valuable resource idle are so staggering that no statistical

indicator could reflect its full magnitude.

Based on past experience, it is naive to think that these problems depend on whether a Popular Party or New Progressive government is in power. The colonial-capitalist system itself is incapable of channelling capital accumulation toward greater job opportunities. Only the change to a superior form of social organization will create the conditions to contend with this problem.

B. Distribution of Income

Another area in which current problems abound is in the poor and unjust distribution of income. While there has been a considerable rise in national income, its distribution is concentrated more every day in the hands of the ruling class and its closest intermediaries.

Recent studies show that the wealthiest 20 per cent of the population appropriates 51 per cent of personal income, while the poorest 20 per cent receives only 5 per cent of it.¹⁷ In 1970, 88 per cent of all workers received less than the minimum income set by the Department of Health for a family to live in healthy conditions.

Another aspect of the unequal distribution of income is its geographic distribution. Puerto Rico has one of the highest coefficients of regional inequality in the world. Approximately 60 per cent of the municipalities have an annual per capita income of less than 500 dollars.¹⁸

It is therefore no coincidence that 33 per cent of the population must receive public assistance (welfare) with all the social and economic consequences that this situation implies.

These problems arise from the high degree of economic concentration and the brutal differentiation that exists in the Puerto Rican economy, that creates a large "marginal" population—marginalized in terms of income and access to social and cultural services.

C. Persistent Inflation

In general terms, inflation consists of a continual rise in prices and, hence, in the cost of living, while wages do not increase at the same rate. Inflationary pressures have become characteristic of the Puerto Rican economy and one more form of exploitation.

In 1973 inflation reached 18 per cent. This means that a product that cost 10 dollars last year now costs 11.80 dollars. But the method of computation used for this official index underestimates the rise in prices, and in reality the problem is much worse. Inflation affects primarily those who receive a fixed income and, in the case of workers, constitutes an indirect way of lowering real wages. In fact, real wages of factory workers declined from \$1.74 an hour to \$1.70 due to the rise in prices.²⁰

The causes of this phenomenon are varied, but all are related to the colonial-capitalist structure of Puerto Rico. The first is the captive nature of our market, which forces us to buy basic subsistence goods on the U.S. market, one of the most expensive and inflationary in the world. To this must be added the irrational application of taxes (tariffs) on goods that enter from countries other than the United States, and the unfair application of navigation laws, which obliges Puerto Rico to use only the U.S. merchant fleet—the most expensive in the world—for trade with the United States.

To make the situation even worse, the monopolistic structure of import activities and the distribution of goods allows certain entrepreneurs to inflate prices to their advantage. In addition the use of obsolete methods, which incorporate many intermediaries, allows each one in turn to add something to the price.

Similarly, the destruction of agriculture necessitates external dependence for subsistence goods, and imposes high prices for what little is nationally produced.

This entire panorama has been aggravated by the economic policies of the colonial-capitalist governments, which have never been able to carry out a plan of integral economic development to control the cost of living.

The continuing deterioration of capitalism, especially its "energy crisis," will accelerate the inflationary process to intolerable levels. The production of material goods requires vast amounts of energy and the capitalist world currently has a limited capacity for refining petroleum, which is the principal source of energy. While in real terms Puerto Rico does not face a scarcity of oil, the oil policies of the United States have created one. To the degree that dependence is maintained, any contraction in the U.S. economy will be reflected in Puerto Rico and will cause a stagnation in productive capacity. This in turn will aggravate the problem of the cost of living. For the next few years, the "energy crisis" will set a rhythm of escalated inflation.

It is clear that the obsolete projects of imperialism and of the traditional political parties (PNP and PPD) cannot offer positive means toward the authentic, independent and stable development of the Puerto Rican economy. The capitalist model of economic growth has reached its

end; its incapacity to solve the problems of the Puerto Rican people—housing, employment, income, education and health—is now evident.

Some Social Manifestations of Exploitation

Undoubtedly, the highest levels of exploitation in the capitalist system can be found in factories, work shops and in centers where capital and labor meet face to face, day after day. But capitalist exploitation that begins in the work place definitely does not end there. Such a system carries inequality and dehumanization in its very entrails, while radiating other manifestations of exploitation throughout the whole country as seen in the inefficient and unjust health system, the perpetual housing problem, high crime rates and an educational system oriented to colonization.

These problems are dialectically related to the economic-political situation in Puerto Rico. They are direct consequences of the incapacity of colonial capitalism to generate integrated and independent economic development. The roots of "social problems" can be found in the characteristics of the colonial-capitalist system: dependency, confiscation of profits by large enterprises, chronic unemployment, inflation, emigration and the unjust distribution of income. Eliminating these things means transforming the system.

The Housing Problem

Housing is one of the principal needs of every human being. Thus, for millions of Puerto Rican families, their priority is finding a "place" to live.

In 1972 there were 225,000 dwellings that did not comply with the minimum requirements of health and



Firestone workers on strike in Puerto Rico, April 1973.

security.²¹ More than 40 per cent of the population was living in inadequate or deteriorating housing. Moreover, the situation is becoming more and more acute. While housing construction increased by only 24 per cent, inadequate or deteriorating housing increased by 68 per cent.

When examined on a regional basis, the problem is even more serious. The extremely unbalanced growth of colonial capitalism has made social manifestations of exploitation far worse in certain regions of the country than in others. In urban zones, there are 125,000 inadequate dwellings and 100,000 in rural zones. But, since the majority of the population lives in urban zones, the problem is greater there than in the countryside. In several towns such as Barceloneta, Santa Isabel, Vieques, Culebras, Ceiba, Coamo, Utuado and others, more than 60 per cent of the housing units are in a state of deterioration.

Moreover, the cost per unit of housing construction continues to rise. For 1972 the average cost of private housing placed on the market was \$28,000. According to the requirements of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the Washington agency that guarantees mortgage loans in Puerto Rico, the minimum annual income of a family must be \$11,000 to qualify for acquiring one of these dwellings. More than 75 per cent of Puerto Rican families receive a lower income than this. Those who are able to qualify would be forced into debt for 30 years. Forty per cent of their income would go towards the loan, interest and insurance payments which would mean that, in the end, the overall payments would be three times the original price. For the majority, who are unable to afford private housing, there remains public housing, renting deteriorating housing or directly taking over the land. The construction costs for public housing have risen tremendously, already surpassing \$18,000 per unit.

This problem gets worse in the presence of the totally inadequate nature of necessary services. These services are provided only in the neighborhoods of big executives and the capitalists. In contrast, the worker is relegated to four walls in the noisiest, most contaminated and dangerous locations. Meanwhile the banks, financial corporations and construction companies continue to reap more and more profits. Urban land speculation is an inherent part of this system. Thus, interest rates rise according to the whims of monopoly financiers, which simultaneously increases the cost of living.

But the housing problem is only a part of something more general: the non-existence of a comprehensive, independent urban development. This situation is inevitable under the prevailing anarchy of colonial capitalist rule—the system which provides the material base for this crude form of exploitation continually unleashed against our people.

Health

It is well known that the health of the population and the extent of medical services depends to a great degree on the economy, science and culture of the country. Health presupposes physical, mental, social and economic well-being and not only the absence of sickness. Infectuous and parasitic diseases do not constitute the main enemies of health—rather it is the poor distribution of economic wealth. In this sense a dependent economy is the enemy of health.

Low income coupled with the constant increase in the cost of living forces the worker and the unemployed to remain at a very depressed standard of living. The lack of adequate social services greatly burdens their lives. What available education there is does not allow workers to adequately develop their potential or enrich their sensibilities. Nor does it prepare them to hold a satisfactory job which would guarantee more income and a higher standard of living. The impossibility of obtaining housing on the market together with the constant deficit of public housing forces one to live in shocking and miserable dwellings. The high cost of medical and hospital services along with the qualitative and quantitative deficiencies of public health services, not to mention the complete absence of preventive medicine, deprives people of their right to good health. Our evidence demonstrates that those from poor areas are most subject to the severest illnesses and chronic suffering yet the least likely recipients of adequate medical attention. Furthermore, the foods which the worker can purchase are inadequate for a balanced diet and therefore increase the level of malnutrition.

Because of this, tens of thousands of people who work their whole lives to create someone else's wealth, suffer constant malnutrition, die from hunger or die prematurely from illnesses brought on by intolerable working conditions, miserable housing and lack of rest. These factors are inherent under capitalism but, in our case, are made worse by the colonial condition. The state, the political manifestation of the economic power of the capitalist class, organizes its agencies such as the health, housing and educational systems, to provide the minimal services necessary to keep the worker producing but not enough to improve his/her total welfare. This situation allows the capitalist to strengthen his grasp on the class structure while perpetuating exploitation.

The Health System in Puerto Rico

The structure of public health services in Puerto Rico is based on a regional system composed of public health sub-units in some neighborhoods, health centers or public health units in towns, general sub-regional hospitals and specialized ones in different sections of the country which are most populated. Such a system claims to accomplish the integration of services at three levels of concentration, permitting the free movement of patients within the system, while offering flexibility in its use of human and economic resources.

The organization is adequate but its operation has failed for not having scientifically utilized material resources nor taken full advantage of human potential.

Among the fundamental reasons for this failure is the lack of awareness and commitment on the part of the health workers who receive an elitist and denationalizing education which does not even provide them with the minimum knowledge of public health.

Moreover, the government is not able to use socially the wealth created by the workers to employ the necessary personnel or to maintain equipment and indispensable medicine to function adequately.

Other factors which influence this failure are the low salaries of these public employees, the lack of appropriate health information for the people and the poor distribution of existing resources.



At the same time the health system manifests one of the most dramatic inequalities in our society: "first class" patients receive services from the private sector while "second class" citizens, as well as all those rejected from the private sector, are relegated to public services, increasing the burden of crowded facilities even more. It is well known that the great majority of people are denied access to private medical benefits because of the cost. The private sector caters to less than 30 per cent of the population, yet it accounts for a budget of three times as much as the public sector. This fact allows us to see that the priorities of health care are established by those possessing economic power. Moreover, the health services are structured to provide emergency crisis care instead of constant attention, an emphasis on treating disease instead of preventing it, a concern with the medical rather than the social aspects of sickness, and only sporadic rather than continuous care. This erroneous focus neither plans towards the future nor allows for the maximization of the state of health of our people.

Obviously, the modernization that results from the spread of capitalism allows improvement of health indices and an increase in corresponding public services, but the colonial administrators try to magnify the facts falsely, converting figures into disproportionate propaganda.

The reality, however, is something else. Today 70 per cent of our population receives poor medical care. The infantile mortality rate is three times greater in those sectors with major socio-economic deprivation. The general mortality rate, which is the most meaningful and important indicator of the state of public health, increases year after year. In the physical development of the population there are notable differences among different social classes. At the same time, neuropsychiatric problems have been converted into the number one medical problem.

It is therefore understandable that in capitalist countries the pharmaceutical and medical industries are considered the most lucrative.

The pharmaceutical industry in capitalist countries should not be considered as health industries since business concerns and eagerness to make larger and larger

profits determine the production of medicine, equipment and medical instruments.

The socio-political system of Puerto Rico does not permit the establishment of a curative and preventive medical system up to national standards without going against the very foundations of the colonial capitalist system

Education in Puerto Rico

Education in Puerto Rico has the mark of the capitalist colonial society. It reflects the nature of our dependent and under-developed economy while manifesting and supporting the ideological vices of the colony. At the higher levels, directors and technicians are turned out to meet the requirements of big capital and the state apparatus, although the colonial assumption is that a significant number of these professionals must be imported from the metropolis. At all levels class relationships are reproduced and intensified; on the one hand, all the polished ideology of the bourgeois conception of the world is transmitted, and, on the other, our culture is weakened and belittled comparing it with that of the invading nation.

This whole process by which the motor forces of the regime are reinforced is hidden by a propaganda apparatus which presents education as the mechanism **par excellence** for overcoming economic and social limitations. This legend is nothing more than artificial embellishment of a grim reality: public and private education are roads over which only those from the economically powerful classes can travel in great number. Children of workers and the unemployed who manage to traverse the full path represent only a small percentage of the school population, not at all comparable to their proportional number within society.

This fact can be succinctly elucidated: the census of 1970 indicated that 49 per cent of the families earn less than \$3,000 annually, yet members from these families represent a proportion of only between 21 and 27 per cent of the university population in Puerto Rico.

As a corollary, enterprises which call themselves private universities carry on big business in keeping with the basis of the regime's propaganda, which presents

education as the best means of ascent in the society. Of the 47,286 matriculated students in the universities throughout the country, as noted by the latest Kirkpatrick Report,²² 16,493 are matriculated in private universities. In other words, close to one third of the university students buy education that is sold in private universities. Of these, close to half come from families with incomes of less than \$4,000 annually. This year, the expenses incurred by a matriculated student from a private university have reached \$1,595 compared to \$1,090 for a public university. Thus, one can infer the enormous sacrifices undergone by a family of meager resources forced to comply with classist education.

Thus, it is no coincidence that the colonial authorities have adopted a "hands off" policy in regard to the universities. Private universities represent a type of escape valve for the illusion which the authorities themselves have created. Therefore, any type of real control—going beyond strictly superficial control—on the part of the authorities would stop or limit the effectiveness of the escape, since, year after year, the number of students increases.

Yet education is also directed to satisfy certain necessities of the economic structure of the society. But under our colonial condition, even education is unable to surpass the limitations of our economic development, as defined by the dependent function of the national economy. Therefore, even though from 1962 to 1972 we were invaded by petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries, the production of technicians and scientists decreased in proportion to the total number of those matriculated.

What is more, this phenomenon points to the distortion of dependent capitalist development in Puerto Rico. Although industry in Puerto Rico and our working class have grown, the number of technicians has not grown accordingly, highlighting the lack of an important link in the capitalist industrial chain. Yet these positions are far from the hands of Puerto Rican technicians, even though some are quite willing to serve big capital. Instead large enterprises reserve any places of confidence for their own technicians and scientists that are recruited from the United States. This assures that a substantial part of the technology will not pass through the hands of the colonized people.

Education, moreover, assumes an ideological function of preservation, promotion and defense of the colonial capitalist regime. This is not only directed to sustain and reproduce ideological relations between the classes but also reinforces our colonial condition generating attitudes of prostration on the part of the colonized in the face of the culture of the metropolis. Education in every capitalist country discharges the first function. The second function is necessary in every colony.

Some of the specific forms of bourgeois capitalist education are the following: 1) dividing knowledge into hermetic sections of specialization, 2) divorcing theory from practice, 3) deepening the difference between the rural and urban areas, 4) making a cult of authority, 5) reinforcing elitism, 6) promoting contempt towards natural sciences by the humanists and vice versa, 7) creating the belief that the methodology of natural

sciences is the only correct scientific means towards so-called objectivity, 8) overestimating objective knowledge in the face of scepticism, subjectivity, religion and relativity, 9) suspending productive life while studying, 10) envisioning education as the means to become rich.

Many of these forms are mutually dependent. Others contradict themselves and represent different stages of bourgeois thought. But all aim towards the conception of the bourgeois world, with their schools acting as spokespeople.

Let's look at these last points in detail:

1. Bourgeois education tries to impede a knowledge of the world as an integral whole by breaking it into unconnected pieces. In its practical aspects, the genesis of this process came from the necessity to organize the large mass of knowledge which the natural sciences brought to human knowledge. Yet, a diametrically opposite aspect was hidden in this process, a total disorganization of thought which arises when one is deprived of a general, theoretical world view.

This concept of education leads to isolated thoughts and a disarticulated self-awareness. In this light, for example, history is not seen as an integral process that encompasses all the aspects of humanity, but is reduced to political history, and within this, the history of countries. Thus the history of Puerto Rico remains uprooted from its Antillian and Latin American context. The names of the great leaders of the Caribbean countries who struggled for freedom like Hatney, Toussaint, Dessalines, Duarte, Maceo, Marti and others, remain like voices of alien tongues. We are never taught about the role of social classes or the processes of historical change.

This fragmented teaching facilitates control of those being educated, so as to reproduce the division of thought into different areas of specializations, guaranteeing private occupational interests.

2. At the same time the system promotes a distance between theory and practice. Theory does not get its hands dirty with the material world where practice takes place nor does practice try to interfere with the realm of theory. Theory, in the academic world, has more social value than practice, and, for that reason, courses in the various sciences are given from the basis of idealistic thought. Who has ever learned about the function of a motor or the growth of plants without ever having delved into practical knowledge and direct application of either. There are so many forms in which it would be possible to organize the production of equipment for use in various types of laboratories but the hierarchy of values established in our education never poses the problem from this perspective because it is considered as a fact that theory and practice are not inevitably linked.

Within the knowledge of the society, this separation promotes the establishment of pseudo-scientific hypotheses at the theoretical level that will never yield to proof on the factual level. From this originates the metaphysical and superficial thinking of our social theoreticians. In turn, this is connected to the overly practical, empirical and strictly pragmatic practice of the system's politicians who, on analyzing our society, can't see the forest for the trees.

3. Our education develops without any attempt at seeing as an integral whole the problems of the countryside and those of the cities. Thus, because it reinforces elitist concepts that the city is superior to the countryside, it leaves behind one of our most acute problems, the modernization of agriculture.

4. In order to create docile citizens, bourgeois education insists upon reinforcing authority. Thus, after several years of education the individual is ready to revere the word of his elders, be it in school or work. Obedience is developed through a long process of conditioning to instill respect for the norms that are never explained and arbitrarily applied.

5. This education reproduces elitist patterns of the bourgeois society—it is not considered important to have capable individuals to carry out necessary social functions. In this light the successful are those who have a lucrative profession; all the rest are the debris thrown aside by the victorious. The system promotes this view of education because it sustains the basic ideological premises of a classist society: that there are those born to triumph and other born to fail. This attitude is said to constitute an inexorable law of humanity: the one who doesn't succeed is the one who doesn't deserve to.

To consolidate the situation even more, bourgeois education establishes titles and diplomas that once conferred or denied, classify one as much as the "carimbo" (brand on a slave) did to the slave.

In addition, elitism is reinforced by establishing special schools that (in keeping with the basis of economic discrimination) avoid having the "white-skinned" rub elbows with the "rubbish." In our country private schools are abundant. Their function, aside from that of deculturalization, is to immaculately preserve the social contacts of the young whose parents belong to the higher economic strata. Of course exceptions are made for those willing to be lured into the game. These are the ones who receive scholarships based on academic excellence—an excellence which is difficult to attain for the rest who come from homes violently afflicted with economic hardships.

6. The universities foment contempt towards natural sciences to those dedicated to the humanities and vice versa. While the triumphant bourgeoisie, sure of itself after putting down the old feudal classes, encouraged the sciences and integral knowledge, to the extent that it has been shaken by its own proletariat and by the advance of socialism in the world, it has begun to slip backward into the reactionary views of science once held by feudal thinkers. In a colonized country like ours, the implications of this phenomenon are more acute since they aim towards the reduction and stagnation of our own scientific and technical base.

This view is reinforced through religion and scepticism which alternate in underlining the belief that there are prohibited areas to human knowledge. This idea is widely diffused through films and comics which depict a scientist who dares to confront a mysterious occurrence and who eventually is forced to pay for such boldness with his life or other severe penalties.

Simultaneously the contempt of the scientist towards the humanities reinforces one's elitist self-conception and personal vanity. Furthermore it creates a scientist who is



Flag raised during Puerto Rican war for independence at Lares, Puerto Rico, on September 23, 1869.

illiterate in a broad sense, who lacks any awareness of social solidarity and who becomes an easy prey to the imperialist's multiple programs to employ his skills against humanity.

7. The contempt on the part of scientists towards the social sciences is based on the assumption that such activities are not worthy of being called sciences because they do not employ the method of investigation adhered to by natural sciences. Such an attitude is nurtured by the deficient philosophic formation of the majority of scientists. Again this attitude favors the employment of scientists in anti-social activities or, as in the majority of the cases, molds them into a passive neutrality.

8. Bourgeois, classist education not only fragments knowledge but also encourages the fragmentation of individuals within the society. This is achieved through a regimen of competence in exams, qualifications, diplomas and other similar measurement criteria. The major commandment is "save thyself, he who can." The individual is exclusively responsible for success or failure. The society is neither guilty for one's failure nor responsible for another's success. Thus one is not obliged, except as a personal act of philanthropy, to return anything to society. This is the basis on which doctors, engineers, and other professionals may justify the economic deprivations that some of them commit against the rest of the people.

From this, it is reasoned that work is worth more and done better when performed by an individual alone. Thus the petty bourgeois intellectual, confident of his own value, scorns and distrusts collective activity. This ideology permeates even those who would be inclined towards Marxism, distorting their world view.

9. To the ideological framework of bourgeois education must be added all those doctrines that in one way or another negate the possibility of objective knowledge. Above all, this phenomenon grows as the bourgeoisie strikes out while it retreats. Education promotes distrust in the very process of learning by promoting the notion that "one tries to learn, but it will be a losing battle, since in the end one can't be sure of anything." Thus, the decadent bourgeoisie promotes religiosity and scepticism in the schools, phenomena they once combatted when they first rose to power.

10. As a corollary to the separation between theory and practice and of the sustained division between city and countryside, bourgeois education keeps students isolated from integral development. This does not apply to those students who must work to pay for their studies but rather to the theory that the ideal academic situation is that in which the young student is solely involved in academic tasks. In part this is due to the incapacity of capitalist society to provide productive employment to all individuals. It is notorious that schools fulfill the additional function of hiding unemployment and retarding integration into a productive life.

11. Above all else bourgeois education promotes itself as a means toward personal profit. The system's goal, attainable only by a very few, is to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to enter into the domain of the professionals or high-level bureaucrats. The primordial motivation of bourgeois education is no different from that of capitalism.

Several traits specific to bourgeois education in Puerto Rico must be added which form part and parcel of the strategic objective of all colonial education: reproduction of the mentality of the colonized. To do this, colonial education negates the value of native culture.

The schools, the universities and the mass media attempt to crush us with the superiority of yanqui culture. They emphasize that this superiority resides primarily in the technical field, without even mentioning that it is precisely yanqui capitalist intrusion which has continuously blocked progress in these fields. To a large extent, the same phenomenon occurs in all countries subject to yanqui imperialist domination. All the mechanisms of bourgeois education function to implant this negative vision of our own cultural life.

The educational system covers up the yanqui cultural and political attack on our language, blocking our relations with countries who share our culture as well as preventing the broader development of our people.

Without a strong base from which to confront the totality of judgments and values perpetrated by imperialism, the development of an attitude of idolatry is facilitated by the colonized vis-a-vis the invader.

The Puerto Rican public school has been imperialism's principal agent in generating this colonized mentality. The parochial schools, all private, have also been of great assistance in this task. In addition to teaching in English—a fact which, in and of itself, makes them vehicles of cultural alienation and assimilation—also they operate for the benefit of high-income groups, guaranteeing the reproduction of a bourgeoisie ideologically armed against "subversion."

II. CLASS STRUCTURE

Social Classes in Puerto Rico

Massive investment of U.S. capital, particularly over the last few decades, has hastened the development of the capitalist mode of production in Puerto Rico, where the industrial sector predominates and is intimately linked to the financial and commercial sectors. In their principal aspects, therefore, the resulting relations of production are capitalist in nature.

Prior to this new stage of U.S. investment in Puerto Rico, which the colonialists have labelled "Operation Bootstrap," a capitalist mode of production existed in Puerto Rico based on the agrarian sector and, in particular, on the monoculture of sugarcane and a limited amount of related industrial activities.

The new strategy of economic exploitation that began to take shape during the second half of the 1940's focused on creating the conditions for a massive invasion of U.S. capital. This was done at the expense of incipient domestic industry, owned by Puerto Rican capital, and the production of raw materials in the agricultural sector. This new strategy served to heighten economic imbalances and, along with other factors, to provoke the accelerated ruin of agriculture.

Later, large consumer goods distributors, supermarket chains, service industries and other U.S. businesses arrived, together with light industry, to further accentuate agricultural decay.

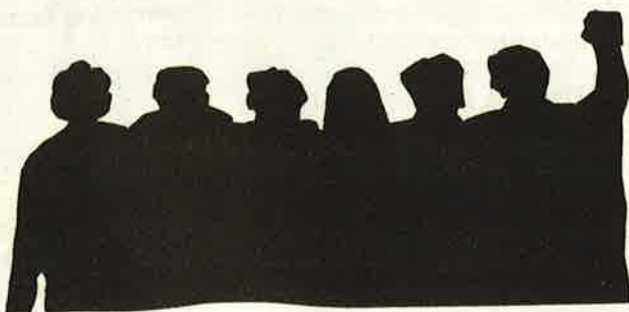
These shifts in the economy also generated profound changes in the class structure of Puerto Rican society. The incipient national bourgeoisie, already affected by the massive invasion of yanqui capital in the sugar industry, saw its possibilities for consolidation as a class definitely shattered.

An intermediary bourgeoisie has taken its place, its members intimately tied to the big U.S. bourgeoisie as junior partners or representatives. The petty bourgeoisie remains important numerically, but must struggle desperately to maintain control over an increasingly insignificant sector of the economy. It remains in principal contradiction with imperialism and the intermediary bourgeoisie. This situation makes the petty bourgeoisie a potential ally of the working class in its struggle for independence and national liberation.

The peasantry, owners of small tracts of land, was at one time an important sector of the Puerto Rican economy and the social base of the old Popular Party. Its slow disappearance both numerically and in terms of its economic function, has accompanied the decay of agriculture. Its political significance is also very weak.

The agricultural proletariat, the protagonist of many battles between 1920 and 1940, has also lost its strength alongside agricultural deterioration. For the great majority, the only alternative has been emigration to urban areas or to large cities on the east coast of the United States; that is, to join the ranks of the urban proletariat.

The most important feature of the new class structure in Puerto Rico is the emergence of a large, principally urban working class and the growth of a significant industrial



sector. This class has been the protagonist of important struggles over the past few decades, and is rapidly gaining consciousness of its strength and its true class interests. The primary task of this class must be to fight for the disappearance of the colonial-capitalist system and to construct from its ruins a new society, in which workers control the product of their own labor.

The Intermediary Bourgeoisie

The dominant class in Puerto Rico today is the U.S. bourgeoisie. It controls the principal means of production and, in the last analysis, controls and directs the entire political superstructure of domination. Moreover, it is precisely the most monopolistic sector of the U.S. bourgeoisie that dominates this situation. Even the so-called public corporations in Puerto Rico are controlled by this class, through the purchase of bonds which serve as investment funds for these enterprises. In Puerto Rico, as a colony of the United States, this direct control is much more pronounced and evident than in any other Latin American country.

In recognizing the extensive domination that the U.S. bourgeoisie exercises over our country and our economy, we must not ignore the existence of groups within the Puerto Rican bourgeoisie and their role in different areas of the economy. In some sectors, this role is extremely significant. Together with the representatives of yanqui capital, these groups form part of the intermediary bourgeoisie and generally function as junior partners of big yanqui capital. They are its principal allies and participate directly in the exploitation of the Puerto Rican masses, as high corporate executives, wholesale distributors, bankers, importers and capitalists linked to commerce and medium and light industry.

The intermediary bourgeoisie administers the colonial political power delegated by the U.S. bourgeoisie; that is, its functions with delegated powers. The relations of production generated by capitalism have reached a point of such instability in Puerto Rico that extra-economic functions have been added to guarantee the social order. Each time a crack appears in the facade of colonial tranquility, the repressive mechanisms of the State (national guard, tribunals, police) take action to secure the smooth operation of the economic process.

We cannot wait for the intermediary bourgeoisie to acquire nationalist consciousness, to fight for nationalistic demands against the U.S. bourgeoisie. This class is totally dependent on big yanqui capital, which continues to penetrate all areas of the economy and heighten the dependency of the Puerto Rican bourgeoisie. Moreover, its role as junior partner enables the intermediary bourgeoisie, despite its dependency, to maintain class privileges and enjoy its share of profits—its share in the exploitation of the Puerto Rican working class. This does not preclude, however, that in a given set of circumstances some sectors of this bourgeoisie could enter into contradiction with imperialism. Yet these contradictions will not be of an antagonistic nature...

The Petty Bourgeoisie

The capitalist mode of production does not exist in a pure state. Thus, in addition to the two fundamental classes of capitalism, other classes and social groups are present. Among these is the petty bourgeoisie, composed of small farmers who work their own land, fishermen, craftsmen and small merchants and manufacturers. They

may be characterized as owning and directly working their small-scale means of production, sometimes with the help of family members, and selling their goods on the capitalist market. In general, they do not hire additional laborers, or very few, and produce little or no surplus value. The production of the petty bourgeoisie is fundamentally directed toward assuring their own subsistence. Their class origin is linked to the transition phase between the pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production.

By virtue of its position in the economic structure, the petty bourgeoisie is subordinate to the dominant mode of production, capitalism. At the same time, it is exploited by capitalism and faces a major contradiction: the petty bourgeoisie strives to accumulate as much capital as the bourgeoisie, but is constantly threatened by the large-scale production of big capitalists.

The petty bourgeoisie must sell its goods on the capitalist market and is subject, therefore, to the laws of the system: it must compete with the lower-cost products of the large capitalists. The petty bourgeoisie is destined to disappear as a class, to drift toward the proletariat and other sectors of the economy. In some cases the opposite may occur, the petty bourgeoisie enters the bourgeoisie; but this is the exception. Nonetheless, the petty bourgeoisie can exist for an extended period of time under capitalism, given its ability to reproduce itself or shift to other areas of the economy where it does not face direct competition from large capital.

Different groups do exist within the petty bourgeoisie, based not on their relation to the means of production but on levels of income. For example, sectors exist among small merchants and small-scale manufacturers whose incomes are far greater than those of fishermen or craftsmen.

As a result, the petty bourgeoisie may at times ally itself with the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie. But in the long-run, its aspirations and class interests are in contradiction with those of the proletariat. This intermediate position between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie leads the petty bourgeoisie to side with one class or another, depending on the correlation of forces at each stage of the class struggle. The petty bourgeoisie thus prolongs its existence as a class, while its historic destiny is to disappear as a class. In short, as "private property owners they maintain affinity with the bourgeoisie; as individuals who live from their work and are exploited by the bourgeoisie, they move toward the working class."²⁴

In Puerto Rico, the process of disappearance and displacement of the petty bourgeoisie is much more pronounced than in other countries, due to the extraordinary penetration of yanqui capital in all sectors of the economy, from industry to services. Accordingly, many members of the petty bourgeoisie have joined the struggle for independence and have become a key factor in its leadership since the turn of the century...

The Working Class

Time and again, Marx insisted that capitalism is not merely the production of commodities, but rather the production of capital. If we understand the capitalist mode of production in this way, we cannot restrict the working class to only that fraction linked to commodity production. Rather, we must include in that definition

those sectors employed in the process of commodity circulation which allow the surplus value embodied in those commodities to be converted into capital. This incorporates into the proletariat two groups which some Marxist theoreticians have categorized as employees.

In relation to capital, these salaried groups share common characteristics with the industrial proletariat: the lack of their own means of production and, hence, the sale of their labor power as a commodity. It must be underscored, however, that the industrial proletariat receives a smaller wage than the wealth they produce, and that the extraction of surplus value from this sector is not duplicated in other sectors of the proletariat.

On the other hand, while workers tied to commercial and banking capital do not produce surplus value, they allow the unpaid labor time embodied in the commodities produced by the industrial proletariat to be transformed into money. Thus, despite the fact that these workers do not produce surplus value, they facilitate its conversion into money; that is, its realization.

Banking and commercial capital allow for and promote the realization of surplus value by extending credit to industrial capitalists, in exchange for a share in the surplus value extracted from the industrial proletariat. Thus, the production process can function smoothly, without interruption, while surplus value acquires its money-form. The result is an increase in the total volume of surplus value appropriated by the capitalists, since more surplus value is extracted per unit of time. While the work of those who receive low and middle-level salaries in the financial and commercial spheres does not create new surplus value, it allows for its distribution among a larger group of capitalists. This is the essential function of the commercial and banking proletariat.

Looking at capitalist production as the production of **capital** and not only of commodities, we must recognize as part of the proletariat all salaried workers who sell their labor power on the capitalist market, who do not possess their own means of production and who do **not** perform any oppressive role for capital. Those employees whose role in the production process is to assure a sustained level of work intensity in order to raise production fulfill an oppressive function for capital. They do so by increasing the rate of exploitation and they belong to a social group that is not part of the proletariat, although under specific circumstances their interests may approach those of the proletariat. Their hybrid position as employees and oppressors makes them assume, for the most part, the point of view of the small independent producers, the petty bourgeoisie, which enters into similar contradiction with large industry.

However, of these three fractions of the proletariat, it is clearly the industrial proletariat that in the long-run must determine the intensity of class struggle. It is from this group that the bourgeoisie extracts its surplus value. The production process could conceivably continue in the absence of the other two sectors, but not without the industrial proletariat. In most cases, the degree of exploitation of the latter is greater.

The **proletariat** or the **working class** is composed of all wage-laborers and salaried workers who participate directly in the financing, creation and circulation of material goods, by which the extraction and realization of surplus value is accomplished.



The **industrial proletariat** is the principal sector of the working class and is composed of all workers who participate directly in the production of material goods and the creation of surplus value. It is made up of workers from heavy, semi-heavy and light industry, construction workers and workers in state-owned power companies.

The banking proletariat includes low and middle-level employees. This fraction of the proletariat is deeply penetrated by bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology. Its formal distance from the production process obscures the true nature of its social position and of its social relations with capital. Nevertheless, large capital has led to the concentration of these workers which, in turn, leads them toward greater consciousness of their possibilities for economic struggle.

The commercial proletariat is made up of workers in commerce and other salaried workers who participate in the realization of surplus value and are exploited by commercial capital. In the large cities, this fraction of the proletariat is concentrated in large commercial centers; this concentration obliges them to recognize their own strength. However, as in the case of the banking proletariat, their actual distance from production heightens their vulnerability to influence from non-proletarian ideologies. This is particularly true in Puerto Rico, where commercial capital plays an important role in the economy and where gigantic enterprises are eager to dump a considerable portion of yanqui production on the island. The commercial proletariat finds itself immersed in an ideology of super-consumption, of superfluous consumption and super-valorization of the colonial chain that relays material goods. However, the sharpening crisis of capitalism makes these enterprises the prime targets of any attempt at economic readjustment and thereby creates the bases for the commercial proletariat to escape its ideological enclosure.

Another important sector is composed of agricultural workers in agri-business.

In Puerto Rico, the working-class sectors mentioned thus far can be broken down into the following categories:

TABLE 1: Working Class Sectors

	Number	% of Total	% of Women
Industrial proletariat	235,000	54	48
Proletariat in state enterprises (transp. & comm.)	40,000	9	15
Banking proletariat	22,000	5	32
Agricultural proletariat	35,000	8	3
Commercial proletariat	100,000	23	29

Source: "La politica obrera y sindical del PSP," in *Chispa*, Special Edition, 1973.

In comparing this table with another describing all salaried and wage workers in 1973, we can note that those fractions of the working class mentioned above represent about 63 per cent of the entire working population of Puerto Rico.

TABLE 2: Wage and Salaried Workers, 1973

	Number	% of Total
Proletariat (tied to the creation & distribution of commodities)	432,000	63
Government (bureaucracy)	149,000	22
Services	100,000	15

Source: "La politica obrera y sindical del PSP," in *Chispa*, Special Edition, 1973.

Despite the fact that these statistics were compiled according to bourgeois economic criteria, which differ from the Marxist concept of "proletariat," the discrepancies with the scientific concept of the proletariat involve only a small group. For example, if ten per cent of the figure that appears under the category "proletariat" were technicians and high-level personnel, some 43,200 individuals, the proletariat would still represent nearly 57 per cent of all salaried and wage workers. There is no doubt that the proletariat is the largest social group in Puerto Rico.

Lastly, it is important to recognize that we have dealt with the question of the proletariat at the economic level of the relations of production. At an ideological level, however, we find many people who do not objectively belong to the working class, but have adopted the aspirations of the proletariat. This is known as a class position. It is a fact that some workers do not support the class position of the proletariat, but rather that of the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie. The reverse happens as well. Marx points to this phenomenon in the *Manifesto*, when he refers to a "portion of the bourgeois ideologues who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole."

The historical genesis of our modern working class is tied to the capitalist development of Puerto Rico controlled by the United States. Over the last fifty years, the United States has proceeded to liquidate the old agrarian capitalist structure, opening the door to industrial capitalism. This process has been accelerated by the colonial relationship and the development of capitalism on a world-scale, which have undermined the preceding economic base.

As the basis of the agricultural economy is dissolved, hundreds of thousands of people are freed from the countryside and peasant life. They emigrate to cities and increase the supply of labor that capitalism so badly needs in order to keep wages low. As part of this process, sectors of our working class have retained the fragmentalist and individualist mentality of the peasant. The sharpest indicator of this is the still small number of workers organized in labor unions. The anti-labor union policy put forth by the colonial governments serves to reinforce this tendency.

The working masses are made up of all those who must sell their labor power to survive. In addition to the working class, this includes all workers in service industries, the state bureaucracy and other salaried employees. Table III illustrates that the working masses of Puerto Rico constitute a significant numerical force. The state bureaucracy alone employs 149,000 individuals. In 1973, the working masses rose to 681,000. Thirty-five per cent of these workers are women.

TABLE 3: Wage and Salaried Workers, 1973

	Number	% of Total	% of Women
Agriculture	35,000	5	3
Sugar cane	(16,000)		
Tobacco			
Coffee	(4,000)		
Others (forestry & fishing)	(14,000)		
Manufacturing	156,000	23	49
Construction	79,000	12	1
Commerce	100,000	15	29
Finances	22,000	3	32
Government (transp. & comm. enterprises)	40,000	22	15
Government (bureaucracy)	149,000	22	45
Services	100,000	15	51
TOTAL	681,000	100	35

Source: Departamento del Trabajo, Empleo y Desempleo, 1971.

The economic sector that employs the greatest number of workers is manufacturing, comprising 23 per cent of all salaried and wage laborers. The government sector (bureaucracy) follows in importance, employing 22 per cent of the entire working population. Taking together those workers employed in government bureaucracy and public enterprises, the public sector represents the country's principal employer, with 28 per cent of all workers (189,000). Other characteristics of the class structure are the high proportion of young people within the ranks of the working masses and the high rate of unemployment. According to 1972 statistics, 55 per cent of all salaried and wage workers are under 35 years of age.²⁶ Official unemployment in Puerto Rico is 11.5 per cent (100,000 workers), according to the **Report on Employment and Unemployment of 1973**, prepared by the Department of Labor. This unemployment rate is determined on the basis of those included in the "working sector," i.e. all those over 14 years of age who are working and those unemployed who are actively seeking employment.

1,073,000 persons over 14 years of age are excluded from this "working sector." This group is broken down in the following manner:

1. domestic employees in their own homes (54 per cent);
2. in school (28 per cent);
3. invalids (4 per cent);
4. idle (14 per cent).

The "idle" category includes people over 14 years of age who are unemployed, but are able and willing to work, although they are not actively seeking employment. This group has grown to include 150,220 persons.

In other words, the true size of the industrial reserve army in Puerto Rico has grown much larger than the colonial authorities are willing to admit. According to their data, a total of 256,220 persons are unemployed. (This includes 106,000 "officially" unemployed and 150,220 idle persons.) To this must be added a total of 153,000 persons, or 19 per cent of the work force, who are under-employed; that is, the industrial reserve army really includes 409,220 persons.



The Structure of the Working Class

The working class is the largest social group in our society, including over half of all salaried and wage laborers. The proletariat (industrial, commercial and banking) make up 63 per cent or 432,000 persons, 27 per cent of whom are women.

The industrial workers are the most numerous sector of the proletariat, and constitute more than half of the working class. This sector includes all workers who participate both in the production of commodities and in the direct production of surplus value.

Of the two major industrial sectors (manufacturing and construction), manufacturing employs the most workers. It is composed primarily of manufacturing establishments owned by yanqui capital (82.4 per cent of the whole).

TABLE 4: Manufacturing Workers by Sector, 1973

Sector	Number	% of Total	% of Total in 1966	% of Women
Clothing	46,800	30.0	30	88
Food	21,840	14.0	16	21
Machinery and Electrical appliances	14,040	9.0	16	57
Textiles	8,040	5.5	7	51
Leather	7,800	5.0	6	72
Professional and Scientific instruments	7,488	4.8		70
Rock, Clay and Glass	7,176	4.6		8
Chemical products	7,332	4.7		16
Refineries and Petroleum	7,020	4.5		27
Others	27,924	17.9		
TOTAL	156,000	100.0		49

Source: Departamento del Trabajo, Censo de Manufactura.

Fifty-three per cent of all women workers in the manufacturing sector are in the garment and textile industry; the former alone absorbs 30 per cent of all manufacturing workers. Eighty per cent of all garment workers are women.

In manufacturing, the concentration of workers per factory unit is low and, according to available information, it is in a state of continuous decline. Fifty-eight per cent of the manufacturing centers in Puerto Rico employ less than 20 workers each; ninety-one per cent less than 150 workers; and three quarters of the total number of factory units employ less than 50 workers.

TABLE 5: Size of Manufacturing Industries
by Employment, 1971

Number of Workers	Number of Factories	% of Total	% of Total in 1966
1- 19	1,595	58	57.0
20- 49	475	17	16.5
50- 99	288	10	17.6
100-149	152	6	9.0
150-199	82	3	
200-249	50	2	
250 and above	103	4	
TOTAL	2,745	100	

Source: Departamento del Trabajo, Censo de Manufactura.

The Unemployed or the Industrial Reserve Army

Unemployment is a prerequisite of the capitalist mode of production. The unemployed are needed as a reserve labor force to cover the growing needs of capital. Moreover, they are used as one of capitalists' weapons to keep wages low and to weaken the negotiating power of active workers. In their propaganda aimed at attracting foreign investment, the "free associated state" never fails to emphasize that for every new job there are four to ten people waiting to fill it. In this way, they instigate competition among workers: whoever accepts a lower wage wins out. This divides the workers and impedes their understanding of the identity of interests that must exist among them. At certain conjunctures, the unemployed become enemies of the working class, used as strike breakers or scabs against workers who rebel against the inhuman demands of capital. They are also the primary source of recruitment for the yanqui army.

Contrary to the tenets of bourgeois social science, the unemployed do not represent a sector marginal to the production process. The proletariat, or the Industrial Work Army, is divided into active and inactive members: active when at a given moment they are in direct relation to capital; and inactive at a given moment when they are passive but readily available to production.

While unemployment is common to all capitalist societies, given the imbalances and fluctuations of capital, the situation in Puerto Rico is made even more acute by the colonial, extremely dependent and foreign-dominated nature of capitalism. The capital generated by our production process is exported to cover the development needs of the United States and not of Puerto Rico. This creates serious imbalances, since capital is not re-invested in the Puerto Rican economy and cannot supply the basic needs of our people. Thus, unemployment and underemployment in Puerto Rico fluctuates between 12 per cent, according to official colonial government statistics, and 30 per cent (over 400,000 people) according to U.S. government statistics.

The economic crisis that U.S. capitalism is beginning to experience will be greater in Puerto Rico, given the subordinate nature of our economy, and will generate sharp social tensions. In particular, the ranks of the unemployed will be swelled by large numbers of active workers, accustomed to a certain wage-level and corresponding life style. The abrupt worsening of their economic conditions may provoke greater unrest among the newly unemployed in the face of crisis. Moreover, the organization and discipline acquired through years of

factory work or labor-union affiliation will make these active workers catalysts for the rapid integration of the unemployed into the struggle for independence and socialism.

The Lumpenproletariat

The lumpenproletariat are those declassed elements, marginalized from the production process. Objective and subjective conditions relegate them to marginal activities such as robbery, drugs, prostitution, etc. They are basically the product of the desperation felt by sectors of the unemployed with respect to their economic situation. In general they possess neither political nor class consciousness, although in certain historic circumstances they have been swept along by the revolutionary tide. Due to their life conditions, however, the lumpenproletariat is generally more disposed toward aiding the counter-revolutionary maneuvers of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must try to neutralize this social sector, in order to prevent their utilization by class enemies.

Emigration to the United States

The process of transformation and proletarianization of Puerto Rico has generated massive waves of emigration, beginning in 1945 and continuing into the present.

The development of the Puerto Rican working class as we know it today involved as much its displacement from agrarian society to industrial-marginal society in Puerto Rico, as its displacement to cities in the United States. Emigration fulfills the same function in both cases: that of providing cheap labor for the U.S. ruling class. In recent years, the emigration of professionals and skilled workers has also increased, creating a typical case of "brain drain."

Massive emigration to the United States is one of the collective experiences that form the heritage of the Puerto Rican working class, that help to shape the worldview of those who stay on the island and of those who leave. Similarly, by serving as an escape valve to reduce pressures, by helping to determine the participation rate in the labor force and by reducing the level of unemployment, emigration is one of the concrete conditions that shape the development of that working-class sector which remains in Puerto Rico. This must be understood as one of the objective conditions in the formation and development of the contemporary Puerto Rican working class and includes, for example, systematic attempts to destroy our nationality through assimilation.

The **General Declaration** approved by the Constituent Assembly of the PSP points out that "the closest thing to the international slave trade practiced by the European imperial powers from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century still exists in our case, in the policy of exporting unskilled workers from the island to the United States in order to satisfy the needs of industries, services and agricultural activities marginal to the technological development of that country."

More than two million Puerto Ricans, or 40 per cent of our nation's population, live in the United States.

The emigration of such a large portion of our population, one of the largest exoduses in modern history, constitutes (at the most obvious level) an escape valve to reduce social pressures during the transformation of Puerto Rico's economy of colonial super-exploitation. But its real meaning is more than that. It is a systematic



process of importing cheap labor to fill in the gaps left by technological and industrial development in the United States, so that the working classes as a whole can be more productive for the U.S. ruling class.

Thus, for example, while New York is not an industrial city but a service area for the general headquarters of the large corporations that divide up the so-called "free world" among themselves, it attracts great masses of Puerto Ricans, together with Afro-americans, to carry out the most undesirable tasks within the stratification of these services.

The U.S. ruling class has been able to develop and command science and technology through imperialist plunder of the peoples and resources of the Third World. Such development necessitates technical and professional training, higher salaries and better living conditions for broad sectors of the working classes. General living standards are higher in the imperialist country than in the super-exploited countries, but stratification is much greater and more complex; that is, the formation of different strata of the population, with diverse functions and living standards, from the lumpenproletariat to highly skilled technicians, including broad sectors of professionals and semi-professionals in service industries not directly linked to production but which are absolutely essential to the functioning of the system.

This complex social division pits certain sectors against others, since the level of alienation is high and consciousness of their exploited condition very low. The ruling class is in fact "bribing" its working classes through exploitation of the Third World. The working classes of the United States, in so far as they see the world through the glasses of ruling class ideology, consider that the relationship the United States maintains with super-exploited peoples is desirable. They develop attitudes of national chauvinism, superiority and racism. Of course, this "bribery" is a product of the ruling class' desire to fatten itself as a class and to enjoy the privileges of its position. At no time does it cancel out the exploitation to which these "bribed" workers themselves are victim.

The stratification of the working class, which maintains the productivity of this class as a whole, includes "transporting the Third World into the national territory of the United States;" that is, creating pockets of cheap labor for

tasks that are less productive in relation to the costs imposed by living conditions in the United States and which cannot, therefore, be assigned to highly skilled workers.

Puerto Rican workers go to the United States to perform these functions. Regardless of our role in production and services in one place or another, as a class we perform this same function in Puerto Rico.

Puerto Ricans who move to the United States do so with the same expectations, shaped by their material reality, as those who migrate from the countryside to San Juan or Ponce. They share the same illusions and dreams, the same worldview. Moreover—and it is important to emphasize this—they do not move as individuals. Rather, in simultaneous fashion and within an historical perspective, a significant part of the nation—more than a third—is transplanted; a world is transplanted, a collective with a collective worldview; literally, a piece of a country that goes on struggling to maintain its cohesion in a new environment.

Something else must be emphasized: As opposed to other immigrants for whom emigration to the United States constitutes a break with their past, burning bridges to face the future, Puerto Ricans are forced to migrate and see their displacement as temporary. The limited studies made by government and social service agencies tend to indicate that the majority of Puerto Ricans resident in the United States, particularly those who arrived as adolescents or adults, "have plans" to return to Puerto Rico. They generally indicate that Puerto Ricans go to the United States to "*buscar ambiente*," which in popular language means to look toward bettering their economic situation in order to return to an easier life in Puerto Rico.

This, which we have called "the myth of return," "the dream of going back," obviously cannot always be realized, but it permeates all Puerto Rican communities in the United States and shapes their self-image. More importantly, the crude reality of super-exploitation, oppression, discrimination and cultural aggression that Puerto Ricans face in their new environment reinforces this myth by convincing them that it is necessary to return. The air bridge between Puerto Rico and the United States which allows for the constant coming and going of Puerto Rican workers, so lucrative for the North American airlines, further strengthens this conviction.

Contrary to previous streams of U.S. immigrants, the Puerto Rican does not sever ties with an old world to look for a new one; he/she is an exile, a displaced victim of colonial exploitation who moves to another area only to be dominated by the same colonizer, to fulfill the same function in the labor force dictated by the U.S. ruling class.

In their new environment, the Puerto Rican working masses, due to their own self-image and the transitory nature of their position as victims of an oppressive system, remain within the world of their community. In other words, the great majority remain on the margin of the cultural, social and political processes taking place in the United States.

More than two million Puerto Ricans are already living in the United States, half of them (1,125,000) in New York City. In addition, it is calculated that 240,000 Puerto Ricans live in New Jersey, 120,000 in Pennsylvania (of

whom 100,000 are in Philadelphia), 110,000 in Connecticut and 110,000 in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Thus, the great majority of Puerto Ricans are concentrated in the large cities of the east coast.

Nevertheless, there is also a large concentration in the Mid West (170,000), of whom approximately 125,000 live in Chicago and another 80,000 in other parts of the country.²⁷

The much lower figures alleged by the U.S. Census Bureau have been disproved by various officials, from the offices of the Puerto Rican Government in the United States to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights and including such "respectable" bourgeois organs as the *New York Times*.

All of the available data confirms the political observations we have made. Puerto Rican migration to the United States increases when unemployment in the United States declines. Greater unemployment in Puerto Rico and greater employment opportunities in the United States leads to more migration.

Similarly, most tendencies indicate that those who migrate have been displaced by the penetration of U.S. monopolies in Puerto Rico: young people entering the work force, unskilled workers and rural migrants. More than 66 per cent of Puerto Rican immigrants are under 25 years of age when they arrive in the United States. Since the type of manufacturing implanted in Puerto Rico from 1945 until the beginning of the sixties employed mostly women, a greater proportion of men have migrated than women.²⁸

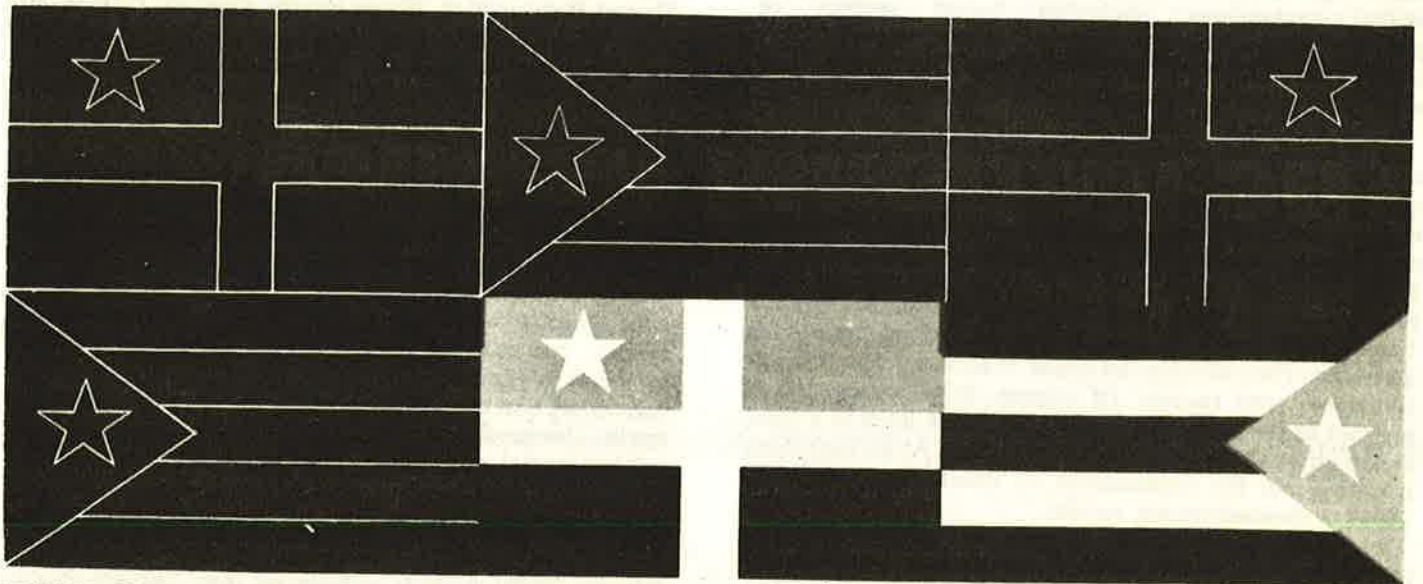
The fact that many Puerto Ricans return to Puerto Rico (although not the majority and although exact figures are difficult to calculate) and that many more continue to arrive creates a constant renewal of the Puerto Rican population in the United States, a constant influx of "first

generation" Puerto Ricans who keep national ties alive. For example, in 1960, 92.3 per cent of all Puerto Ricans over fourteen years of age living in the United States (or 69 per cent of all Puerto Ricans in the United States) were born in Puerto Rico.²⁹ In 1970, 93 per cent of all heads of families over 16 years of age were born in Puerto Rico. Moreover, the U.S. general census of 1970 indicates that 72 per cent of all Puerto Ricans living in the United States use Spanish as their primary means of communication.³⁰

Half of all Puerto Ricans living in the United States, or one million, are of working age. Of these, the participation rate (those of working age who work or are looking for work), according to government figures, is 560,000. Of the 420,000 (42 per cent of all those employable) who do not participate in the work force, 200,000 are mothers receiving welfare. In other words, although official unemployment as defined by the government for Puerto Ricans living in the United States is at 11.5 per cent, the real figure is thirty per cent.³¹

Fifty-eight per cent of Puerto Ricans who work are proletarians and 35 per cent are in services, sales or office work. Only 5.5 per cent are professionals, technicians, managers or administrators.³² It must be noted that the majority of those classified as proletarians work in light industry. This means that Puerto Ricans are not an important force in the industrial proletariat of the United States and therefore do not represent a significant sector within the large industrial unions.

Although the government's definition of "poverty levels" does not reflect real poverty in the United States, one third of the Puerto Rican population in the United States, like the Afro-americans, live below this level. Together with Afro-americans, Chicanos and American Indians, we occupy the lowest strata in the U.S. economy. In addition, the increase in average family income (\$4,800 in 1969) remains far below the increase in the cost of



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living. Although this tendency existed in the 1960's, since 1971 it has been aggravated by the galloping rate of inflation in the United States.

According to the Census, 95 per cent of Puerto Ricans living permanently in the United States (that is, not taking into account migrant agricultural workers) are in urban centers, and therein lies their potential for contributing to revolutionary struggle. More importantly, in all urban centers with large Puerto Rican communities, one finds other oppressed minorities as well. Generally we share the same neighborhoods and the same urban problems as other Latins and Afro-americans in New York and other places on the east coast, and as Afro-americans and Chicanos in Chicago and other Mid Western cities.

As Puerto Ricans, we confront the most serious social problems: the poverty that envelopes us, the racism that permeates U.S. society and the systematic policy of exclusion used by the ruling class to maintain large armies of cheap labor.

Many of the problems we face in daily life result from our position in the lowest-paid strata of production and services. But at the same time, these problems have been institutionalized to keep us in this role within the system. Thus, for example, racism and discrimination and their manifestations in U.S. labor unions, in the educational system, in the lack of access to decent neighborhoods, in the workings of the welfare system are, on the most obvious level, effects of the former. Yet their institutionalization in practice converts them into the cause of our remaining in the lowest strata of the socio-economic system.

The racism and lack of democracy that characterizes many labor unions excludes Puerto Ricans from higher wages and better working conditions. Similarly, we are cut off from job promotions, from what capitalism calls "social mobility." Worse still is the absence of the basic right to work and to protect that employment once obtained. Thus the phrase "last hired, first fired" is particularly relevant to Puerto Ricans.

If the jobs to which we have access are the worst paid, our wages the lowest, our unemployment levels the highest and our participation in labor unions the lowest, our progressive asfixiation in regard to the spiraling rise in the cost of living is without doubt one of the worst in the United States.

Trapped in this situation, it is not uncommon that a vicious circle develops: the greater the economic problems, the greater the social, family and mental imbalances; and the greater these imbalances, the greater the economic problems. Neither is it uncommon for us to be the most victimized by so-called welfare. The welfare system is humiliating for those who receive. It is designed to dehumanize, to regulate the participation rate in the labor force and thereby regulate pay scales. While the large corporations receive public assistance in the form of subsidies to regulate production, advantageous loans, contracts based on patronage and other forms of "honorable assistance," "welfare" is dispensed in a systematically brutal manner. In reality, the ruling class needs "welfare" to maintain social stability. Its scope broadens or contracts according to the existing need to broaden or reduce the participation rate in the labor force.



Both our economic situation and discrimination cuts off access to decent housing for Puerto Ricans arriving in U.S. cities, where the cost of living and of maintenance for public and private property is constantly rising. In their desire for wealth, landlords generally abandon the maintenance of their buildings when they no longer consider them sufficiently lucrative. This puts pressure on tenants to move out, allowing the landlord to raise rents with each new tenant with no additional investment in maintenance. The greater the influx of Afro-americans and Puerto Ricans, the greater the exodus of other groups and the worse the maintenance. Thus, a kind of vicious

circle is established, a veritable epidemic that hastens the deterioration of entire neighborhoods.

It is not surprising that Puerto Ricans have one of the highest drop-out rates from schools in the United States. Those who do finish school receive an inferior education, which keeps them and those who have not finished in the lowest ranks of the labor force.

As a result, the young Puerto Rican who grows up in this society is "ghettoized" not only in terms of material reality, but culturally as well. He/she faces an identity crisis which disorients future goals in life.

Thus, among Puerto Ricans growing up in the United States, an obvious stratification process occurs. Large sectors are "lumpenized" by their surroundings and the education they do not receive. Only a few are able to ascend the social ladder; the higher the steps, the fewer are those who reach them. Those who do attain the highest levels are called upon by the system to occupy reformist leadership positions within the community.

Thus, a system of selecting cadre to serve the system, based on the elimination of the majority, has been institutionalized. Those who survive the elimination-process are incorporated into different leadership levels: foremen, technicians, semi-professionals, professionals, politicians and managers.

The system tries to form an intermediary stratum to function harmoniously with the interests of the ruling class.

Migrant Agricultural Workers

The Puerto Rican who lives in the cities of the United States has his/her rural counterpart in the Puerto Rican agricultural migrant. The miserable conditions of agriculture on the island drive the agricultural migrant to work on a seasonal basis in the harvest of North American farms. These workers receive starvation wages for their labor, the very lowest on the U.S. wage scale; they live in encampments that are literally concentration camps; the cost of transportation, food and lodging—all of the very worst quality—is deducted from wages, as are the expenses for non-existent services such as fictitious medical programs. They have no right to collective bargaining, while the most basic human rights are trampled. Migrant agricultural workers who have decided to stay on and look for permanent employment in the United States have given rise to a growing Puerto Rican population living in conditions of extreme poverty in small towns and cities of the interior. The colonial government of Puerto Rico promotes and facilitates this migration, and does everything possible to keep these workers defenseless in the face of their capitalist employers.

III. THE POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL SUPER-STRUCTURE

Constitutional History since 1898

Throughout the 19th century the United States had a two-fold interest in Puerto Rico: as a market and as a strategic military center of vital importance. The U.S. intention was to annex Puerto Rico to an empire which would expand from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans.

On July 25, 1898 yanqui troops invaded Puerto Rico through Guanica. At that very moment, Spain was preparing to surrender in the war unleashed by the United States, taking advantage of the Cuban struggle for in-



1898 yanqui cavalry invasion in Puerto Rico.

dependence. Although Puerto Rico was not a belligerent nation in this conflict, the yanquis immediately installed a military regime in our country, eliminating unilaterally and totally the autonomous government institutions which had been established that same year.*

Following the military conquest of Puerto Rico, the United States imposed its own terms in the conversations leading to the Treaty of Paris. In that treaty, among other things, Spain was forced to recognize U.S. sovereignty over Puerto Rico. The island passed into U.S. hands as "spoils of war" in violation of international law.

Section 3, Article IV of the United States Constitution, known as the "territorial clause," confers on that nation's Congress the power to decide the destiny of territories acquired by purchase or conquest. By virtue of the Treaty of Paris and in exercise of that clause, the U.S. Congress exerts its control over Puerto Rico.

After two years of political and military occupation, the U.S. Congress passed the so-called "Foraker Law," which established a civil colonial administration in Puerto Rico. Although a House of Delegates elected by popular vote was established, real power was reserved for a Governor and an Executive Council appointed by the President of the United States.

Seventeen years later, on March 2, 1917, the U.S. Congress passed another statute, known as the **Jones Law**, which eliminated the Executive Council and replaced it with a popularly elected Senate which, together with the lower house, formed the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico. By the same law, we were deprived of our natural

* In November 1897, only months prior to the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico won, through negotiations with a weakened Spain, a grant of autonomy which provided unprecedented reforms. Although not an independent nation, Puerto Rico had the right to elect voting delegates to both houses of the Spanish *Cortes*. The legislature (made up of a House of Representatives and an Administrative Council) would pass on all internal matters, fix the budget, determine tariffs and taxes, and accept or reject any commercial treaties concluded by Spain without local participation. In early July of 1898, the new government officially began to function. On July 25, 1898, the U.S. troops invaded.

citizenship. North American citizenship was imposed upon all Puerto Ricans, against the express will of the only colonial administrators elected by popular vote: the House of Delegates.

Thirty years later, on August 5, 1947, that law was amended to provide for the election of the colonial governor.

On July 3, 1950, the U.S. Congress, once again without consulting the people of Puerto Rico, passed Public Law 600, known as the **Puerto Rican Commonwealth Bill**. This law provided for a public referendum in Puerto Rico to decide whether or not to adopt a "Constitution." This decision would then be subject to review by the North American Congress and President, who would determine whether it conformed to the provisions of Public Law 600 and of the U.S. Constitution. In such case they would approve it and only then would it take effect. Public Law 600 further provided that all sections of the Jones Law not expressly repealed by Law 600 would remain in effect in Puerto Rico and would be known as the **Law of Federal Relations with Puerto Rico**. The provisions which supposedly had been repealed then became part of the so-called **Constitution of Puerto Rico**. In recommending its adoption to the U.S. Congress, the congressional committees which participated in the drafting of Law 600 reported:

The application of the *Law of Federal Relations with Puerto Rico* and the exercise of federal authority in Puerto Rico under its terms are in no way diminished by the Constitution of Puerto Rico and cannot be affected by future amendments to that Constitution, nor by any law passed by the Legislature of Puerto Rico; any law of Puerto Rico which is in conflict with the Law of Federal Relations with Puerto Rico or with the provisions of the Constitution of Puerto Rico, as expressed in Public Law 600, or with the Constitution of the United States or with laws of the United States not locally inapplicable, shall be null and void and shall have no effect.

The response of the Puerto Rican people to this new colonialist swindle was the Nationalist Revolution of October, 1950. Other patriotic sectors voted against Law 600 in June, 1951 when the referendum ordered by the U.S. Congress was held. Despite the deceptive propaganda disseminated in favor of the law by representatives of yanqui domination in Puerto Rico, only 387,016 persons voted in favor, with 119,169 votes against and vast sectors of the population abstaining.

The so-called constitution which resulted from this process was mutilated by the U.S. Congress, which added a clause to prevent the application of the primary school attendance requirement to private school students; another providing that any amendment to this "constitution" conform to Law 600, the U.S. Constitution and the Law of Federal Relations. The Congress also eliminated from the so-called **Bill of Rights** an article pertaining to the recognition of various human rights, such as the right to employment, to housing, to medical assistance, etc.

Once the so-called constitution was put into effect on these terms by the U.S. Congress, the colonial government adopted as its name the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico. Having consummated this farce, the United States notified the United Nations in 1953 that it would no longer provide information on Puerto Rico in accordance with Article 73(c) of the U.N. Charter, since the territory had achieved self-government. Notwithstanding its control over the General Assembly in that period, the United States was obliged to resort to lies and trickery in order to secure passage of a resolution freeing it of the obligation to provide information on Puerto Rico. Their argument was based on the premise that the people had effectively



exercised their right to self-determination, and that Puerto Rico had achieved the attributes of political sovereignty through an association reached by common agreement and, as such, had attained a new constitutional status.

Since that time, the struggle for independence and other circumstances have forced even the colonial administrators to propose new reformist projects to the foreign rulers, but with no success.

In 1959 the colonial legislature approved a Joint Resolution requesting that the U.S. Congress pass a series of amendments to the Law of Federal Relations. These included:

(1) That the Free Associated State be granted the option to choose whether or not to be included in commercial treaties entered into by the United States;

(2) That it be permitted to gradually assume certain functions then exercised by agencies of the federal government;

(3) That appeals of judicial decisions be reviewed directly by the United States Supreme Court, without passing through any intermediate court; and

(4) That the Free Associated State be granted the right to determine its own debt-ceiling.

These demands, timid as they were, were further weakened in the drafting of the bill. Nevertheless, in the course of the legislative process they were opposed by all Departments (Defense, Interior, Agriculture, etc.) of the Federal Government. Two insignificant concessions were finally obtained: direct appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court and an increase in the debt-ceiling to 15 per cent of the taxable wealth.

In 1960, at the initiative of the Soviet Union, the United Nations General Assembly approved the historic Resolution 1514(XV) calling for the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. To implement the Resolution, the Special Committee on Decolonization was created, later known as the Committee of 24 (since participant delegations included 24 nations).

The Pro-Independence Movement (MPI) took advantage of this new situation to launch an intense international campaign for the independence of Puerto Rico. In addition to persistent appeals to United Nations delegations, the MPI took part in numerous international conferences and conventions. These activities culminated at the Second Conference of Heads of State of Non-Aligned Nations, held in Cairo in 1964, which approved a Resolution calling for discussion of the question of Puerto Rico by the Committee of 24. By that time the triumph of the Cuban Revolution had given the Puerto Rican people a tireless and incorruptible champion for their cause in the United Nations and many other international forums.

These events brought about an exchange of letters between the Governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Munoz Marin, and President John F. Kennedy of the United States. A new attempt was launched to reform the colonial regime, touching off a heated debate. There was almost unanimous agreement that political sovereignty was the indispensable factor in any reform of the Free Associated State. In response to this view, the colonial legislature approved a Joint Resolution on December 3, 1962, requesting authorization by the U.S. Congress for a plebiscite to make the final decision on the question of political status, based on recognition and affirmation of the sovereignty of the Puerto Rican people.

This request was partially incorporated in a draft bill, but the U.S. Congress approved a law which provided only for the appointment of a commission to study the alternatives for political status. This commission was made up of thirteen members, the majority of whom were North American.

The Status Commission worked for two years, finishing its task on July 25, 1966. It limited itself to two proposals: that the colonial legislature of Puerto Rico, and not the U.S. Congress, decide whether to hold a plebiscite on the question of status; and that ad hoc committees be established by the U.S. President and the Governor of Puerto Rico to examine possible areas for readjustment in the relations between the metropolis and the colony.

At the end of 1966, in response to extraordinary pressure from Washington, the colonial administrators and legislators hastily approved—despite strong popular opposition at home—a law providing for the recommended plebiscite.

The plebiscite took place in July 1967. Despite the great sums of money taken from the public treasury for propaganda, 35 per cent of the registered voters and more than 50 per cent of the citizens eligible to vote did not participate.

Several years after the plebiscite the first Ad hoc Committee was named, under the colonial administration of Governor Luis A. Ferre, to study whether Puerto Ricans should vote for the President of the United States. This committee recommended to the U.S. Congress that Puerto Rico be included in the presidential election. The U.S. Congress tabled this recommendation.

Important victories for the independence struggle were won in 1973, in the United Nations and in the Conference of Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Nations in Algiers. In both cases, world opinion as reflected in these international bodies recognized Puerto Rico's right to independence and self-determination, as well as its right to international assistance toward that goal. As part of the imperialist reaction to these victories, a second Ad hoc Committee was recently named under the colonial administration of Governor Rafael Hernandez Colon. At this point there is no sign that this crude colonial maneuver will propose, much less achieve, any substantial reform of the political superstructure of the colony.

Puerto Rico has not had a constitutional history of its own from the time of the yanqui invasion in 1898 up to the present. Without exception, all of the supposed constitutions—the Foraker Law, the Jones Law, Public Law 600, the Constitution of the Free Associated State—were all organic federal laws, passed by the U.S. Congress for the organization and reorganization of its colonial administration in Puerto Rico. Ours is a clear case of direct government by the metropolis.

The colonial political parties all represent variations of the same ideology: that of a parasitic crust of bureaucrats and intermediaries who have served as the support and social base for foreign intervention. That ideology is capitalist and colonialist.

At the present time, two principal parties compete for the administration of the colonial government: the New Progressive Party and the Popular Democratic Party. Nationally, both represent the interests of the same class and an unconditional alliance with yanqui imperialism, with only slight variations in emphasis.



Nonetheless, the Popular Party did have an authentic popular origin. Its foundation, first program and first electoral campaign (1940) responded to the clamor of the exploited masses, who experienced a decisive awakening during the crisis of the 1930's and in the heat of the patriotic effort of the Nationalist Party. This process was concretized in the partial victory of the PPD in the 1940 elections.

In the mid-1940's, several factors related to the class roots of the PPD led the party to a change of direction in its program. Among these were the lack of a solid ideology, the contagion of opportunism represented by many traditional politicians of the period who joined the party's leadership, and the cowardly retreat of its most important leader, Luis Munoz Marin. His initial program of broad structural reform drew a hostile reaction from Washington and Munoz responded with retreat.

The net result of this turnabout was manifested in several currents that converged to determine Puerto Rico's course in the next quarter century. These were: (1) the abandonment of independence as a political goal of the party; (2) abandonment of the industrialization program based on the development of state-owned industries; (3) initiation of the "industrial promotion" policy based on large concessions to North American capitalists to encourage investment in the island; (4) paralysis of the application of the 1941 Land Law, intended to destroy the system of large sugar plantations; (5) an anti-worker policy which began with the division of the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), decreed by the PPD leadership at its 1945 congress; and (6) foundation of the Free Associated State, as a formula intended to reconcile the interests of the U.S. government with the alleged interests of the Puerto Rican people.

These policies formed the basis for accelerating the process of economic absorption of the island by big yanqui capital. The 1950's and '60's saw an astronomical increase in the influx of U.S. capital into all sectors of the Puerto Rican economy. The exodus of Puerto Ricans to the United States increased as a direct result of the unemployment, the agricultural crisis and the displacement brought on by such economic plunder. At the same time, immigration of North Americans to Puerto Rico also increased, further heightening the displacement

of Puerto Ricans from key positions in industry, finance, business and public administration.

These new policies led to a tremendous growth of both the bureaucracy and the intermediary bourgeoisie. The latter, well established within the main currents of the colonial-capitalist system, continued to consolidate its power as a class and as a major force in colonial politics.

Autonomismo*—a pale reflection of the patriotic nostalgia of the Popular Party leadership—has had to face, over the last two decades, the harsh reality foreseen at the beginning of the century by Jose de Diego: that the constitutional system of the United States is utterly opposed to the idea of self-government. Repeated attempts by the PPD to reform the Law of Federal Relations, which regulates yanqui domination of our country, in the direction of self-government were systematically rejected by the Congress and Government of the United States.

The bureaucracy and the intermediary bourgeoisie—since it is not a bourgeoisie in the proper sense—has no control over the means of production. It is totally dependent on big yanqui capital, which it must serve unconditionally. Its patriotic residues are easily eclipsed by its class interests. Thus, confronted with the failure of autonomy, the intermediary bourgeoisie leans toward annexationism.

Thus the Popular Party lost the 1968 elections to the New Progressive Party. The Popular Party itself, with its traitorous policy of the past quarter century, laid the foundations for its own demise and the rise of the New Progressives.

The New Progressive Party represents a joining of forces between the old Republican Party—assimilationist, ultra-conservative and always a minority—and the emerging forces of the bureaucracy and the intermediary

**Autonomismo*: a reformist tendency today prevalent within Commonwealth advocates which merely seeks greater spheres of autonomy in Puerto Rican affairs but never breaks the permanent subordination to the United States. It is counterposed to self-determination.

Jose de Diego was a lawyer and writer who served as Secretary of Justice in the short-lived autonomous government of 1897. After the U.S. occupation, de Diego became the first President of the insular House of Representatives and, in later years, devoted himself towards gaining independence for Puerto Rico.



bourgeoisie within the PPD. The PNP represents a class which in its present stage of development sees itself obligated to favor integration with the United States. It retains only remnants of patriotic nostalgia, which leads the party to revive stale slogans such as "jíbaro statehood" and "the preservations of the Puerto Rican nationality within the great American nation."

The internal contradiction within the New Progressive Party, recognized by its own leadership, raises difficulties for the advancement of the statehood cause. Thus, the PNP has once again followed the path opened by Muñoz Marín—the presidential vote—as a way to delay for a considerable period the confrontation with the U.S. Congress over a request for statehood.

Two factors make the PNP vacillate in forcing a petition for statehood: first, they know—and this has been confirmed by the latest polls—that statehood is the aspiration of only a minority of the Puerto Rican people; and secondly, that there is not the least possibility that the U.S. Congress would approve it. By focusing on the presidential vote, therefore, the party conveniently sets its course on a much longer road where confrontation with reality is not so imminent. The extension of the presidential and vice-presidential vote to Puerto Ricans would require an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This procedure involves not only the approval of two-thirds of the Congress, but also ratification by three-fourths of the state legislatures. The process is a slow one and it is assumed that public opinion can be conditioned for a wait of many years.

In 1972 the Popular Party regained control of the colonial administration with a campaign based on channeling the enormous dissatisfaction of the masses



with the PNP government of Luis A. Ferré. A number of factors combined to favor the PPD's return to power: (1) the structural crisis of colonialism began to manifest itself in an intensification of basic social problems: the constantly rising cost of living, increasing unemployment, lack of adequate housing for the great majority, and an over-all deterioration of social conditions; (2) the equivocation and deception which flourished in the PNP government; (3) the escalated repression and widespread abuse and mistreatment of broad sectors of the population, particularly workers' and squatters' movements; (4) the lack of an electoral alternative capable of ousting the PNP, particularly on the left, due to the PIP's refusal to form a united front with the PSP.

The Popular Party's new government has not dampened the political polarization which the class struggle is accelerating throughout the country. This government represents the most powerful imperialist interests currently established in Puerto Rico, such as the oil and mining companies and the large banking interests which control funds for construction, industry and commerce. This fact was reflected in the composition of the cabinet named by the new colonial administrator, in which the most important positions are held by lawyers connected to large corporations and former executives of the most powerful foreign firms on the island.

The new colonial administration is also more closely tied to yanqui intelligence operations, particularly those of the CIA, than any in the past. The CIA liberally financed the Popular Party's electoral campaign in exchange for political commitments made in advance by the new colonial administrators.

These commitments include the accelerated plunder of our natural resources by mining and petroleum companies, through plans for the exploitation of copper and nickel from the center and west of the island, and the installation of a superport and a system of petroleum substations, refineries and highly polluting petro-chemical plants.

In order to adapt the juridical-political system to the new needs of big capital on the island, certain automatic concessions have been proposed by the Popular Party and



Rebels who were captured by the National Guard in Jayuya, Puerto Rico during 1950 uprising.

the colonial administration through the so-called ad hoc committee.

The Popular Party has effected a fundamental change in its political leadership and moved fully into the technocratic era. Political leadership with a mass base, which had been the party's vertebral column over the past decades, has gradually given way to elements beholden to big business and who today control the party from top to bottom.

The honesty and administrative integrity which once characterized the government of the Popular Democratic Party have disappeared. Today, the members of this administration enrich themselves in the high offices of colonial power, to a degree surpassing even the corruption which epitomized the so-called New Progressive Party.

Superstructure

In this context, the political superstructure of Puerto Rico, as a U.S. colony, is expressed in a variety of structures designed to perpetuate yanqui domination. The absolute character of this domination demonstrates the goal of socio-economic exploitation and keeps alive the threat of national extinction.

Military invasion was the repressive means used by U.S. imperialism to protect the socio-economic expansion into Puerto Rico initiated before 1898. Alongside military invasion, the economic invasion was stepped up through agricultural corporations that already had established interests in Puerto Rico. The Foraker Law was introduced to legitimize the invasions of troops and capital, and the power to regulate the lives of the Puerto Rican people.

Thus, from the outset, the juridical institutions, the repressive military apparatus and the economic structures of the North American capitalist state all combined to announce the regime which was to prevail in Puerto Rico.

In 75 years of domination, the U.S. Congress has passed two bills (the Jones Law and Public Law 600), with the sole purpose of adjusting the political structure of Puerto Rico's colonial administration to the needs and desires of the United States.

This process has produced the following bases for the colonial version of the yanqui capitalist state:

1. U.S. military domination of Puerto Rico, including all types of armaments and operations bases.
2. Total monopoly of the Puerto Rican market by the United States.
3. Imposition of North American citizenship on Puerto Ricans and their consequent subjection to all U.S. laws of "federal jurisdiction."
4. Imposition of U.S. currency on Puerto Rico as part of its basic subjection to the entire U.S. economic and financial structure, including the fluctuations of big capital.
5. The extension and support of these four basic areas of the U.S. political superstructure by means of U.S. jurisdiction over immigration, customs, mails, labor-management relations, communications, wages, judicial decisions, bankruptcy, air and sea space, expropriation, coastal waterways and repressive organs (FBI, CIA and others).

The U.S. political superstructure in Puerto Rico is predicated on economic, juridical, social and military domination by the United States in every area vital to our

life as a people. Its purpose is to secure the extraction of natural resources, the exploitation of cheap labor and the acquisition of disproportionate benefits through commercial speculation in our captive market. A further objective is the strategic use of Puerto Rico as a base of aggression against other peoples, particularly in Latin America.

The executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government, the repressive police organs (Criminal Investigations Corps—CIC, shock troops, etc.), the National Guard and the entire administrative network which controls labor-management relations, planning issues, business, as well as economic, social and educational programs—in fact, the entire political structure of Puerto Rico is directly and unconditionally subordinated to the economic infrastructure and the political superstructure of the United States.

This network has been formalized in juridical terms in the various organic statutes (Foraker Law, Jones Law, Public Law 600 and the Free Associated State), it is demonstrated and reaffirmed by U.S. military, economic and social domination.



Intertwined in this maze is a network of economic domination by the big U.S. consortiums, which alternate with the federal political structure in dictating guidelines for the administrative structure of the colonial government. Within this framework, the Puerto Rican partners of these capital interests, whether through their administrative functions or their class interests, make whatever arrangements are required by the U.S. political superstructure in Puerto Rico to ensure a free hand for big capital investment. This is a desperate act of the PPD and the PNP colonialists, charged with consolidating U.S. domination through reforms which give the appearance of taking Puerto Rico out of the classical colonial mold.

Signs of weakness in the U.S. economy are now a source of anxiety for these sectors, as are the heightened effects here of U.S. socio-economic conflict in Puerto Rico, particularly spiraling inflation and the "energy crisis".

To all this must be added the heightened rhythm of working-class struggle in Puerto Rico, the demands of a people plagued by inflation and the environmental dangers which permeate imperialism's new economic plans. The revolutionary process in Puerto Rico is in a period of development and consolidation.

We can expect the detrimental effects of the U.S. economic crisis in Puerto Rico—whether or not they are temporarily resolved—and the international scrutiny of the United Nations to lead Washington and the colonial administrators to devise changes in the U.S. political superstructure in Puerto Rico. Such changes would have to satisfy at least two objectives:

- a) to remove P. R. from the direct jurisdiction of the United Nations, or at least to confuse, dissipate and hinder U.N. supervision; similarly, to prevent a decisive mobilization of the Puerto Rican people in struggle, which could generate a process of decolonization in a favorable conjuncture of colonialist crisis;
- b) to achieve greater commercial and economic maneuverability by gaining access to other markets, by developing new economic plans and by trying to neutralize the growing crisis of the colonialist economy. Here the new technicians of pseudo-capitalist development would play a vital role.

This new tendency, reflected in the so-called "autonomic" demands of the Ad Hoc Committees, could

give rise to a policy along one of two lines regarding the U.S. political superstructure in Puerto Rico:

- (1) The recognition of certain areas of apparent political power, amounting, however, to a mere delegation of federal authority with no concrete relinquishment of yanqui jurisdiction over Puerto Rico. Such recognition would leave the basic structures of domination untouched and permit continued interference in our internal affairs and control over decision-making in all spheres. Such measures might be accompanied by new economic intrusions, such as the exploitation of minerals, to exhaust the remains of our national wealth in an attempt to alleviate the colonialist economic crisis. Meanwhile, the process of socio-economic absorption and displacement of the working class would continue. All this, combined with a program of repression calculated and planned by the technicians of yanqui intelligence, would aim to create the proper conditions for a consolidation of colonialism. The objective would be to allow the yanquis to overcome the signals of crisis, weaken the basis of our nationality and provoke the total

assimilation of the Puerto Rican people in the long or short-run.

With all the risks this strategy implies, it would be no more than a colonialist hallucination in today's world. It would be in open defiance of the world consensus against colonialism expressed in United Nations resolutions.

- (2) The other option would be the real or apparent recognition of areas of political power, based on the same objectives of economic domination and on military intervention in our internal affairs, coupled this time, however, with the simultaneous relinquishment of yanqui federal jurisdiction over Puerto Rico. This could be accomplished through some pact or treaty which would leave intact the imperialist power structure, giving Puerto Rico the nominal status of an "association," "protectorate" or "straw republic." This neocolonialist option would seek to avoid international consideration of Puerto Rico's case. While formally acceding to international pressure, it would maintain the necessary framework for continued exploitation.

In either of these two versions, the U.S. political superstructure in Puerto Rico would undergo only superficial changes, because the economic structures and repressive apparatus would continue under complete domination of the U.S. bourgeoisie. In the process of capital concentration, the U.S. bourgeoisie has developed financial super-states in the form of multinational corporations that, along with its repressive agents, make up the military-industrial complex of U.S. imperialism. For the socio-economic domination and exploitation of peoples, they no longer require the obsolete, anachronistic structure of the classical colony, which the yanquis preserve in Puerto Rico as a vestige of a by-gone era. Washington's reluctance to forego this total absorption of Puerto Rico stems from strategic considerations regarding the Caribbean and Latin America, and from the undeniable short-term economic advantages of the classical colonial structure.

In Puerto Rico, the U.S. bourgeoisie has an economic infrastructure and a puppet army—the National Guard—which permit it to dispense with the classical political forms of colonial domination. The exploitation of natural resources (land, sea and minerals) as well as that of the working class could be carried out under the cloak of a neo-colonial political state.

The colonial government of Puerto Rico has developed areas of alleged public service in the form of public corporations which are nothing more than intermediaries for speculation by yanqui bond-holders and their large corporations. This same form of politico-economic organization makes the public corporation an intermediate corporate entity in the service of the U.S. financial state, and a counterpart to the political superstructure of colonialist domination.

This intermediate corporate entity would be the logical instrument for a transformation to a neocolony, safeguarding the process of exploitation. This is so because it appears to be a large enterprise in the public service, or a national undertaking in the reformist mold and in the "interest of the people" (Water Resources Authority—AFF, Aqueduct and Sewers Authority—

AAA, Metropolitan Bus Authority—AMA, Mining Corporation, Telephone Company, etc.)

It is vital for us to block this strategy. Our commitment is to socialism, which presupposes political independence as a guarantee of our existence as a people free from socio-economic exploitation. Formal independence with socio-economic exploitation is in no sense independence: not even in a political sense, since the political decisions of neocolonies are a mere reflection and product of the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Clearly, anyone who does not posit political independence as the basis for economic independence has not understood the dynamic of our historical process. But in the present historical moment, anyone who proposes the formal, artificial independence of the neocolony as an equivalent of political independence has fallen into the imperialist trap.

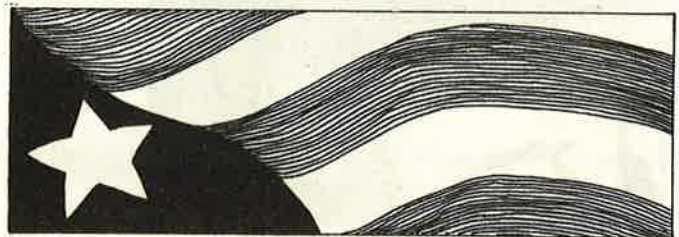
For this reason we conclude in the **General Declaration** of our Party that in Puerto Rico today, every **independentista** must be a socialist and every socialist an **independentista**. True independence cannot be conceived other than as a break with the whole colonial-capitalist edifice which serves as a foundation for the so-called "free associated state." Such a break would not usher in a capitalist nation since that would mean a mere change in masters for the great majority of the people.

None of the above denies the need for a transition process in the construction of socialism, with political independence as its cornerstone. It must be in harmony with this process and with the objective of a socialist republic that we wage the struggle for independence in our homeland.

We cannot now conclude that imperialism is seriously considering any substantial change in our political status, not even in terms of a transition to neocolonialism. On the contrary, there are indications of even greater determination to keep the U.S. political superstructure intact in Puerto Rico.

It may be that as a result of our struggle, imperialism and its allies here will decide to move toward neocolonialism and install a formal republic, associated by treaty to the United States or not. But we would recognize the reformist character of such a decision in its historical perspective and we would combat the neo-colonial nature of this state with equal determination. Nothing short of full independence, which is only achieved through the construction of socialism, will satisfy our aspiration for freedom.

Thus we place the struggle for independence and self-determination as our first strategic priority and declare the necessity of uniting all the patriotic forces who share this goal to fight for its realization.



Part Two

The Socialist Alternative



I. BASES OF OUR PROGRAM

The **General Declaration** adopted by the Party's Constituent Assembly proclaims four basic rights as essential to the program of the working-class party:

1. The inalienable right of our country to independence and total sovereignty.
2. The inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to complete recovery of the national wealth, from control by individuals, corporations, governments or foreign forces of any kind.
3. The right of Puerto Rican workers to progressive socialization of the means of production, be they in foreign hands or national, and to the construction of a socialist society where ultimately there are neither exploiters nor exploited.
4. The right of the workers and the Puerto Rican people to use all forms of struggle within reach, including revolutionary violence in the face of the repressive violence of the colonial-capitalist system, in order to achieve the fundamental rights previously enumerated.

The first of these four basic rights—national independence—is inalienable; that is, it cannot be compromised. For our Party, therefore, the political status of Puerto Rico is not negotiable through elections, plebiscites or referendums, nor agreements of any kind that would weaken or restrict the right of the Puerto Rican people to independence and the full exercise of sovereignty.

The second inalienable right is equivalent to the goal of national liberation. We maintain that all foreign holdings in Puerto Rico have been obtained by the rule of force of the colonial system. We therefore recognize no property rights acquired under these circumstances. Through our struggle, the Puerto Rican people will recuperate all that constitutes the national wealth: land, sub-soil, sea, air, flora, fauna and everything that Puerto Rican men and women have worked to create in all aspects of our national life.

The third right constitutes the essence of our socialist ideology and the long-term objective of our Party: "the construction of a socialist society where ultimately there are neither exploiters nor exploited." That is, the socialist society to which we aspire will lead to a communist society, the only one that can achieve the disappearance of class divisions.

The fourth right relates to the means and forms of struggle. As a decisive factor in the achievement of our goals, it is included among the basic rights. By nature, however, it is linked to the strategy and tactics of our struggle and will be further elaborated in the corresponding section of this thesis.

In communist society, our final goal, the prevailing principle is: "from each according to his/her capacity and to each according to his/her needs." On the one hand, this presupposes that scarcity has been overcome by the full development of society's productive capacity and, on the other, that society has been transformed so profoundly that class divisions, the division between manual and intellectual labor and the division between

town and country have disappeared. Human beings will be totally liberated from the millennial burdens that have shaped their existence under the prevailing systems of exploitation since class society first developed. Work will be not only a means of subsistence, but a primary necessity vital to every human being.

To reach communism, we must first construct and consolidate socialism. Socialist society destroys the roots of bourgeois power, establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat and creates the material bases for the full development of the productive forces and the final step to communism. It is based upon the principle: "from each according to his/her capacity and to each according to his/her work."

Revolutionary change from one social system to another cannot be achieved abruptly, nor by decree. It is a process and revolutionary power provides the qualitative change that directs this process. It requires the application of a correct transition program that consolidates the power of the working class and sets solid bases for the construction of socialism.

II. A TRANSITION PROGRAM

What we have called "the socialist alternative" is a transition program toward a superior form of social organization: socialism. It is rooted in the struggle to overthrow capitalism; thus, the basic premise of our transition program is the socialization of the principal means of production.

The strategic tasks of the Party during this period—which we define as the Democratic Workers Republic—are political agitation and organization of the working masses, to consolidate workers' power in all the organizations and institutions of society. We shall then be able to establish a workers' democracy and the definitive seizure of power by the Puerto Rican proletariat.

A transition program could take on a reformist content if it fails to explicitly define its purpose as that of continuing the struggle toward the final objective and take concrete measures to reach that goal. The power of the workers over the means of production and distribution, as well as over the State and its armed forces, will define the revolutionary character of that program.

The new strategy of economic growth is based on a socialist conception, on the direct and concrete actions of the Puerto Rican working class for the benefit of society as a whole.

The transition program is designed to radically change the property relations of society, from a fundamentally private to a fundamentally social basis. It must reorient the entire productive apparatus of the economy to satisfy the basic needs of our people. It will radically alter the present pattern of income distribution, making it more just and equitable. It will allocate economic resources in a planned and efficient manner, to increase production, employment, productivity and to diminish the imbalances between different sectors of the economy and diverse regions of the country. It will establish direct channels for working-class participation and power in the fundamental decisions of Puerto Rican life.

The transition period from one social system to another is difficult, and class struggle may take on brutal forms. We cannot anticipate the concrete forms that this struggle

will assume during that period in Puerto Rico. It is clear, however, that no ruling class has relinquished power peacefully, and that the level of class struggle will be greatly intensified. But no matter how difficult the struggle, the transition to socialism signifies the elimination of pain, suffering and social disequilibrium for millions of Puerto Ricans of this and future generations. That is why revolution is the motor force that moves the development of human civilization.

Socialist Planning

A country is capitalist or socialist not by virtue of its ideas or intentions, nor the existence of a plan, but according to its social structure and the class nature of its leadership. If planning is subordinated to the decisions of a privileged class, the plan is simply one more tool of class exploitation. Planning is not merely a technique, but rather the mode of functioning of one type of society: the socialist society. In Puerto Rico today, planning is no more than a bureaucratic mechanism, totally lacking in coordination; trying to bring order to chaos but failing continuously.

Under socialism, however, planning will enable the workers of Puerto Rico to collectively determine and coordinate their objectives. It will provide the means to fully develop our society, taking into consideration objective economic law and the level of social development.



Cuba and Puerto Rico Are Two Wings of One Bird. "I have one wing free . . . I will soon have both."

Socialist planning will only be possible when the principal means of production and distribution are in the hands of society and function for its benefit; when structures for real working-class participation in the elaboration and realization of the economic and political plans exist.

Socialist planning is neither spontaneous nor erratic. On the contrary, it responds to a specific reality and to a given level of development of the productive forces. Thus, socialist planning in Puerto Rico is as much a point of departure as a long-term process.

The fundamental features of socialist planning require a clear political vision of long and short-term objectives, their respective priorities and inter-relationships. Clearly, these objectives will be directed toward solving the basic problems of the Puerto Rican people and raising the living standard of all workers.

The working masses will determine, through the broadest participation, the major economic objectives and will set priorities. These priorities will vary according to the historical moment and economic conditions, and will be subject to continual reevaluation. Policy will be implemented by the appropriate organisms through a national development plan, that will fix the levels of consumption, production, investment, foreign trade, educational spending, public health, housing and other aspects of social life. The principal criteria will be social benefit and economic efficiency. This implies a total restructuring of the Planning Board in order to modernize, democratize and reorient its functions, and to guarantee the strengthening of short-term, sectoral and regional planning. It will also coordinate scientific and technological research with the long-term planning of economic development.

Such coordination will guarantee the coherence of the plan and, therefore, its success. It will also regulate the integration of economic activity, the selection of appropriate technology, participation in the world economy, the promotion of scientific research, pricing and all other aspects of economic development.

To ensure that economic resources will not be wasted, economic activity must be subordinate to planning. But this subordination is relative and will not apply in equal fashion to socialist and private enterprise, during the period in which the latter must still exist.

Investment in Puerto Rico has followed an anarchic pattern, alien to the interests of the Puerto Rican people. Socialist planning will insure an efficient allocation of resources.

In the first place, investment will be determined by the collective decisions of the government and the working masses, and not by the profit-seeking of the few. Social benefit will prevail over personal gain.

Secondly, investment in Puerto Rico will not be subject to the fluctuations of foreign economies, and even to the periodic crises—energy or otherwise—of the U.S. economy.

Thirdly, investment will not be based solely on the economic viability of the undertaking. Rather, social and economic contribution will be weighted together.

Lastly, in the planned economy of the Democratic Workers Republic, investment needs will be carefully

studied and planned before beginning any project. Improvisation will give way to the organization of socialist production.

In the colonial-capitalist system, investment cannot be planned because private enterprise has the power to decide its magnitude and conditions. Under socialist planning, investment will be decided on the basis of social possibilities and necessities. Society as a whole will decide what portion of production will be dedicated to satisfying immediate needs, such as distribution or imports of consumer goods, education, public health, recreation and other social activities, and what part will be reinvested to raise production.

The New Industrialization

The industrialization process in the Democratic Workers Republic will be fundamentally determined by the social appropriation of the means of production. The dominant classes (national and foreign) today control the principal instruments of power; that is, they privately own the means of production in industry. For this reason the ownership of large companies and monopolies must be nationalized and socialized. This will establish the basis of political and economic power which is necessary to achieve the initial objective of socialist industrialization.

We propose the socialization of all strategic enterprises, including all enterprises currently in the hands of government but controlled by North American shareholders (AFF, AAA, AMA, etc.), the large domestic transport companies, air and maritime transport, communications, petroleum refining and distribution, cement, petrochemical and pharmaceutical production, the subsidiaries of the Fortune 500, the monopolies and large distribution firms and, in general, all large enterprises that are key to economic development. Owners of small and medium-sized businesses will be part of the private or cooperative sector of the new economy, insofar as they adjust production to the national development plan.

The concentration of large industry in the hands of society will ensure that the profits these corporations derive under capitalism will be used rationally by the Planning Board to direct the process of socialist accumulation. These industrial enterprises will be a major source for financing new investment necessary for the creation of a new socialist industrial structure.

At the present time, industry in Puerto Rico is a mere appendage of U.S. industry. Industrial colonialism has built factories that are only one part of a technical process that begins and ends abroad. Our island has been converted into a sweat-shop of cheap labor, where foreign capitalists enjoy unparalleled political and economic privileges: indiscriminate use of the air, water and electric energy and exorbitant tax exemptions.

The nature of our industry, as but one part of a foreign-controlled production process, lends a new character to our industrial dependency. This dependency is now absolute. The anarchic forces of the capitalist market are incapable of providing the island with an alternative industrial structure, one that is not entirely dependent. Multinational corporations demand control of every phase of the industrial process, regardless of geographic location. Industrial colonialism relegates the subordinate countries to mere producers of component parts or low-technology consumer goods. This production is totally dependent on imported raw materials.

Socialist industrialization in Puerto Rico will not have to obey the workings of the capitalist world market. It will be able to achieve the vertical integration of industry and ensure that all phases in the elaboration of a given product take place in Puerto Rico. This integration will be carried out through a two-fold policy of import substitution and export promotion. Complete factories of an efficient size will be established to permit the integration of the chemical, textile and garment industries, electronics, copper production, metallurgy and machinery production. These industries will eliminate actual imports of intermediate goods and will export their remaining production to the world market. In addition to integrating the industrial process, our industrialization policy will promote intensive specialization in certain high-technology industries. Puerto Rico can become a major international supplier of final and intermediate goods of the previously mentioned industries.

To achieve these goals, Puerto Rico must participate in a new international division of labor. As a member of international organizations for mutual assistance, we will be able to acquire the necessary factories for the industrial integration process. Likewise, participation in the common market of the socialist countries and other markets of non-socialist countries will allow us to build those factories according to economies of scale.

This strategy of socialist industrialization will develop a national base of intermediate goods produced with imported or national raw materials. In addition, the industrialization strategy will develop agricultural raw materials for the food industries, which will permit the integration of both sectors of the economy.

A socialist economy does not face the problem of chronic unemployment. Thus, its industrial development strategy need not maximize employment in all cases. Socialist accumulation and the cooperation of friendly countries will permit a higher concentration of investment in high-technology projects that maximize socialist production. At the same time, certain sectors of the economy will obey the social criterion of maximizing employment. The contradictions inherent in the capitalist system between policies which tend to maximize employment and those which maximize growth disappear in an industrial socialist economy. Both objectives can be achieved while simultaneously guaranteeing the maximum social benefit.

The process of socialist industrialization will be achieved through development plans coordinated with a new international division of labor. Puerto Rico will



participate in this international industrial integration on the basis of complete political and economic equality. The first industrialization plan will initiate the process of total integration of industry, while creating a national base for production of parts and accessories to replace imports. In friendly countries, complete factories will be engaged in producing basic supplies for our industries and minimizing dependency.

Workers And The New Economy

During the transition period, different types of relations of production will co-exist, as remnants of the capitalist mode of production persist alongside the new socialist relations. Thus, the organizational forms of the new economy will not be homogeneous; on the contrary, varied forms will co-exist, depending on the depth of revolutionary change. Of the three organizational forms described above—social, cooperative and private—the social sector will be dominant; by the end of the transition period it will have become the sole sector.

The social sector will comprise all economic activities that determine the growth and development of the new economy. It is in this sector that the participation of workers will take on its maximum expression, since participation is more a political problem than a technical one. In all enterprises which pass over to this sector, working-class leadership will prevail over bureaucratic and elitist schema. Workers in socialist enterprises will take responsibility for direction and management of the socialist enterprises, and for determining the most efficient means for achieving the objectives set by society as a whole. These characteristics will firmly establish the social sector's vanguard role toward a consolidated socialist economy.

Workers will also have great responsibility in enterprises included within the private sector. In addition to protecting their immediate interests, workers will take charge of supervision and control over production (workers' control), to ensure that private companies neither contradict nor sabotage the national economic plan to which they are subordinate. Workers will also proceed to create the economic and political conditions for these enterprises to pass over, gradually, into the social sector of the economy.

The cooperative sector of the new economy will encompass enterprises of secondary importance, which for political or technical reasons cannot be transferred to the social sector. Their production will be a significant contribution to the economy, and they will represent an organizational alternative for small-scale producers. Workers will be cooperative members of this sector and will assume a fundamental leadership role in organizing production in accordance with the national plan. Moreover, those workers who are politically most advanced will have the task of guiding and orienting their fellow-workers.

In the new economy, workers must develop workers' power at all levels of economic organization. But this power, this effective participation, cannot be achieved without planning. It is in the planning of the new economy that workers' power finds its most concrete expression, in determining what to produce and how to produce it, in deciding upon the most correct pricing-policy, as well as where and when to invest. Ultimately, this is the expression of real democracy.

Participation in the planning and execution of our objectives will not be spontaneous nor anarchistic; it must be organized and conscious. This is precisely the role of working-class organizations. Labor unions will be the instruments of control and leadership. Under the leadership of the vanguard party, they must develop political and technical consciousness among workers, combining moral and material incentives. A continually deepening working-class consciousness will be a primary means of developing the new economy and its productive forces. The combined efforts of the three instruments of the working class—the party, the State and the labor unions—will provide the foundation for workers' power.

III. PUERTO RICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

The **General Declaration** of our Party begins with the affirmation that "Puerto Rico is a Latin American nation of four and a half million people, of whom 2,700,000 live on the island and the rest (more than a third) are concentrated in New York City and throughout the United States."

Puerto Ricans have been forced to move **en masse** to U.S. territory as a colonized people. As a result, future generations will continue to reside there even after the conquest of our national liberation. In view of this reality, we proclaim before the people of the United States and of the world that the national liberation of the Puerto Rican people will not be complete without the social, political and economic liberation of their descendents in U.S. territory. We therefore have the right and duty to:

- (1) participate fully in the revolutionary transformation of U.S. society, safeguarding thereby the survival of our cultural heritage and our integrity as a people even within the frontiers of the United States, and
- (2) to utilize, even within the national territory of the United States, all forms of struggle, including revolutionary violence against the repressive violence of the system, to assert the national rights of Puerto Rican people wherever they reside.

The geographic dispersion of the Puerto Rican people is one of the most dramatic and complex aspects of our social reality, shaped by colonialist domination.

It is obvious that the national liberation to which we aspire is set within Puerto Rican national territory, the seat of our nation. Yet this liberation cannot be complete until it encompasses the enormous sector of our people living in the United States.

The Democratic Workers Republic will take a variety of measures aimed at the liberation of that sector of our population. Among them will be the following:

- (1) We shall guarantee the inalienable rights of all Puerto Ricans, regardless of where they reside at the moment that the republic is established, to return to their native country and join in the process of constructing a new society. No matter what citizenship they hold, the instant they arrive in Puerto Rican national territory they will be granted Puerto Rican citizenship with all its rights and obligations.
- (2) At the same time, we shall offer the full moral and material support of the new republic to Puerto Rican



Four Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned in the United States since their March 1, 1954 attack on the U.S. House of Representatives. Left to right, they are: Rafael Cancel Miranda, Andres Figueroa Cordero, Lolita Lebron and Irving Flores. Not shown is Oscar Collazo.

communities that remain in the United States, in order to advance their objectives and support their demands, which can never be fully satisfied until the capitalist system is destroyed and socialism is established within the United States.

- (3) We shall struggle to safeguard the right of Puerto Ricans living in the United States to free transit between that country and their homeland, in such manner as to maintain constant communication and to prevent isolation from their relatives and their country.

V. SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

The daily work of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, on the road toward the seizure of power, requires fighting against the colonial-capitalist system in all its manifestations. We are the conscious defenders of all the interests of the working class, be they immediate demands or final objectives. Those measures which contribute toward improving the living and working conditions of all working people will have the vanguard's most determined support.

In its daily work, the Party is fully aware that the objective is not to liberalize the colonialist-capitalist system on its own terms. The reforms that imperialism may grant from time to time, in order to prolong its hegemony, are more a by-product of revolutionary struggle than a result of the efforts of reformist sectors.

There are two ways to confront the problems which originate in the nature of the colonial-capitalist system: by isolating one problem from the rest or by relating a specific problem to the totality of problems. The former characterizes those sectors which confront certain

problems of colonialism and capitalism, but do not succeed in relating them to the whole and go so far as to separate them entirely from the colonial-capitalist system. Precisely, therein lies the difference between the revolutionary vanguard and those sectors or groups which still have not attained an adequate understanding of colonialist domination.

When the PSP confronts a given problem, it aspires through its struggle to raise the consciousness and fighting spirit of the people. The solution to such problems depends in large measure on the amount of popular support generated by the struggle. To the extent that the slogans of the vanguard take root and are embraced by the people as their slogans, victories will be won which will continually deepen the struggle for independence and socialism.

The daily work of the PSP revolves around the most serious immediate problems of the Puerto Rican people. In essence, the Party's short-term objectives mean struggling successfully against the causes and factors which engender those problems. This struggle is carried out with the clear understanding that the concessions wrested from the regime will have very short-lived effects. We are not struggling to improve the conditions of wage slavery, but to win complete emancipation from that system. This can only be achieved by the overthrow of capitalism.

The most serious and immediate problems confronting the people of Puerto Rico can be summarized as follows:

1. the high cost of living;
2. anti-working-class legislation and labor union colonialism;
3. the so-called energy crisis;
4. environmental colonialism;
5. control over mineral resources;
6. the lack of class and national consciousness;
7. repression;
8. militarism;
9. inefficient and under-utilization of land.

In the face of each one of these problems, the PSP unfurls its battle slogans. These slogans can be synthesized into one general slogan: **Independencia ya, socialismo ahora mismo.**



Part Three

Strategy and Tactics



First Congress of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party held in the United States, New York, April 8, 1973.

I. THE STRATEGY FOR PUERTO RICAN LIBERATION

Since its formation fifteen years ago, the Pro-Independence Movement has recognized the need to set foundations for a clear strategy toward national liberation in our country. To a large extent, the new struggle for independence which began in the decade of the sixties is a concerted effort toward achieving this objective.

In the first political thesis of the MPI (*The Hour of Independence*, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1963) the need to develop a clear strategic base for the movement is already discussed. However, this document presents only a bare outline of what constitutes strategy and tactics from a political perspective. It states that the goal of this strategy, in the case of Puerto Rico, "is the triumph of independence, or a substantial and decisive advance in this direction." Clearly, at that point in time there was no pretension of formulating a complete strategy, but certain steps toward that goal were taken.

"To establish the strategy of the Pro Independence Movement," we affirmed in that first thesis (op. cit. p. 108), "we must first determine two things: (1) the principal point against which this struggle must be directed and (2) the level of organization, preparation and development of forces."

Further on in the same text, we state that "to achieve these objectives, the movement must be able to fully mobilize those forces actively engaged in struggle, as well as passive and potential forces. This dictates, at least, the following requirements: (1) to concentrate the greatest force against the enemy's most vulnerable point; (2) to select the moment most appropriate to a given political activity on the basis of objective analysis; (3) to carry out firmly in practice the chosen orientation, overcoming all obstacles; and (4) to act with flexibility, always taking into account the correlation of forces."

Another basic principle established in this first thesis is that "the forms of struggle are always subordinate to strategy and tactics." (Ibid.)

Still limited to a purely legalistic framework, this first thesis proposes a strategic objective in the following terms:

Thus, we will direct our struggle, in the future, toward the realization of a Constituent Assembly. There, the people of Puerto Rico, with their votes, without conditions or reservations of any kind, and through the absolute exercise of self-determination and sovereignty, will provide their delegates with a political mandate for the establishment of a free Puerto Rico. Nothing less than this full exercise of the people's right of suffrage should engage the efforts of the Puerto Rican people at this historical moment, and least of all of the patriotic vanguard, the *independentistas*. (Ibid. pp. 112-113)

This thesis reiterates Resolution 1514-XV of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which states that all imperialist powers must effect "a total and unconditional transfer of all powers to the peoples of the non-autonomous territories, trusteeships and all other territories which have still not achieved independence" (p. 112). And on the basis of this resolution, the thesis concludes that "the Pro-Independence Movement will continue its struggle, using all possible means, to ensure this total transfer of power, followed by the Constituent Assembly" (p. 113).

However, the thesis offers no explanation of what to do to ensure the implementation of this international mandate, which had not even been made specifically applicable to the case of Puerto Rico.

In the second thesis of the MPI, an attempt is made to define a precise strategy toward independence. In summary, it reads as follows:

The achievement of independence will come about through a crisis of the colonialist system. The deeper this crisis, the more profound this eventual sovereignty will be. If the crisis is sufficiently profound to shake the imperialist structure to its roots, independence will be accompanied by social transformations. On the contrary, if the crisis affects only the juridical structure on which the present colonial regime is based, then the United States will be able to safeguard its established interests in Puerto Rico with the mere recognition of formal independence.

The development of the crisis and its dimension will depend on many internal and external factors. To these must be added a conscious agent—the militants of the vanguard—which at a given moment will have a decisive influence on the development and deepening of the crisis.

Whatever form the development of this crisis takes, the experience of nearly three-fourths of a century of U.S. domination dictates these two conclusions:

(1) No event less serious than a crisis of the colonialist system will be capable of producing either the formal or real independence of Puerto Rico; and (2) Once the crisis of the colonialist system has occurred, the United States will have no alternative but to recognize the independence of Puerto Rico. The degree of sovereignty this implies will depend on the relation that exists at that historical moment between the anti-imperialist forces and imperialism, and the depth of the crisis itself. (*Presente y Futuro de Puerto Rico*, San Juan, 1969, p. 43.)

The Crisis of Colonialism

The weakness of the strategic concept of the crisis of the colonialist system as outlined in this second thesis, is evident: it continues leaving the decision on Puerto Rican independence in the hands of Washington. The entire framework is based on the premise that the United States, in the face of crisis, will be forced to act in a pre-determined manner; that is, it will recognize the independence of Puerto Rico for lack of any other alternative.

We cannot and will not wait until the U.S. Congress decides to grant or recognize the fact of independence. On the contrary, we ourselves must seize this independence as an exercise of power. To do this, we must take the strategic initiative, while always taking into account what the enemy will do. We must therefore define this colonialist crisis, which is proposed as the basis for beginning the seizure of power.

The process of political and economic erosion of imperialism in Puerto Rico will provoke a crisis in two principal and inter-related forms: when the yanquis can no longer administrate and govern the colony effectively, nor delegate power to the intermediary and management bourgeoisies; and when they can no longer derive the enormous profits, which today they obtain with ease from their investments in the colony. These two conditions will begin to appear in indirect and barely perceptible forms; but they will continually become more serious and generalized, until the colonialist regime loses all legitimacy in the eyes of the masses. This illegitimacy will encourage the Puerto Rican people, dialectically linked to the vanguard, to take the most courageous actions in defense of their country and against the exploitation we all experience under the imperialist yoke.

The crisis will sharpen during a long and tortuous process of conscientization, organization and mobilization of the working class and the working masses toward revolutionary actions. As the masses recognize their need to control the most diverse aspects of their collective life, to find solutions to problems which no longer have

solutions within the existing structures, popular forms of organization will be generated. This process will culminate in the formation of parallel structures that will gradually wrest away areas and functions of the enemy's power and establish revolutionary power bases that will permit the complete seizure of power.

We speak of revolutionary power bases not in the geographic sense, but in terms of concrete reality, of the commitment and action of the workers and masses in coordination with the working-class party and with the patriotic and revolutionary fronts and organizations it generates. In this process, the worsening of the objective socio-economic conditions will be used to sharpen the fundamental contradictions between colonialists and colonized, between capitalists and proletarians.

Following a Leninist analysis, we can see as the parameters of this crisis the sharpening of a process which includes internal conflicts among different sectors of the ruling class. This will occur both in the camp of the primary exploiters and in the ranks of the domestic bourgeoisie which serves them. It will occur in sharp contrast to the growing organizational cohesion and unity in purpose and action of the exploited, which finds its clearest expression in the actions of the vanguard. The absence of reformist alternatives which would diffuse the level of struggle, and which the colonial regime tries to apply, slowly at first and then more and more rapidly, complements this process. If adequate power bases have been developed, this process and the intensified repression will bring the struggle to the point of explosion, to the point where "twenty years are condensed into one day," the historical moment in which the masses not only support, but participate decisively in the most courageous acts. It is impossible to anticipate the precise moment of this occurrence. There is no specific signal of the ripeness of the revolutionary process, but certain symptoms of social explosion can be discerned and scientific steps taken to hasten its arrival.

At the time the second thesis of the MPI was formulated, the theory of colonialist crisis was barely developed. It lacked completeness, maturation and verification in practice. Nonetheless, this document marks an important stage in the search for a strategy in the new struggle for independence. In its second thesis, the MPI rejects the reformist alternatives and takes a revolutionary stance.

It must be emphasized that this thesis refers to armed struggle as a response to the repression of legal activities. This is an outgrowth of the original premise: that independence, in the final analysis, will result from U.S. recognition of our people's right to independence. It is affirmed that no peaceful transition is possible, that sufficient pressure on the United States will necessarily include armed confrontations, but always within the previously mentioned framework. Ultimately, everything depends on the actions of the yanquis and not our own. This is the umbilical cord with reformist **independentismo**; it must now be broken forever.

The foundation of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party at the Eighth National Assembly of the MPI constitutes a qualitative ideological advance, which necessarily implies a re-evaluation of the entire strategic concept. The **General Declaration** of the PSP establishes our fundamental objective: the transformation of the colonial-

capitalist structure in Puerto Rico into a Socialist and Democratic Republic of Puerto Rican workers. It further explains that "socialism is the economic-political system through which the working class, in alliance with all exploited classes, exercises power by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat, destroys the bourgeoisie and obtains complete control over the means of production to organize and promote economic development and the redistribution of wealth on the basis of 'to each according to his/her work.'"

In accordance with this fundamental objective, we proclaim the four basic rights of our people: 1) the inalienable right of our country to independence and total sovereignty; 2) the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to complete recovery of the national wealth (i.e. national liberation); 3) the right of Puerto Rican workers to progressive socialization of the means of production (i.e. the right to construct socialism); and 4) the right to use all forms of struggle within reach, including revolutionary violence in the face of the repressive violence of the system, to achieve the fundamental rights previously enumerated.

According to the **General Declaration**, the strategy toward full realization of these fundamental rights has four main pillars: 1) the consolidation and development of the working-class party; 2) patriotic unity; 3) labor unity in the **Central Unica de Trabajadores** (Workers' Central Federation); and 4) international solidarity with our struggle.

The Development of the Party

Without the existence of a vanguard, it is impossible to develop the numerous forms of struggle which are necessary in order to arrive at the final strategic triumph. It is a vanguard to the extent that it continues to provide effective ideological and practical leadership to the masses. Under its leadership, new roads and new alternatives for action are opened to the masses in their struggle to confront the problems which can no longer be solved within the structures of the crumbling regime.

The determined actions of the vanguard transforms these efforts into concrete organizational forms. It continually coordinates activities in order to strike at the weakest links in the chain. Only the ideological and practical unity of the great majority of the people, led by the working class and its vanguard party, can make the revolutionary seizure of power a reality. The role of vanguard is not assigned by anyone, and much less is it a self-appointed position. Only the people can grant this recognition. And this recognition is based on the quality and depth of one's work and on the impact it generates among the masses; in other words, it depends on an ability to organize and lead the people's struggles against imperialism.

The Puerto Rican Socialist Party is attempting to carry out this historic responsibility each day to a greater degree and with more efficiency. No other objective can distract its practical efforts nor its ideological development. The Party's organizational forms must adequately meet this need. They must possess the ideological and organizational cohesiveness required for the Party to fulfill its leadership role. And it must have the indispensable flexibility to adjust its methods of action to the requirements of each moment.

The vanguard organization or party is not built around a leader, but around an idea, or, more properly, a doctrine. This doctrine is elaborated by the party's own membership. It gathers together the historical experience of the country—and of other countries fighting against exploitation in all its forms and manifestations—and examines it in light of Marxist theory which represents the richest revolutionary experience of our time.

In the vanguard concept of organization there is no room for the simplistic notion that the people's liberation is in the hands of a populist ("caudillo"-type) leader, a messiah who knows all, does all and decides all. The role of a leader, and of leadership in general, can only be understood in its correct and exact definition: all struggle requires a guiding force, a leadership. Among such leaders are a few who distinguish themselves from others by their own capabilities. But the fundamental factor is that these leaders will be more capable and efficient to the extent that their actions respond adequately to the requirements of the historic moment in which they happen to live.

If, in general, collective action produces a geometric multiplication of its efforts when united around a similar goal, so then, collective leadership achieves similar results in terms of quality.

Added to this is the absolute conviction that independence and socialism will be the result of the joining of the struggle of the vanguard with that of the people in a persistent and continuous fight against imperialism. Victory will only be won by wrenching it away from the hands of the imperialists.

Characteristics and Principles

The organizational forms and work methods of the vanguard organization must be in accord with the principle of persistent and continuous struggle. With this in mind, three characteristics define our Party from an organizational point of view: 1) it is an organization composed of members; 2) it is a collection of units; 3) it is a work center.

In order to become a part of the PSP one must fulfill the requirements set out in the **Regulations**. The **fundamental** factors or conditions for membership established in the regulations can be synthesized as follows:

- 1) Support and disseminate the **General Declaration and Thesis** (programmatic documents of the Party) and uphold the dispositions of the **Regulations**;
- 2) **In accordance with your conditions, to the extent of your capabilities**, carry out the tasks and activities required by the struggle for independence and socialism in coordination with the leadership bodies of the Party;



Madison Square Garden Rally, October 27, 1974.

- 3) Pay your voluntary dues punctually;
- 4) Conduct yourself both in public and private in accordance with the best interests of the Socialist Party and the Puerto Rican Revolution.

Since we are not dealing with a simple organization composed only of individual members, the membership, once admitted, should be grouped in organic units, from the highest leadership levels to the base. The organic units, in turn, are defined as work centers. In other words, following the levels of organization, each member acts within a definite sphere and has diverse concrete tasks to fulfill.

This structure is based on five fundamental principles which govern the life of the organic units and the members. These are:

- 1) **Democratic centralism:** Our party does not defend the interests of groups or of individual workers, but rather the interests of a whole class. These interests can only be manifested through a unitary will which connects infinite individual actions into a common struggle.

But it is only possible to achieve this unity of will in the Party through ample and democratic discussion in which all members have not only the right, but also the duty, to participate by voicing their opinions. The broadest consensus possible is sought, but once discussion has ended and a decision is adopted, if a minority exists, it would submit consciously and voluntarily to the decisions of the majority. In this way the organic units which are democratically elected are able to carry out in practice what has been approved through wide discussion. For this reason the **party's centralism is a democratic centralism**, in other words, **it is based on the will of the party's masses**.

In practice, democratic centralism signifies the following:

- a) the elective character of all leadership bodies, from the bottom to the top;
 - b) periodic reports from the leadership to the base;
 - c) periodic reports from rank-and-file units to higher leadership bodies;
 - d) subordination of the minority to the majority;
 - e) fulfillment of the decisions of the upper levels by the lower levels.
- 2) **Collective action:** Individual efforts are increased in geometric proportions when they are united behind a similar goal. The work of the group produces more than the arithmetic sum of its individual products and, for this reason, a truly revolutionary struggle requires joint action, in other words, collective work.
 - 3) **Organizational discipline:** Rational discipline is indispensable to a revolutionary organization. Otherwise it would not be able to act collectively.

The party's discipline is **conscious and voluntary**. Decisions are the result of a very rigorous analysis, the widest discussion and the most democratic consideration. This is not blind obedience to one who decides and gives orders, but the concrete expression of a will which has been collectively decided upon,

which obeys a common sentiment: that of ending the exploitation of one person by another.

- 4) **Re-evaluation of decisions:** Plans which are not put into practice are worthless. If decisions are not followed in the test of practice, the organic units become demoralized. Thus the necessity of maintaining a strict vigilance over decisions. These must be realistic and their realization should be totally feasible. The seriousness of a revolutionary organization rests on this.
- 5) **Criticism and self-criticism:** One learns from one's own mistakes. To err is human, as has been said from ancient times. Intelligence lies in correcting the error. There is nothing worse than persisting in one's errors.

Criticism and self-criticism are the tools of Marxism-Leninism for combatting defects and errors.

Criticism is the most rapid and effective manner of identifying an error in order to begin to correct it, both individually and collectively. This should always be linked to self-criticism, for nothing helps self-development more than the capacity to examine oneself with a critical eye and to have the courage to express this criticism.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Lenin defined the period following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and World War I as the beginning of the decadence of imperialism and the rise of socialism.

Naturally, those who saw history as a linear process thought that Lenin was mistaken when socialist revolution did not spread rapidly throughout the world, and when capitalism was able to overcome some tangential contradictions and display a sudden vitality by making a series of political and economic adjustments.

This process culminated at the end of World War II with the consolidation of yanqui imperialist hegemony within the capitalist bloc.

History is a dialectical process, however, and these events merely reflect a temporary upsurge of capitalism and the corresponding isolation which the international communist movement experienced for a variety of reasons. The Second World War created favorable conditions for the significant advancement of Marxist-Leninist ideology in many parts of the world. The triumph of the Red Army over fascism and the establishment of popular democracies in Eastern Europe laid the bases for what would come to be known as the socialist camp. Its further expansion within the so-called Third World, and particularly in Asia through popular revolutions in China, Korea and Viet Nam, marked a definitive step toward changing the correlation of world forces between capitalism and socialism.

The next significant blow to imperialism came with the Cuban Revolution and its subsequent consolidation, and the emergence of nationalist and progressive governments in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The expansion of the socialist camp, and certain coinciding interests with nationalist and progressive governments, created the subjective bases for a new, qualitative leap in the correlation of forces at the international level.

A series of internal and external factors were already pointing to critical tendencies within the U.S. capitalist economy. Europe and Japan were also affected as a result

of capitalist integration on a world scale. The situation worsened and began to assume crisis proportions when a significant sector of the so-called Third World initiated measures to control and protect their natural resources. For the advanced capitalist countries, this represented a serious threat to sources of raw materials. Moreover, this phenomenon has not been restricted to progressive regimes; rather, it includes oligarchical and reactionary governments, as clearly illustrated by recent developments in the Middle East. Certain national bourgeoisies and oligarchies have recognized that natural resources constitute a powerful economic bargaining tool vis-a-vis the developed capitalist countries, in whose interests these resources have served until now. Therefore, they are beginning to find common ground with progressive governments and movements, not necessarily on the basis of ideological conviction but on something much more compelling to their class interests: the fact that their natural resources—i.e. sources of capital accumulation—were being anarchically eroded by imperialist capital, without permitting their active participation in international capitalism.

While the U.S. bourgeoisie appears to understand this phenomenon well enough, the North American Left has not yet accepted the real possibility of economic crisis within its borders. When it is accepted, that Left is not in a position to use this understanding toward the advancement of the revolutionary process. The attachment to static and inoperative models of U.S. capitalist development cloud its capacity to see the magnitude of the problems facing the United States and the entire capitalist world structure. Capitalism confronts a new conjuncture where it must make a series of significant readjustments and experience a series of social tensions. The U.S. working class, the most privileged in the capitalist world until now, will suffer serious losses as a result of this reality. The bourgeoisie will no longer be able to count on easily obtained super-profits from the Third World, which have subsidized the economic advantages of certain sectors of the U.S. working class.

This reshuffling and readjustment has a definite effect on Puerto Rico—the weakest link in the U.S. capitalist chain. Our incipient bourgeoisie has begun to protest the nefarious effects on our economy and to solicit readjustments appropriate to dealing with the situation within the archaic structure of the so-called free associated state. Objective conditions, however, are such that Puerto Rico shall certainly be affected to a higher degree than the United States. All this further prepares the fertile ground for the advancement of the Puerto Rican revolutionary struggle at the international level.

Faced with significant defeats in Asia and Africa, with challenges to its hegemony within the capitalist bloc, U.S. imperialism has taken refuge in Latin America. Talk of the dismantling of its war economy are utopian dreams. The reality is that a war situation persists between imperialism and the progressive drive of peoples to eradicate the oppression of the imperialist yoke.

The consolidation of the socialist camp and its militant role in the political battle throughout the world are determinant factors in the struggles for national liberation. Imperialism, while it continues to follow its battle plan, is simultaneously forced to negotiate.

In recent years, imperialism has demonstrated a clear policy toward the support of military and fascist regimes

in Latin America. The fascist coup in Chile strikes a serious but temporary blow to the potential of revolutionary movements in Latin America to significantly reverse this process. The victory of Peronism in Argentina is thus flanked by fascist regimes, with the effect of strengthening the moderate and conservative wings of the Peronist movement. In Uruguay, fierce repression of the Left has proceeded to the institutionalization of fascism in the new corporate state. The nationalist and anti-imperialist foreign policies of Peru and Panama are joined by Argentina's similar international line. But these processes are not immune to imperialist maneuvering, so that at times the unstable political and social alliances they represent are reflected in a precarious political equilibrium.

Another group which has attempted to forge an independent international policy by establishing relations with the Revolutionary Government of Cuba are the English-speaking Caribbean countries, such as Jamaica, Trinidad-Tobago, Barbados and Guyana.

The economic and political readjustments of yanqui imperialism have reinforced the military and strategic function of Puerto Rico within the Caribbean in particular, and toward Latin America in general. Imperialism continues to assign to Puerto Rico the role of economic, political and military spearhead in this geographical region. An understanding of this strategic role is spreading among many parties, governments and organizations not only in Latin America, but in Asia, Africa and the socialist camp as well. The recent experiences of the international work of our Party are clear indications of this. The defense of Puerto Rico and the proclamation of its inalienable right to independence have become a rallying cry of attack on American imperialist maneuvers throughout the world.

Never before, in more than a century of struggle for Puerto Rican independence, has there been such resounding international support for our cause.

Shortly before the founding of the Party in 1971, we resumed, with the aid of Cuba, our diplomatic offensive in the United Nations, aimed at reopening debate on the colonial case of Puerto Rico. This discussion had been tabled indefinitely in 1967 following a two-day debate in the Committee on De-Colonization.

At the conclusion of the Party's Constituent Assembly, a delegation of its leadership initiated a visit to several socialist countries, during which the basis of their commitment to support our objectives was established. Subsequently, in the course of 1972, Party delegations travelled to many Asian, African, European and Latin American countries, gaining solidarity and establishing relations and contacts with parties, governments and mass organizations.



In August 1972, at the Conference of Chancellors of Non-Aligned Countries held in Guyana, our Party delegation was recognized, with observer status, as the legitimate representative of the national liberation movement of a colonized people struggling for independence. The Conference approved a resolution demanding that the United Nations Committee on De-Colonization rule on the colonial case of Puerto Rico.

Several days later, on August 28, 1972, the Committee on De-Colonization approved its first resolution on Puerto Rico. In its preambular clause, it recognized the "inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence, in light of Resolution 1514 (XV) approved by the General Assembly on December 4, 1960," and mandated the Committee's Working Group to submit a report on the procedural aspects relevant to the application of Resolution 1514 (XV) to the case of Puerto Rico by "early 1973."

In 1973, the following events of great significance to our struggle occurred in rapid succession:

1. In August, for the first time in history, a body of the United Nations—the Committee on De-Colonization—listened to the plight of the Puerto Rican people against the government and U.S. imperialism through the direct spokespersons of the parties for independence in Puerto Rico.

2. On August 30, the Committee on De-Colonization approved a resolution on the colonial case of Puerto Rico which recognized the inalienable right to self-determination and independence of the Puerto Rican people. It called on the United States to abstain from obstructing this right and took measures toward deepening the study of our case and maintaining it under permanent consideration.

3. In September, again for the first time in history, a Conference of Heads of State and Government, the Fourth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Algiers, heard the Secretary General of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, as spokesman for the Latin American national liberation movement, denounce yanqui colonialist intervention in our country and agreed to give full support to the independence struggle in Puerto Rico.

4. In October, the World Congress of Peace Forces held in Moscow, the largest and most encompassing conclave in history of non-governmental forces, passed a resolution denouncing the colonial subjugation of Puerto Rico as one of the enclaves of colonialism in the world today and urging the peoples of the world to offer their militant support to our struggle for national liberation.

5. In November, the United Nations General Assembly widely debated the report of the Committee on De-Colonization on the colonial case of Puerto Rico. On December 14, this report was approved by an overwhelming majority of 104 to 5, and included the August 30 resolution recognizing the Puerto Rican people's inalienable right to self-determination and independence. Thus, the General Assembly of the United Nations ratified the agreement reached by the Committee on De-Colonization.

The general effect of these events is to place resolutely on the contemporary world agenda on decolonization the colonial case of Puerto Rico. It represents the universal recognition of our inalienable right to self-determination and independence, and the commitment of peoples world-



wide, who make up the widest spectrum of political forces, to offer, their moral and material support to the Puerto Rican people in their determination to exercise that right.

Today, the struggle of the Puerto Rican people is no longer that of a small and isolated people against a powerful imperialist nation. We have the support of that vast sector of humanity—**que ha dicho basta y echado a andar**—to sustain our right to independence against those who would crush it. We have struck at one of the weakest links in the imperialist chain. The direct colonial domination of Puerto Rico represents an act so universally repudiated that it has provoked condemnation by a broad world-wide consensus. This means that international legality is on our side, and that the United States has placed itself on the margin of this legality with respect to Puerto Rico. This decision will acquire its full significance in the measure that the Puerto Rican people are able to organize their forces, to affirm in practice their right to independence, endorsed by U.N. legislation, by proclaiming the Republic of Puerto Rico.

The Socialist Camp

For a Marxist-Leninist party, the solidarity offered by a bourgeois government can never be equivalent to that offered by a workers' party or government. For us, proletarian internationalism is a basic principle, regardless of whatever difficulties might arise at a given moment due to misinformation, ignorance or errors that may characterize our relations with a given party or government.

Guided by proletarian internationalism, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party maintains an independent political line at the international level.

Independence does not mean neutrality. It means evaluating a given situation, taking into account the totality of factors involved, and assuming a position based on principles. Thus, we reject the proposition that the USSR is social-imperialist and the strategic enemy of humanity. Likewise, we reject the judgement that the Chinese process has degenerated and taken on a petty bourgeois and nationalist character. We recognize that a series of contradictions exist within these countries which we do not perceive as strategic; and that to consider them as such has the effect of weakening the revolutionary forces. In this manner, we promote the unity of the socialist camp.

At the international level, our principal efforts are directed toward the socialist camp, as the cardinal example of solidarity with the peoples of the world and our natural ally in the construction of socialism.

We offer and claim solidarity from the entire socialist camp in adherence and fidelity to the principle of proletarian internationalism. We respect the independence of every Marxist-Leninist party, be it in power or struggling to obtain it, and we demand respect for our independent position.

We consider the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its Communist Party to be powerful foundations of the socialist camp. We are in agreement with their ratification of the Leninist principle that peaceful coexistence and the reduction of tension urged by them must be fostered between states, and that there can only be struggle between classes and between oppressor and oppressed countries. Another world war, we understand, would not advance the process of humanity in the least; but we are also aware of how imperialism uses this possibility for blackmail. In no sense should peaceful coexistence be understood as a brake on the peoples' struggle or on the struggle of the international proletariat for national liberation and socialism.

In our assessment, the revolution which culminated in the establishment of the People's Republic of China, led by the Chinese Communist Party, is one of the great historical events which has fundamentally changed the correlation of forces in the world. The fact that the People's Republic was able to break the imperialist blockade and obtain the recognition of the international community, including the United States, is a manifestation of the strength which that great revolution has developed. The lessons of the Chinese experience have been an important factor in the development of Puerto Rican revolutionary consciousness and of Puerto Rican youth, and consequently, of the formation of Party cadres and militants.

We reaffirm that no socialist country can be the enemy of the peoples of the so-called Third World, that the enemy of exploited peoples is imperialism, and that among the imperialist states the United States stands out as the fiercest enemy of humanity.

We reaffirm the statements in the two political theses of the M P I to the effect that the Cuban Revolution is the event of greatest importance in the Western Hemisphere in all of contemporary history. Spearhead of social revolution in Latin America, Cuba has offered the most active and effective solidarity to our people in the struggle for national liberation. In equal measure, the PSP offers our fervent support to the sister Republic and its glorious socialist revolution, led by the fraternal Communist Party of Cuba.

We consider that the heroic struggle of the people of Viet Nam and of other Indochinese peoples constitute an example for all revolutionaries of the world. We reaffirm our solidarity with, and commitment to, the heroic struggle of these peoples. We consider that the correct policy of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and of the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam will succeed in defeating all obstacles set up by imperialism and will achieve the definite reunification of its homeland.

Likewise, we support with solidarity the proposals of the Democratic Republic of Korea for the independent



unification of the Korean homeland. We manifest our admiration for the Korean people and its Workers' Party in recognition of their achievements in the construction of socialism in the northern part of Korea.

The Countries of Asia and Africa

The economic and political importance which these countries have gained in recent years and the advancement and consolidation of nationalist, progressive or socialist positions make them an essential factor in the decadence of imperialism and a vital source of support for our struggle. In this sense, it becomes necessary to widen and deepen our relations with governments, parties and organizations in this part of the world. Significant steps in this direction have been achieved through reciprocal solidarity established with the national liberation movements of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. Likewise, with the liberation movements which struggle against racism and apartheid, we extend and receive support.

Equally significant is the development of our relations, based on mutual solidarity and support, with the heroic Palestinian people in their struggle against Zionism, with Algeria, Syria, Iraq and Democratic Yemen.

The progress of our efforts in this region of the world will depend on, in part, our participation in the Non-Aligned movement and on our relations with certain progressive governments and parties.

Latin America and the Caribbean Countries

As the scene of North American imperialist retreat and regroupment, this region has extraordinary importance for us. It is fundamental to place our struggle within the larger framework of Latin America and, more specifically, the Caribbean. We will have to make use of existing organizations or individual resources to deploy an intensive campaign. We shall deepen the already existing relations and develop new ones throughout the continent. Moreover, it is important that Latin America and the Caribbean countries are demonstrating a greater interest in the Non-Aligned movement.

It is in terms of Latin America and the Caribbean that we see the great importance of the Party's international efforts, exemplified by two goals: the internationalization of the struggle and the establishment of bilateral relations with parties and organizations. In the specific case of the independence struggle, these efforts must be based upon broad, unitarian foundations. There have already been several positive examples to that effect with a wide range of countries and organizations which are not only beneficial to our efforts but which can also serve as a point of departure towards creating greater patriotic unity at the national level.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the Chilean revolutionary forces which are organizing the struggle of resistance against the fascist military junta and its imperialist allies. We see as congenial the processes being developed in Peru and Panama, as well as the progressive positions assumed by the Argentinian government. Likewise, we manifest our solidarity with the fraternal struggle of the Dominican people against the dictatorship and imperialism.

Strategy of International Work

All the work of the Party in this area of international relations is based on the common recognition, along with our various allies throughout the world, of certain principles which we consider basic.

These are: the eradication of imperialism on a world scale, the acknowledgement of our independent international policy, the use of the United Nations and other international organizations as sounding boards for the denunciation of our colonial condition, the mutual solidarity on political and diplomatic levels, and the exchange of concrete solidarity in accordance with the needs of our struggle and the possibilities of other countries.

The following basic principles constitute the foundations of our objectives on the international level: the recognition of our right to take aggressive action, the eventual recognition of the Republic-in-Arms and the political and diplomatic recognition of the Democratic Workers' Republic.

The Struggle in the United States

Puerto Rico is a Latin American country at the central point of conflict between U.S. imperialism and the liberation struggles of peoples around the world. As the principal classic colony of the United States, Puerto Rico is a strategic point for imperialist domination of Latin America. It is no coincidence, therefore, that Puerto Rico is at once a fortress of the United States in Latin America and one of the countries where revolutionary struggle is reaching higher levels on the Continent. In many senses, and by virtue of its position as a yanqui fortress, Puerto Rico is a frontier nation on the Continent.

We are the frontier between the yanqui and Latin American worlds of today; between the agrarian past of super-exploitation in Latin America and the industrial future that imperialists and revolutionaries alike seek, for different motives and in different ways. We are the frontier between the present system of colonial and neo-colonial domination and the future of socialist liberation; between the imperialist plunder of our peoples and resources and the struggle for national survival; between the past of national fragmentation and the future epoch of economic, social and political integration.

While the United States envisions an increasingly dependent role for Latin America, as a backyard for its industrial production, struggles are being waged to break this domination and build a new future. The process of economic penetration, military domination and cultural aggression that develops parallel to the rapid proletarianization of the population within this scheme of economic exploitation, is much more accentuated in the colony. But this very process creates the material conditions for the struggle toward socialism—the only struggle that can destroy definitively the power of imperialism. The present and future role of Puerto Ricans living in the United States must also be seen within this context.

As a frontier colony, Puerto Rico experiences with greater intensity all dislocations and contradictions. The way that the "Puerto Rican problem" is solved will pave the way for the future of the entire Continent.

Therefore, the destruction of the yanqui fortress necessarily signifies the deepening of contradictions within North American society itself. At the same time, the weakening of imperialism within its own national borders heightens the conditions for revolutionary victory in the Third World and particularly in Puerto Rico. But the revolution in Puerto Rico is a prerequisite for revolutionary development in the United States; for if anything characterizes the fall of an empire it is the loss of its colonies.

Colonial exploitation in Puerto Rico has an important particularity: More than one third of our nation has been forced to abandon their homeland and to live in U.S. cities as a colonized people.

Puerto Ricans living in the United States, under conditions of super-exploitation, face the choice between preserving and developing their national identity, or seeing it die and disappear. They therefore have the responsibility to contribute to the salvation of our nationality by establishing a free and socialist homeland on Puerto Rican soil. Those who live in the very belly of the monster can make a decisive contribution to this process. To do so is also to make a decisive contribution to the revolutionary transformation of U.S. society as well. Both are essential to guaranteeing a decent future for our descendants, both in Puerto Rico and the United States.

If Puerto Rican independence is an essential element for the transformation of North American society, as a tremendous blow to the power of the imperialist bourgeoisie and to the very system that determines the relations of production within U.S. borders, our struggle is intimately linked to the highest interests of U.S. workers. On this base, all possible alliances between the exploited classes of Puerto Rico and those of the United States must be built.

For Puerto Ricans living in the United States, the construction of socialism in that country is also a primary task because it is the only solution to the conditions of super-exploitation they presently suffer. The effective participation of Puerto Rican workers in the radical struggles of U.S. society will be an important contribution to the class struggle there in addition to the movement for independence and socialism in Puerto Rico.

In the United States, the primary function of our Party is to unleash in full force the national liberation struggle of Puerto Rico in the heart of U.S. cities where a significant portion of our colonized population is forced to live, and to link this struggle to the general fight for revolutionary change in the United States.

The Proclamation Of The Democratic Workers Republic

The proclamation of the republic will be our first strategic objective. The reformist current of **independentismo**, with all its variations, limits the struggle solely to continuous pressure on the U.S. Congress and Government, in order to force enactment of a law recognizing our independence. The new struggle, however, recognizes that we ourselves, without asking the yanqui's permission, must establish our own republic. This presupposes the achievement of two indispensable conditions:

Firstly, the incorporation of great masses of the people, led by the working class, into the movement toward the proclamation of the republic and the emergence of a revolutionary situation. This movement will arise from the growing crisis of the colonialist system and by the conscious action of the masses. Only then will the seizure of power and the installation of the Democratic Workers Republic be feasible, as a preliminary step toward the construction of socialism.

Secondly, we must prepare an armed force able to confront the enemy's aggression and protect the republic. With the help of our allies throughout the world, we will fight against all the attempts to suffocate the republic on the part of imperialism and its allies on the island.

Both conditions complement each other and are equally necessary. As Fidel said in a recent speech, "If you have arms but not the masses, you cannot have a victorious revolution; but if you have the masses and not the arms, a victorious revolution is still not possible."

Over the last few years, since the Party's foundation, all our efforts toward achieving those four objectives outlined in the **General Declaration**, have been directed principally toward organizing and mobilizing the masses and provoking the emergence of the objective and subjective conditions which define a revolutionary situation. The road toward this goal is still long, but progress toward all four goals is being accelerated.

The Party of the working class expands and deepens its roots in order to fulfill its function as vanguard in the struggle toward the revolutionary seizure of power, the establishment of the Democratic Workers' Republic and the construction of socialism.

All classes and sectors which share the need for independence and social change to destroy the present order must be involved in this process. From the industrial proletariat to the patriotic petty bourgeoisie, they include the vast majority of the Puerto Rican people. The application of a correct policy of patriotic unity is therefore essential to our strategic development.

The international support that our movement is gaining daily will be of utmost importance once the republic has been established. At that moment, moral support must be translated into material aid, in all its many aspects.

The specific conjuncture that will enable us to proclaim our independence will depend on innumerable circumstances and conditions, which will arise in the course of the struggle itself. We cannot predict its course nor venture judgement on the principal forms the struggle will assume in its culminating phase. We do know that this struggle must count on broad popular support; that the masses will have to confront the enemy with superior force; and that they will be able to defeat the enemy and validate our right to self-determination and independence.

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Please note that the numbering of the footnotes follows the original Spanish edition, and that numbers which are missing refer to footnotes in sections not present in this English edition.

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