

People's War in Puerto Rico

Much confusion prevails concerning the national and colonial questions, particularly with reference to Puerto Rico. We revolutionaries in Puerto Rico state emphatically that so far as we are concerned, independence and the dictatorship of the proletariat are one and the same thing. We envision no transitional period between private ownership and socialism. Therefore, we reject any type of alliance with the so-called "new" bourgeoisie, which is made up of U.S. lackeys. Like the old bourgeoisie, this "new" one should pay for its mortal sin of treason to our people.

If we are to have a real nation, then the territory on which we have historically developed must be truly common to all workers and their allies. Only collective socialist ownership of the means of production and the land can bring about this development. Under socialism, relations of production could convert themselves into social relations, and real national relations among the people could come from the psychology that emerged from these social relations. Collective ownership of the means of production would guarantee this development.

Even language can develop as a common possession of all the people only under the conditions of socialism. Under imperialism, the imperialists or their local stooges impose an "inferior" form of language upon the workers. Only under socialism are the workers able to cast off this yoke and overcome their cultural enslavement. Culture, as the conscience of society and the totality of the forms of expression available

to that conscience, could become truly national only after the triumph of socialism. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat permits the complete flowering of culture in a nation previously oppressed by imperialism and local nationalists.

Our view of this question leads us to emphasize the role played by ideology. Communist ideas must govern every word and deed of our fight for independence: the most brilliant ideological clarity must shine upon all aspects of the struggle. Ideological clarity has been an historical necessity for all revolutionary movements. If in 1868, at the very moment it proclaimed independence, the revolutionary government of Lares was able to abolish slavery and the "notebook" system that maintained the so-called white "free" laborer in feudal servility, this development was possible only because the leaders of Lares understood the need for (bourgeois) ideological clarity: they knew that a capitalist society could not be built by slaves and feudal serfs.

After the bitter experiences of the international communist movement, we communists of today must not delude ourselves with half-baked notions about "two-stage" socialism or dilute our movement by making treacherous pre-socialist alliances with the mortal class enemies of working people and Marxism-Leninism. Ideological clarity in the fight for socialism means, above all, the absolute understanding that without the dictatorship of the proletariat, there can be no road away from capitalism, no road to socialism.

INTRODUCTION

On September 23rd, 1971, in a speech to a multi-organizational political meeting at Lares celebrating the 103rd anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence, I said:

"...The struggle for independence has a road to victory. It is true that electoral results have always been adverse to the struggle for independence. It is true that the military effort to free Puerto Rico at Lares¹ could not continue. The same was true at Yauco in 1897,² and in 1936,³ and also in 1950.⁴

"But we say, with the revolutionary understanding we have acquired from the historical experience of all the peoples of the world, that there is a victorious road for independence. This is the road of People's War. One may ask: is Puerto Rico ready for People's War? Is it now correct to put forth from this platform the slogan of People's War as the main slogan in the struggle for independence?"

We maintain that the eventual ability to organize People's War depends upon the constant encouragement of the people's revolutionary spirit, the military spirit of the broad pro-independence masses of Puerto Rico."

And in the Proclamation of the Liga Socialista Puertorriquena that was circulated in Jayuya to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the 1950 insurrection, we said:

"With our floral offering of a red star upon the grave of Grisefio Torresola, we reaffirm our unreserved support of armed struggle as the only means of winning national independence and state sovereignty for Puerto Rico—independence that is national in form and socialist in content. We raise the victorious banner of March 11 along-side the fighting banner of October 30."

In the same Proclamation, we also said: "If it is true that the pro-independence movement has gained ground, the factors previously mentioned do

1. On September 23, 1868, the Republic of Puerto Rico was proclaimed at Lares under the political leadership of Dr. Ramon Ementerio Betanzas and the military leadership of Manuel Rojas.

2. The last peasant uprising against the Spanish colonial government took place at Yauco on March 24, 1897.

3. 1936 was the date of revolutionary mass action against the U.S. government that took place under the leadership of Pedro Albizu Campos.

4. In 1950, a Nationalist party uprising, involving several towns in Puerto Rico, took place. Part of this action included an assassination attempt against U.S. President Truman.

not suffice to explain this phenomenon. Twelve years of constant work by anti-electoral organizations were needed to help bring it about. This upsurge is the result of an anti-electoral front that should develop into a revolutionary front capable of leading People's War. And we promised:

"Soon, the LSP will publish its study of the problems of People's War in Puerto Rico. People's War is invincible. People's War is the victorious road to independence. Neither elections nor terrorism nor putchism—People's War means victory for independence and socialism. Its prelude is called the 'Eleventh of March.'⁵"

PROBLEMS OF PEOPLE'S WAR IN PUERTO RICO

Petty-bourgeois sentimentality seems to permeate everything in Puerto Rico. Is this in fact true? In reality, sentimentality is a lack of profound sentiment; it is superficial and foolish, a puny disguise for class motivations. Despite its abnormal growth during the past 25 years, the petty bourgeoisie is really a minority of the Puerto Rican population. The immense majority—perhaps as much as 80%—are workers.

Nonetheless, the petty bourgeoisie has had and continues to have a major corrosive influence on the historical development of our country. True, practically all the *independentista* leadership has come from the petty-bourgeoisie; true, the petty-bourgeoisie is almost totally responsible for the literary, artistic, and scientific output of Puerto Rico: however, we do not retract our earlier statement that this intermediate sector of Puerto Rican society continues to exert a corrosive influence on the historical development of our country.

Its influence has been negative for many reasons. It has stamped its class seal upon our political life and to a great extent upon our literature and art. In politics, it has promoted class vacillation, mysticism, and the false, schizophrenic hope of autonomy without socialism. Even in the best sector of the independence movement, the petty bourgeoisie has swung like a pendulum between facile, illusory "patriotic" exultation and equally unfounded despair. In literature and art, this class has left its mark of pessimism, "drop outism," and impotence.

It may appear odd that we should begin our study of the problems of People's War in Puerto Rico with these remarks. We have felt compelled to undertake this discussion since we participated in the political events that took place at Lares last September. The discussion, like the struggle for independence and socialism, will not be easy. War is hard.

It is our sincere conviction that petty bourgeois sentimentality, which seems to permeate all Puerto Rican life, will pose a great obstacle to the development of revolutionary mass consciousness during the armed struggle for independence. Therefore, it is indispensable that we put sentimentality in its

place from the very beginning.

For all its assumed self-importance, the petty bourgeoisie is nothing more than an instrument of the bourgeoisie, a tool used by imperialism against the working class. The capitalists use the petty bourgeoisie to transmit extravagant fantasies to the workers. The most pernicious of all these fantasies is so-called "social (read: class) peace." According to this absurd "concept," there can be harmonious relations between exploited and exploiters. Imperialism tries to disarm the working class ideologically by spreading this lethal poison among the masses and by lulling them into a docile acceptance of class domination.

Within the independence movement, this assault upon the revolutionary essence of the people cloaks itself in the "respectable" garb of patriotic solidarity. Nothing could be more deceitful.

The history of all mankind is the history of class struggle. The struggle for a people's sovereignty and national independence is a specific form of class struggle. This is our struggle, and if we do not learn this absolute truth, then the struggle we conduct for our independence and sovereignty will continue to pursue a false course.

The class struggle concerns those classes whose interests are mutually incompatible and absolutely contradictory. Marxism-Leninism has scientifically explained this struggle as the moving force in the development of all societies that are divided into antagonistic classes. It has proved that in bourgeois society, the class struggle necessarily leads to the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class, to civil war, and to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has as its eventual objectives the elimination of all classes and the establishment of a classless communist society.

Patriotism is, according to Lenin, "one of the most profound sentiments held for centuries in millions of isolated homelands." But patriotism is not engendered by a mystical "national spirit" or "racial soul." It is produced by definite economic and social conditions. It is an historical phenomenon whose content varies from epoch to epoch. As a form of social consciousness, patriotism acquired special significance in the epoch of rising capitalism, when nations and nation-states were formed. But as class antagonisms developed and sharpened under capitalism, the hypocrisy of bourgeois patriotism became evident, and millions of workers learned that the true loyalty of the bourgeoisie belongs to itself as an international class against the workers of all countries.

We need not go into great detail to prove that this theory correctly explains the historical development of the struggle for independence in Puerto Rico. The treason of the creole capitalists is well known, along with their shameless surrender of all Puerto Rico to U.S. capital, their political submission to U.S. monopolies, their wicked alliance with foreign exploiters to bleed the Puerto Rican working class dry. What "patriotic solidarity" unites Em-

5. On March 11, 1971, a massive rebellion, involving thousands of students, attempted to drive the imperialist Reserve Officers' Training Corps out of the Rio Piedras campus of the

University of Puerto Rico. The rebels fought a violent armed struggle with police, during the course of which the head of Puerto Rico's "anti-riot" squad, Colonel Mercado, was killed.

presas Ferre, the Serralles Brothers, the Mercados, the Trigos, the Calafs, the Carrions, etc. with the great exploited mass of workers in Puerto Rican factories, "haciendas," or offices? On the other hand, there can be no doubt of the political solidarity between these bosses and the Rockefeller, the Morgans, the owners of the great oil refineries, the major U.S. banking firms, the powerful transport and aviation firms, the ITT, the multimillionaire U.S. bondholders of so-called colonial "authorities" (Fuentes Fluviales, light; Acueductos y Alcantarillados, water; etc.), the automobile, rice, and newspaper monopolies.

The bourgeoisie's carefully nurtured illusion of "social peace" and "patriotic solidarity" between exploiters and exploited was invented to confuse and divert the broad working masses.

The lies of "social peace" and "patriotic solidarity" also give rise to the sentimental theory that Puerto Ricans should not fight among themselves. The Rio Piedras massacre was ordered by Colonel Riggs, an American. But who executed that order? Bienamino, Perez Segarra, Bonilla, etc. were all Puerto Ricans. They murdered Ramon Pagan, Pepito Santiago, Rodriguez Vega, and Pedro Quinones. The murder of Beauchamp and Rosado was ordered by Colonel Cole, a yankee, but the actual assassins, those who emptied their revol-

vers into these three men at police headquarters, were Puerto Ricans. The Ponce massacre originated in Washington. It was ordered from San Juan by General Winship, a yankee. But Colonel Orbeta and Captain Blanco, as well as all the other officers and cops, the Soldeviplas and Nenadichs, were born in the same land as their victims. Those who fired their machine guns in Jayuya and Utuado, those who murdered prisoners who had surrendered to them after a valiant combat, were Puerto Ricans. A Puerto Rican murdered Adrian Rodriguez and Antonia Martinez. On March 11, Colonel Mercado went to the University to kill students. The fact that he met with the fate he had intended to mete out is a hazard of the law of combat, the law that applies equally to nature and society: the most fit, not necessarily the strongest, survives. Those who surround us at meetings or on marches with guns in hand, ready to kill us without giving us the slightest opportunity to defend ourselves, are trained by the CIA and the FBI, but they were born in Puerto Rico.

The political parties that oppose independence, imperialism's "civilian" fronts like the "Lions" or the "Exchange," are led by Puerto Ricans. In the Selective Service offices, Puerto Ricans send their neighbors' sons off to be used as cannon fodder in imperialism's international slaughter houses.

The class struggle rages within the independence



May Day march in Puerto Rico , 1972

6. Fulanismo: personality politics.

7. Cipayeria: colonial sycophancy.

movement. Its classic forms are sectarianism and anti-communism. Its secondary forms are "fulanismo,"⁶ slander, and informing. Yet not only are we all Puerto Ricans—we are also patriots!

Life demolishes the false sentimentalist theory of "patriotic solidarity" among all Puerto Ricans. A day will come when U.S. imperialism will have to send its own invading army to Puerto Rico, because the colonial *cipayeria*⁷ will no longer have the strength to mobilize enough Puerto Rican cops and national guardsmen to murder Puerto Rican revolutionaries. But before that day comes, there will be many times in the struggle to free Puerto Rico from imperialism, national oppression, and class enslavement, when revolutionaries will have to face Puerto Rican servants of U.S. imperialism and Puerto Rican capitalism in a death-struggle.

One of the petty bourgeoisie's most hypocritical utterances is its whining, its "ay bendito," its "universal mourning," its "terrible preoccupation" with the injuries, mutilations, and deaths that may result from acts of revolutionary violence. None of these noble sentiments is expressed when our youth are sent to be slaughtered by yankee militarism in Korea or Vietnam. Nor are these utterances heard when the dead are *independentistas* like the taxi driver Adrian Rodriguez or the student Antonia Martinez, both murdered by police.

The *cipayeria* propaganda mongers' hypocritical "peaceful Puerto Rico" theory is further belied by the rate of crime in Puerto Rico. The homicide rate is high, and suicide occurs three times as much as homicide—not because of "rapid progress" or "the intense transformation of our society into a modern industrial society," as the purveyors of sociology-for-a-price claim, but because colonialism deforms the popular psyche and subjects the oppressed masses to extraordinary tensions.

The "patriotic solidarity" demanded of the working class is but a capitalist trick to divide workers among themselves. The only "patriotic solidarity" the working class needs is a commitment to conduct a revolutionary struggle for independence and, upon winning this struggle, to organize its own government, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Only People's War, the great iron forge of heroism, can bring about the true patriotic solidarity of all oppressed Puerto Ricans.

Here too the anti-ROTC struggle of March 11 serves as an accurate prelude to People's War. As we pointed out in *EL SOCIALISTA* on March 15, 1971, in the heat of combat against the imperialists and their stooges, sectarianism, anti-communism, and students of all patriotic organizations fought together with *esprit de corps*, like brothers and sisters in arms.

The Inequality of Forces

In 1899 an American military analyst named Coolidge stated that Puerto Rico would never pose a military problem to the U.S. His conclusion is a logical extension of the premise that the protection of U.S. armed forces will enable U.S. imperialism to do exactly as it pleases in Puerto Rico.

History has answered Coolidge. The imperialists wanted to destroy Puerto Rico through assimila-

tion. They have been unable to do so.

This inability is history's answer to Coolidge's conclusion. The answer to his initial false premise has not as yet been given. It is People's War.

Coolidge's premise has been the nucleus of U.S. policy in Puerto Rico. This policy is based upon the inequality of forces between the invading and the invaded country. Throughout 73 years of U.S. colonialism, our people have been bombarded with the idea of inequality by all the weapons of public opinion—the schools, newspapers, radio, and TV. The idea had been germinating even before the U.S. conquest. The cultivation of defeatism was the favorite habit of conservatives and autonomists throughout the 19th century. It found willing encouragement from U.S. annexationism and espionage prior to 1898.

In developing revolutionary consciousness, we must make an in-depth analysis of this imperialist premise.

We can divide it into two parts. The first is the inequality of available manpower, the population of Puerto Rico versus the population of the U.S., the force of numbers the imperialists can command to crush Puerto Rico's military organization. The second part of the premise is imperialism's superior firepower, capable of rapidly silencing any insurrection in Puerto Rico.

Experience seems to confirm the premise. In Puerto Rico, the U.S. has been able to crush nationalist insurrections by mobilizing only partial sectors of its colonial forces. Yet even so, the 1950 Insurrection contributed greatly to the military experience of the Puerto Rican revolution when it proved beyond doubt that the colonial police force is impotent to deal with even a limited uprising.

Will the experiences of the past inevitably repeat themselves in the future? Colonial pessimism says yes. People's War says no.

The idea of People's War is inherent in Marxism. All Marxist theoreticians have dealt with the subject: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Vo Nguyen Giap, Ho Chi Minh, Mao Tse-tung, Mehmet Shehu, Kim Il-sung. All agree that People's War is invincible. Engels viewed the struggle waged by guerrillas during the U.S. War of Independence as the first example of People's War in modern times. The vicious circle of armed inequality between exploiter and exploited will end "...as soon as the masses of country and city workers have a will... corresponds to their class will." The great victorious leaders of People's War—Lenin, Giap, Shehu, Kim—won because, as socialists, they were able to help the broad working masses express their willingness to fight in class terms. People's Wars can achieve victory only under the red proletarian banner. History proves without fail that as soon as the rulers begin to fear the working masses, they attempt to abolish the concept of the people in arms and substitute for it the idea of a standing army, compulsory military service, and a corresponding military hierarchy.

The false theory of the inequality of forces collapses when one compares the present imperialist puppet army to the active military potentiality of the aroused Puerto Rican masses. If the subjective factor of revolutionary consciousness were developed to its maximum capacity, Puerto Rico could



have no less than 100,000 soldiers in day-to-day combat with the imperialist army. The revolutionary soldier will live under the protection of his people; he will eat what the poor of his country eat; he will dress however he can; and he will be as well armed as the best-equipped imperialist soldier, for he will seize his weapons from the enemy army. He needs no salaries, bribes, Bob Hope shows, drugs, or prostitutes to sustain his morale. As People's War develops, corresponding demoralization will set in among the imperialist troops, who will see themselves fighting a losing battle, constantly surrounded by enemies, and forced to fight without letup or rest.

Puerto Rico's small territorial size and dense population will help significantly in developing revolutionary consciousness. They will also serve as factors in demoralizing the imperialist soldiers. In the rising struggle for patriotic salvation, the people will blend into its own territory; people and people's soldier will unite in one social entity: one will protect the other. On the other hand, the imperialist soldier, isolated, harassed, panic-stricken, will react in such a way as to promote revolutionary unity among the people. The enemy will fight as a minority and always on the defensive. We will be the majority and always fight on the offensive.

One potential argument against the military victory of the Puerto Rican revolution is the difficulty implicit in Puerto Rico's existence as an island dominated economically by U.S. monopolies. Can the imperialists, having destroyed our agricultural production, prevent us from acquiring food and supplies by air or sea; in short, can they turn Puerto Rico into a besieged garrison and force it

to surrender by waging a war of famine against it? A simple strike by U.S. maritime workers cuts most Puerto Ricans off from their food supply: the conscious counterrevolutionary efforts of the imperialists to starve us out appear in this context as a horrible phantom, a sword of Damocles hanging over our heads.

Yet such a development is only a phantom, easily dissipated by reality. History proves that this is so.

On Saturday, March 6, 1943, I reported the following facts in the New York newspaper **Pueblos Hispanos**:

People in Puerto Rico were starving. Using the German submarine blockade as an excuse, the U.S. deliberately allowed a state of famine to exist in Puerto Rico. The U.S. government argued that because of its military situation, not one single ship was available to carry food to Puerto Rico. Yet rice rations for the civilian population had been reduced to two pounds weekly per family.

While this situation prevailed in Puerto Rico, the U.S. government was sending \$1 million worth of food to Martinique every month.

Martinique was governed by the French admiral Roberts. The island belonged to the collaborationist Vichy government headed by Pierre Laval, who was to be executed by DeGaulle's firing squad when the war ended. In addition, Martinique was a base of operations for the same German submarines that sank U.S. ships and blockaded Puerto Rico. Nonetheless the U.S. government continued to assert that it had no ships available to send food to Puerto Rico and at the same time sent \$1 million worth of food every month to the Laval-Hitlerites

in Martinique.

Ferdinand Smith, a native Jamaican who had become a naturalized U.S. citizen and who was at the time general secretary of the N.M.U., provided us with these facts. He also gave us detailed information about ships waiting to sail in convoy to Europe, which had plenty of time available to make a round trip to Puerto Rico and still not depart for Europe a minute behind schedule.

Our report in **Pueblos Hispanos** was confirmed by Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. It spread like wildfire through El Barrio and the Puerto Rican neighborhoods in the Bronx and Brooklyn. The Institucion Penolana called an emergency meeting, as did numerous Puerto Rican social clubs, the then-powerful Workers' Spanish Club, and Latin-American IWO lodges. In El Barrio and along Prospect Avenue in the Bronx, there were threats of mutiny.

The weak complaints of the colonial legislature, scornfully unheeded until then, all of a sudden came to the attention of the masters in Washington. Special air transportation was provided so that a legislative commission could come to Washington to beg for help. In a matter of hours, the commission was in Washington; in a matter of hours, the problem was solved. The first food convoy left immediately for Puerto Rico. The mobilization of Puerto Ricans in New York—and most particularly, the threat of rebellion by workers in El Barrio and on Prospect Avenue—had saved the day.

The U.S. government had imposed a state of famine on Puerto Rico as a deliberate act of imperialist terrorism, a move to thwart the pro-independence sentiment of the Puerto Rican people. 1943 was the year that Pedro Albizu Campos left prison (although he could not return to Puerto Rico until 1947). In 1943, the majority of nationalist leaders in federal prison were coming to the end of their sentences. In 1943, the first Pro-Independence Congress brought together 20,000 Puerto Ricans; and the second Congress in 1944 would be even larger. The CGT (Confederacion General de Trabajadores), a pro-independence trade union federation that led 250,000 workers, had merged with the Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina (CTAL), which was to count a membership of 4,000,000 workers in 1944. Seventy thousand Puerto Rican youths had been forced to bear imperialist arms, but they were to return home after the war ready to fight for independence. The government knew this, because its censors read their mail. The hour of imperialism's victory in World War II was nearly at hand. Reluctant to drop the atomic bomb on white Germans, the racist U.S. government preferred to delay its victory by reserving this fate for the Japanese. U.S. imperialism tried in the most blatant way to convince Puerto Ricans that it had the power of life and death over them.

Yet a small gesture on the part of Puerto Ricans in New York City was enough to stop imperialist terror in Puerto Rico.

Today the Puerto Rican population in the U.S. numbers nearly one and a half million. The children and grandchildren of Puerto Ricans feel a deep bond with the country of their elders. Their militancy against capitalist oppression increases every

day. The overwhelming majority of them are workers, the children and grandchildren of workers. Reality will impose itself upon their consciousness and they will show international working class solidarity with the struggle in Puerto Rico. They will fight alongside the 1,600,000 workers who comprise 80% of Puerto Rico's population.

Puerto Rican proletarian power is an indispensable economic fact of life in several major U.S. cities. In New York, for example, racism, which forces Puerto Ricans into the worst paid jobs, also makes them the arbiters of the food business, which they can paralyze whenever they see fit. There are 10,000 Puerto Rican workers in Buffalo's steel industry. Whole crops of grapes and vegetables can be lost if Puerto Rican workers walk off the job.

The population of Mexican extraction in the U.S. numbers 10,000,000. Its anticapitalist militancy and class consciousness grow with each passing day. Most of these 10,000,000 are superexploited workers who have suffered decades of humiliation and oppression at the hands of imperialism. They too will act in solidarity with their Puerto Rican class brothers.

The same may be said of Afro-American workers, the third group of the trio of superexploited workers in the U.S. Their militancy will increase as they grasp the truth that as workers united by the class struggle with all other workers, they are invincible. When the intensity of the struggle in Puerto Rico reaches their consciousness, Afro-American workers will mobilize to defend People's War in Puerto Rico.

Finally, workers of all extraction and national origin, the broad mass of millions and millions of American workers, will join in solidarity with People's War in Puerto Rico when they understand that the same bosses who exploit them also exploit the workers of Puerto Rico.

All these forces will unite to prevent the imperialists from smashing the revolution in Puerto Rico or waging a war of famine against it.

One may ask: what solidarity can the revolution in Puerto Rico expect from those workers in the U.S. who do not think like revolutionaries? We answer: what interests have the Puerto Ricans on the mainland in seeing their relatives in Puerto Rico starve to death? There is a real basis for mobilizing Puerto Ricans in the U.S. to fight against the imperialist government's eventual intention of starving out People's War in Puerto Rico.

The magnitude and ferocity that the struggle of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. will attain will spread throughout the proletariat. The international working class, in the U.S., in Puerto Rico, and elsewhere, will refute forever Coolidge's pedantic "premise." Puerto Rico will give the U.S. ruling class much greater military problems than even their wisest prophets have predicted.

An authentic revolutionary Marxist-Leninist movement in the U.S., led by a true party of the working class that helps organize the spontaneous militant solidarity felt by Puerto Rican workers for their class brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico, is of tremendous importance to colonial Puerto Rico. The Progressive Labor Party, the Puerto Rican Socialist League, and their close ties with

each other, are of vital importance to the proletariat of both countries. The struggle for the defense of the Puerto Rican revolution requires a vanguard party that will act as a general staff for the U.S. working class. In the U.S., proletarians are those who live by selling their labor power, no matter what their national or ethnic origin. Between the exploited and the exploiters in the U.S. there is not and should never be any relationship other than class war. PLP has defined its Marxist position by asserting that its communist duties and loyalties place it not beside the monopolies and the Pentagon, but beside the international proletariat. PLP holds the outlook of converting any international war between the U.S. imperialist government and another government into a civil war for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers' power. To defend People's War in Puerto Rico by giving revolutionary leadership to the broad masses of workers in the U.S. thus forms part of its great duty to the international proletariat.

We have made an in-depth study of the Algerian experience, but we differ from it in our orientation towards the mobilization of the working masses in the imperialist country. This mobilization, in the form of demonstrations, protests, strikes, etc., will undoubtedly make the war of liberation less protracted.

The international proletarian relationship between the workers of the colony and the workers of the imperialist country is a basic point of Leninist strategy. In our view, the struggle to win over the enemy's soldiers (part of any revolutionary strategy for warfare with a bourgeois army) will remind the government in Washington that "its" own soldiers are workers, and that they can and will come to identify their interests with the interests of the workers oppressed by imperialism. This process has already taken place to a limited extent in Vietnam. If the process did not develop further in Vietnam, this was so because People's War was stifled and transformed into war for negotiations, exactly at the moment when the imperialist army was about to degenerate into complete demoralization, the moment when revolutionary leadership could have helped begin its transformation into a proletarian army.

Constant in-fighting on the small Puerto Rican territory will bring about an almost total confusion between the two armies. The "regular" army will see its fire-power diminish, for in order to bombard the people's militia, it will have to fire on its own troops. The air force and artillery will become useless. The most terrifying of the imperialist army's street weapons, the tank, may become an impotent hippopotamus. This war has no front because it is fought on all fronts. It is governed by a strategy that involves every aspect of life and keeps its trumps well-hidden; by tactics that can hit and run any time, anywhere; and by logistics that come from both the people and the enemy.

The corpses were still rigid and the guns still smoking when we saluted the revolutionary victory of March 11 on the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico. We saw that historic event as a prelude to People's War. It seemed to us to trace in its own outline the general lines of this invincible instrument of revolutionary struggle. We wrote these words in the heat of those stupendous memories.

However, our enthusiasm does not lead us to conclude that People's War is child's play or that the final victory will be even as easy as it was on March 11. We must have no illusions about war or about the long painful road ahead, the failures, humiliations, imprisonments, exiles, disillusionments, betrayals, blood, tears, and deaths that filled the long years leading up to the victory of March 11, 1971. Historically, March 11, 1971 revokes October 24, 1935.⁸ This is why we repeat that "the development of the consciousness of the masses continues to be, as always, the basis and the principal content of all our work."

In conclusion, I repeat the words I spoke at Lares and quoted in the introduction to these notes: "One may ask: is Puerto Rico ready for People's War? Is it now correct to put forth from this platform the slogan of People's War as the main slogan in the struggle for independence? We maintain that the eventual ability to organize People's War depends upon the constant encouragement of the people's revolutionary spirit, the military spirit of the broad pro-independence masses of Puerto Rico."

A long road lies ahead in the struggle. The struggle will allow no truce, but it cannot be rushed. If we are to win, we must cast aside anxiety, desperation, hopelessness, and exhibitionism, along with all methods that are not revolutionary and all thought that is not Marxist. Only in this way can we march onward toward the conquest of independence and the organization of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The organization of workers' power demands the prior development of the Liga Socialista Puertorriquena to a level of efficiency required by its high revolutionary objectives. Our prime purpose is not merely to make a war and organize an army, nor is it to build a party that organizes and leads the army. The point is that the party that organizes and leads the army must be Marxist-Leninist. The army is an armed instrument that carries out the political tasks of the revolution, under the leadership of the party.

Titanic work, gigantic effort, proletarian stoicism, contempt for death, joy in struggle, pride in watching the new society rise on the horizon of every day, the new man, the future man for all time to come, communist humanity—this is what awaits us. For this we work. Toward this we go.

8. On October 24, 1935, the police massacred members of the Nationalist Party on the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico.