by Gloria Fontanez

Puerto Rican people in the U.S. have a long history of struggle. From the day we arrived we've known the reality of the myth known as the 'land of honey.' They were forced to live in rundown, rejected apartments, discriminatory policies of the U.S. government, state, and federal agencies, the difficulty of learning a new language and being called spics because we would say, 'no speak English,' being beat up by other poor people, they thought we were out for their jobs, being forced on the welfare rolls, unable to find necessary for payment. Many people, employment, being therefore constantly threatened with losing whatever jobs we would find; these and other situations developed organizational defense and response.

In the early years of our migration many social dialect developed, e.g. Pajandero, as well as many civil rights organizations like the Bronx Hispanic American Commission, and later in more recent years, the revolutionary political organizations like El Comité, PSP (MPI), and the PRWOO (YLP). Undoubtedly, wherever oppression and exploitation exist, the people will rise in organized force to seek ways to defend ourselves and resolve our problems. This has been the general growing trend for Puerto Ricans inside the U.S. and Spain.

In the years of our development as Puerto Ricans in the U.S. many ideas have developed as to how and who will lead a successful struggle against the U.S. rulers.

In January 1970, the Young Lords Party (PRWOO) raised the problem in this way, Puerto Rico is the historical colony of the U.S. Puerto Ricans in the U.S. being Puerto Ricans are therefore part of the divided Puerto Rican Nation, which lives in the U.S. and 1/6 in Puerto Rico.

True, Puerto Rico has been a completely dominated colony of the U.S. for 33 years. And although it's also true that we are Puerto Ricans in the U.S., it is false to say that we are part yet divided from the Puerto Rican Nation.

When we made that analysis we were being unreal, and in order that we may change things we must view problems in a real way, so that we may find real solutions.

Who are we not part of the Puerto Rican Nation? First, what's a Nation? Revolutionary before us studied this problem, and found that a nation 'is a historically developed, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up as it exists in culture.'

2. EDUCATION: The main resolution is to have a Spanish speaking superintendent of District 7 and more Spanish speaking principals in the District as well as bilingual courses. This is a drop in the bucket compared to the needs of our children.

3. MANPOWER: The Puerto Rican Conference claims to be combating the lack of jobs, training, & opportunities in the South Bronx. What they have really done is consolidate the control of agencies like the Model Cities' Manpower program, that receive funding for job and job training programs. The Conference then makes deals with companies like Schaeffer Brewing Company. The Company promises to hire only workers sent to them by the Conference (disguised as the agency). You can get a job at Schaeffer but only if you go through Manpower. This makes you obligated to them for life. And if you dare to struggle against this obligation (like when they tell you to campaign for this politician and you refuse), you will lose your job and maybe your life.

These are only a few examples of the practice of the Puerto Rican Conference. These politicians are well fed.

Many are well meaning. But to some their main interest is to make more money and grab more power for themselves and yet they try to tell us that they are fighting for our interests. We can't be fooled by these people. They are the dirty work of McGovern, Lindsay, Rockefeller and Nixon. We, the working and poor Puerto Ricans, don't need anybody handing us jobs like we're beggars. We have the right to work, and we must unite to take back control of our own cities. The struggle continues.

Nations like every historical phenomena, are subject to the laws of change, has its history, beginning and end.

Is Puerto Rico a nation? It most certainly is. What's important today is to unite all those who can be united to defeat the common enemy- the U.S. IMPERIALISM!