

ONE NATION



ONE PARTY

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The destruction of the Puerto Rican nation through continued colonial aggression or its survival achieved through a successful national liberation struggle is on the agenda of progressive people and revolutionaries throughout the world.

International forums such as the Summit Conference of Heads of States of Non-Aligned Nations, the General Assembly of the United Nations, the World Peace Council and the Bertrand Russel Tribunal have discussed the implications of U.S. economic, political and social aggression on Puerto Rico; all of the forums have passed resolutions supporting the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to independence and self-determination to prevent the continued destruction of their natural resources, national heritage, and possibilities for future economic development.

Puerto Ricans in the United States play a fundamental role in the struggle for Puerto Rico's national liberation. The polemic which has developed over the two million Puerto Ricans who live in the United States has created the need to discuss in printed form the theoretical and practical tenets which define the role of this sector of the Puerto Rican people.

The following article is the edited version of a speech given by Florencio Merced Rosa, member of the National Political Commission of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party and delegate of that body to the U.S. Branch of the PSP, at the University of Puerto Rico on November 1974. This pamphlet is the first of 4 which will be published in the United States in the coming year.



Espiera torica
deriende
o tuyo!!

Comrades:

Our Party has developed a strategic concept toward the proclamation of the Workers Democratic Republic, the initial phase of the construction of socialism. This strategic concept is the result of scientific study and a consistent praxis, in constant dialectical inter-relation.

Our Party uses the science of Marxism-Leninism as a guide for action. To make correct use of the most advanced social science known to humanity, it is necessary to apply it in a creative manner to the specific situation of each country, of each case. At the same time we should avoid, in our judgement, falling into exclusivisms directed at justifying assumed positions, setting aside the very essence of Marxism-Leninism, setting aside its general tenets and postulates.

Thus, we have tried to act in accordance with our strategic concept. For this it has been necessary to study carefully the political history of our people. Similarly, the analysis and study of the reality and struggle of other peoples has been necessary.

One of the great developments in our strategic concept is to have cut the umbilical cord that joined a certain liberalism with the most radical and progressive independentist forces. That umbilical cord consisted in leav-

ing up to Washington the final decision about our independence. This has been the case since the position presented and upheld by José de Diego up to Pedro Albizu Campos and Puerto Rican nationalism. To a certain extent, the Movement Pro Independence (historical predecessor of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party) was unavoidably permeated by that position.

De Diego's statements indicate he always expected the decision to confer independence for Puerto Rico to come from Washington. The radical and belligerent nationalism, under the direction of Albizu Campos, designed a strategy for struggle directed at forcing the yankees to recognize Puerto Rico's independence. The furthest the Movement Pro Independence went in its thesis was to speak of the worsening of the capitalist-colonialist system's crisis, forcing Washington to recognize our independence.

The Puerto Rican Socialist Party says in its Political Thesis, *The Socialist Alternative*, that the independence of Puerto Rico will come as a result of an act of self-determination of our people, led by the working class. Then, the Workers Democratic Republic will be proclaimed and this proclamation will be vali-

dated by all the revolutionary means at our disposal. This will be achieved, independently of Washington's will, and as the result of our own struggle and the solidarity of the people of the world.

Initially, today's independence forces should not find it is particularly strange or difficult to arrive at this conclusion. In fact, many leaders and militants of the Movement Pro Independence had arrived at this conclusion a while back. Other revolutionaries and independentists had also concluded this.

The important fact is that a whole political collective should arrive at that conclusion. The important fact is that that conclusion should be arrived at as the result of a practice and a collective analysis and that it be shared by thousands of revolutionaries in Puerto Rico today. Even more important is the fact that certain organizational-strategic objectives have been delineated, directed toward the proclamation of the Workers Democratic Republic of Puerto Rico.

Within our strategic concept, the need for a revolutionary Party is foremost, the party of the working class that leads it to act as the revolutionary class that it is, independent of other classes and social sectors. Because of this we are committed to the development and consolidation of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

National unity constitutes another of the fundamental pillars of our strategic concep-

tion. We believe that all the Puerto Rican people can struggle for the Workers Democratic Republic to which we aspire.

When we speak of the people we exclude from our definition the bourgeois elements and the intermediary and parasitic bourgeoisie, as well as the bureaucratic bourgeoisie (please excuse the vague term), which is nourished and benefits greatly from the capitalist-colonialist system.

The creation, consolidation and development of a United Workers Central, with deep patriotic roots and a strong anti-imperialist content constitutes yet another fundamental pillar of our strategic concept.

International solidarity constitutes another one of the strategic pillars upon which we base our strategic concept. We understand that international solidarity as the most strict application of international proletarianism, which presupposes mutual and reciprocal help and solidarity. Our colonial situation makes us seek and maintain solidarity relations with progressive countries and governments. At the same time, we uphold an independent international line.

It is evident that even with a consolidated and developed revolutionary Party capable of deserving the most decided support of the working class and the working masses, even with the most solid national unity having been achieved, even after achieving the United Workers Central and after it attains a wide



international solidarity —moral as well as material—, we will not have as yet brought together all the necessary elements that will enable us to achieve our goal. This is so, no matter how serious the crisis of the capitalist-colonialist system is at that or at any given moment.

This is why our strategic concept includes the need for the consolidation and development of the proletariat's and the people's revolutionary armed forces. The workers' Party aspires to impart ideological direction to the whole process delineated here.

As you know, our Party is organized in the United States. The United States Branch of our Party is organized and operates in an effective manner in New York City, New Jersey, New England, Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles, California. Because of its importance and because of generalities and particularities that we will touch upon further on, the organization of our United States Branch is part of our strategy for liberation.

The General Declaration of the Constituent Assembly of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, ratified in November of 1971, begins with the following affirmation:

"Puerto Rico is a Latin American nation with four and a half million nationals, of which 2,700,000 live on the island and the rest (more than a third) is concentrated in New York and other parts of

the United States.

The geographic dispersion of a substantial part of our people all over the North American territory and the displacement of a large part of the rural population of the island to the capitol and other cities of the country are a direct result of the genocidal policy implacably imposed by North American imperialism since its intervention in our homeland in 1898 by the force of arms. That policy has substantially transformed the Puerto Rican reality. The present conformation of the socio-economic structure presents one of the most dramatic national situations in the contemporary world. The debate revolves around the survival or extinction of the Puerto Rican nationality on the one hand, and on the other, the continued slavery or the liberation of the Puerto Rican working class, that for all practical purposes constitutes almost the totality of our people.

The North American intervention has represented one of the worst cases of colonial oppression known in today's world."

Our contention, which more than a contention is a simple description of a complex reality, in the sense that the Puerto Ricans who reside in the United States are a part of the Puerto Rican nation, and the consequent organization of our Party "in the belly of the beast", has provoked much discussion within

the left in the United States. Some groups here have raised as a banner of organizational and ideological struggle the discussion and the attack of our position.

Unfortunately, most of these organizations and/or groups have limited their opposition to somewhat inarticulate attacks, without previous scientific research into the reality we speak of, without a previous scientific analysis. Furthermore, they use as a basis some definitions of what a nation is by Joseph Stalin. At the same time, our positions are distorted and are described in such a way that they are adjusted to the objectives of those who combat them. Stalin's definition of a nation is mechanically applied, out of the context of our reality.

Summarized, the positions of these groups regarding this matter are reduced to the following:

1. That the Puerto Ricans in the United States do not form a part of the one and only Puerto Rican nation or nationality, since they are not submitted to the same system or economy as those on the island.
2. That the Puerto Ricans who live in the United States do not share the same geographically determined territory as the Puerto Ricans on the island.

According to some of our detractors, the two objectives pointed out here constitute indispensable requisites for the configuration

of a nation as Joseph Stalin defines it.

On the basis of the above-mentioned concepts, they conclude that our positions regarding this matter are petty-bourgeois in nature and that what the Puerto Ricans in the United States must do is join, as a national minority, a Marxist-Leninist party of Mao Tse Tung thought, a multi-national party which must give direction to the revolutionary process in the United States.

There are others, of course, who oppose our views about this matter without the multi-national party ingredient; at least without the Marxist-Leninist Mao Tse Tung thought ingredient. It is a shame that we are obliged to summarize in such a succinct manner the objections our positions raise amongst these groups. Any one of the persons or comrades here present who shares them in part or in whole is invited to expound them in the period of discussion.

It is difficult for us to expound the gross ridiculizations which have been made concerning our position. For example, it is a perverse distortion to say that we state that the Puerto Ricans in the Bronx constitute a nation and that the Puerto Ricans in Chicago constitute a nation and that the Puerto Ricans in Boston constitute a nation, etc. What we have stated is that the Puerto Ricans in the United States are part of the Puerto Rican nation, a point we will go into later on.

We state that the Puerto Ricans who live on

the island and in the cities of the United States form part of one nation, that we constitute a unique nationality different from others that exist in the United States. Therefore, we claim our right to organize the Puerto Ricans here and there.

But more than claim that right, we are exercising it, being the only political party which is organized on the island as well as within "the belly of the beast". The quantitative and qualitative growth of our United States Branch is evident. It can be observed through its wide organization, its daily work, its participation and role in extraordinary activities such as the Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Rally held last October 27th at Madison Square Garden. It is evident that our United States Branch is today recognized —by friends and enemies alike— as one of the most consolidated and influential organizations in all of the left in the United States.

Imperialism, with its intervention in our homeland, has forced one third of the Puerto Rican people to emigrate to its cities. This has been a very particular migration, because it probably constitutes a unique case in history, a matter we will touch on later. That migration, planned by imperialism and executed with the criminal complicity of the back yard colonial leaders, sought and seeks to serve as an escape valve for the crisis that menaced and menaces the colony on all fronts. At the same time, it solved the need for a quite particular

labor force that the North American economy needed and needs.

From our viewpoint, and on the basis of the objective reality of the Puerto Ricans on the island and in the United States, we have decided to upset their plans and projections and we have decided to organize our struggle for independence here as well as there.

As revolutionaries we do not avoid theoretical arguments and statements that do not adjust with literal precision to the positions we support. Neither do we mechanically adjust our judgments to the statements and interpretations of one of those theoreticians and revolutionaries, without placing them in the historical period we are about to analyze and transform.

Let us see the definition of a nation that Joseph Stalin gives us in his work *Marxism and the National Question*, written at the end of 1912 and 1913:

"A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."

Stalin adds: "It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end."

It is necessary to underline the fact that

not one of the distinctive features, taken alone, is sufficient to define a nation. Furthermore, it is sufficient that only one of these features be missing so that the nation ceases to be a nation.

Stalin continues: "It is possible to conceive of people possessing common 'national character' who, nevertheless, cannot be said to constitute a single nation if they are economically dis-united, inhabit different territories, speak different languages, and so forth. Such, for instance, are the Russian, Galician, American, Georgian and Caucasian Highland Jews, who, in our opinion, do not constitute a single nation."

Now, in using the Stalinist definition we must place it in the historical period in which it has developed, we must know the reality to which it corresponded and even the end it sought. Marxists do not write or work in the abstract. In a prologue to the collection of his articles that form the book *Marxism and the National Question*, Stalin himself states,

"This article reflects a period of discussions about the principles regarding the national question, held within Social-Democracy in Russia during the reactionary period of the tzarists and land-owners, a year and a half before the

imperialist war broke out, the period of growth of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia. Two theories concerning the nation were being debated then, and therefore, two national programs: the Austrian, supported by the Bund and the Mensheviks, and the Russian Bolshevik,"

These are enough quotes from Stalin's prologue. It must be pointed out that this prologue was written by Stalin in 1920. Why does Joseph Stalin bother to place us in the precise historical period during which he produced his brilliant theoretical piece? Whoever is familiar with Marxists can reasonably conclude that one of the reasons must be the importance Marxists ascribe to placing a theoretical discussion within a practical framework, within a specific historical perspective.

Lenin so indicates in his work *On the National Question*:

"The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within *definite* historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country (e.g., the national programme for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch."

Lenin immediately asks himself: "What does this absolute tenet of Marxism imply in its application to the question under discussion?"

Here is the Leninist question that the theoreticians who combat our positions have not asked themselves, accusing us of the most varied positions.

We believe that we have shown the importance of placing our "national programme" within a specific period or historical time. On the other hand, it seems evident that our national problem unfolds in a historical period different from that which occupied Stalin. Furthermore, anyone who is familiar with the historical period in which Stalin lived and who is familiar with the Austrian programme (supported on many of its issues by Rosa Luxemburg, by the way), who is familiar with the life and work of the Mensheviks and the reactionary positions of the Jewish Bund, will understand how useless and opportunist it is to sustain an opposition to our position regarding this matter, using as a fundamental and exclusive basis Stalin's definition of a nation.

We are by no means throwing aside a Bolshevik position that served to defeat positions which history has more than proven to be incorrect and which even today are useful as a guide. But they are guides, not recipes.

A bit more. In Tzarist Russia, 57% of the inhabitants were not Great Russians, that is to

say that only 43% were Great Russians, constituting themselves as the oppressor nation; 17% were Ukranian, 6% were Polish, 4.5% were Belo-Russian, etc. The USSR was founded on December 30, 1922. Today, 15 federated republics, 20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous regions and 10 national districts compose it. Is it reasonable, we ask, to apply definitions which are the result of a debate on the reality of one nation or nations, of one state or states, like the ones we have superficially touched upon, to our national reality?

Before us are two forms of making use of Marxism-Leninism, two forms of dealing with the problems of our time. One of these forms requires the creative application of Marxism to our national reality and to our era. The other sustains a static and mechanical analysis which degenerates, therefore, into the worst opportunism.

One of the strongest points against our contention (that the Puerto Ricans living in the United States are part of the same Puerto Rican nation as ours) is the fact that we do not share a common territory. This is true if we are guided by the Stalinist definition. But it is true only in appearance, even using Stalin's definition as a base.

It is not mere coincidence that Stalin uses as an example the case of the Jews and proves that they do not constitute a nation as such. Stalin basis his conclusion on the criterion of



territoriality among others. It is necessary that we understand what the Jewish Bund was and what it represented.

The Jewish Bund was a kind of General League of Jewish Workers in Poland, Lithuania and Russia. The Bund concentrated its work amongst the Jewish artisans. It became part of Russia's Social-Democratic Workers Party —from its first congress in 1898— as an independent autonomous organization. Until 1901, the only issue the Bund demanded was the equality of civil rights for Jews. The development of this Jewish Bund will force it to come face to face with the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks have to combat not only the Jewish Bund but also the clearly bourgeois Jewish organizations. This, while propagating the working class internationalism among the Jewish working masses and winning over the best of them to the Party and the struggle.

Joseph Stalin did not invent, just for the sake of it, the criterion of territoriality as one of the terms that defines a nation. It is necessary that we investigate why it is that such a criterion is established. It is logical to think, and in a complete reading of Stalin we will find this, that one of the reasons for which this criterion is established is the necessary and inevitable communication required for the existence and permanence of a nation.

Joseph Stalin does not establish the criterion of territoriality as a requisite, believing that it is necessary that the trees of such and such a territory should be the same in order to constitute a nation; or, for that matter, that the soil be the same. It is undeniable that he states it because of the difficulties in communication and interrelation that in 1912 conditioned a common territory.

That is why the communication and interrelation of a North American Jew and of a Georgian Jew is questionable. However, our opposers do not think of this at all. If Stalin says that one of the requisites that defines a nation is that of a common territory, what does it matter if it is established on the basis of a necessary communication and interrelation between nationals? Therefore, why should one try to find out if this communication and interrelation is possible, or even exists, between the Puerto Ricans here and there in 1974? It is not at all important. If Stalin says that one of the requisites is a common territory, which evidently the Puerto Ricans on the island and in the United States do not share, we must conclude that the Puerto Rican Socialist Party's position is mistaken.

Nothing further from the creative and scientific attitude inherent to Marxism-Leninism.

Before presenting some quotes from the Political Declaration of the United States

Branch of the PSP entitled *Desde las entrañas*, we believe it necessary to state that we are not seeking shelter under any exclusivisms to deny or mold the general truths of Marxism-Leninism to our positions. What is impossible is to pretend that Stalin or any other revolutionary of any other time, in writing about the national question, was thinking and considering the case of Puerto Rico or anyone which remotely resembled it. It could not be because humanity's history had not as yet registered any capitalist colony of which one third of its population had been forced to migrate to the Metropolis. Marxists are revolutionaries, therefore scientists; not prophets.

Let us go into some of the characteristics of the Puerto Rican migration to the United States, initiated on a mass scale after the second half of the 40's. *Desde las entrañas* says:

"The development of today's Puerto Rican working class included not only its displacement from an agrarian society to foreign-owned industry in Puerto Rico, but also its displacement to cities in the United States. In both cases it filled the same need: that of being a source of cheap labor for the U.S. ruling class.

The massive emigration to the United States is one of the collective experiences that forms part of the legacy of the Puerto Rican working class and helps

define its conception of the world. This includes those workers who remain on the island as well as those who leave. The emigration is one of the concrete conditions in which the sector of the working class that stays on the island is formed: it serves as an escape valve to reduce pressures, helps to shape the labor force participation rates, reduce the levels of unemployment, helps to shape social expectations, etc.

This phenomenon must also be understood as one of the objective conditions in the formation and development of today's Puerto Rican working class, including systematic attempts to destroy our nationality through assimilation."

Further on the Declaration states:

"The fact that such a large proportion of the population had to migrate to the United States, a migration which represented one of the largest demographic movements in modern history, seemed to be, at first, an escape valve to reduce social pressures resulting from the transformation taking place in the Puerto Rican economy. But, more than that, it is a systematic process for importing cheap labor to fill the marginal needs created by the technological and industrial development of the United

States, a development necessary so that the working class, as a whole, may produce more for the ruling class of this country (the United States)".

And the Declaration says:

"The stratification of the working class in such a way as to insure its continuing productivity, as a whole, includes 'bringing the Third World to the national territory of the United States', that is, the creation of a cheap labor force to fill jobs that, due to high production costs, could not be filled by highly skilled workers.

To fill this role, we, the Puerto Rican workers, come to the United States. Apart from differences in specific locations within the production and service process that we have in one place or other, it is the same role that those of us who remain in Puerto Rico experience as a class".

Before continuing with what we consider to be necessary quotes from the Political Declaration, *Desde las entrañas*, it is convenient to point out that the publication includes an Economic Appendix. Appendix B of the Declaration, entitled "Demographic and economic analysis of the Puerto Rican population in the United States" represents a

serious piece of research. Many of the conclusions we are quoting are arrived at from part of the data it presents.

Stalin himself points out that one of the characteristic features of a nation is a psychology of culture manifested in the community. I believe it is necessary to mention what *Desde las entrañas* has to say about this:

"The Puerto Rican who moves to the United States does so with the same expectations (stemming from his material reality) as the one who moves from rural Puerto Rico to San Juan or Ponce, operating with a unique set of illusions and dreams, with a particular world view.

In addition, and it is essential to highlight this point, it is not a matter of the movement of an isolated individual, but rather the movement of an entity with a collective world view. This is so because we are dealing with a substantial sector of a nation — more than a third of the population — which means transplanting an entire world; literally, we are dealing with a chunk of the country, which will continue struggling to maintain its cohesiveness in its new setting.

Another point which deserves attention is that in contrast to other immigrants for whom coming to the United States meant breaking with their past,

burning all their bridges and focusing their attention on the future, the Puerto Rican is forced to come and sees his uprooting as temporary."

On the same subject, the Declaration continues:

"This phenomenon, which we have called the 'myth of returning', the 'dream of returning', obviously is not always realized, but it permeates the whole community and helps to shape the vision that the community has of itself. What is even more important is that the crude reality of superexploitation, oppression, discrimination, and cultural aggression to which the Puerto Rican is subjected in his new environment reinforces this myth and convinces him that it is necessary to return. Even more of a factor is the air shuttle established between Puerto Rico and the United States which makes possible the constant coming and going of Puerto Ricans, so profitable for the North American airlines."

This air shuttle is one of the elements that facilitates the communication and interrelation and which disproves those who affirm that the Puerto Ricans on the island and those in the United States do not share a common territory. Stalin could not have imagined this

air shuttle, nor could have anyone else in 1912. I do not think I am mistaken when I state that the San Juan-New York bridge is the largest aerial traffic in the world.

We continue to quote from the Political Declaration:

"As opposed to previous migrations, the Puerto Rican is not a migrant that separates from his world to look for a new one, but rather, is an uprooted, displaced, victim of colonial exploitation, who moves to another area to be dominated by the very same colonizer, always in the same role that the ruling class makes him play in the labor market.

In their new environment the Puerto Rican working masses, because of the way they see themselves and their transitory oppression, stay within the world of their community. That is, the vast majority of Puerto Ricans are kept on the fringe of the social, cultural, and political processes of this country."

The above mentioned Declaration also states:

"Puerto Ricans are further isolated by accessible transportation to and communications with Puerto Rico, mass media and recreation in Spanish,

(although, as with any profitable business, they are controlled by the same who exploit the workers); they even have access to business and job relations in Spanish."

In daily life, this means that any one of us who finds himself in Hartford, Connecticut, can turn on the radio and listen to the news of the hour in Spanish, straight from the Capitol building in Puerto de Tierra in San Juan, Puerto Rico. It will say, for example, "the independentist Senator Ruben Berrios has just informed", etc.

The Political Declaration *Desde las entrañas* has had a limited circulation in Puerto Rico. Therefore, we will take the liberty, counting on your patience, to quote certain demographic aspects concerning Puerto Ricans that reside in the United States. We are convinced that they will make it easier to understand the reality of our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters who live in the United States, as well as the Puerto Rican Socialist Party's position concerning this matter.

Demographic aspects:

"There are already more than two million Puerto Ricans living in the United States, half of whom (1,125,000) live in New York City. Furthermore, it is estimated that 240,000 Puerto Ricans

live in the state of New Jersey, 120,000 in Pennsylvania (100,000 in the city of Philadelphia), 110,000 in the state of Connecticut and 110,000 in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. That is, the large majority of Puerto Ricans are concentrated in the heavily populated cities of the Eastern Coast of the country.

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

The Political Declaration also states:

"The current population of Puerto Ricans in the United States is noticeably young: 86% are under 40; 48.6% are 17 or younger; 31.7% are 9 years old or younger. The median age is 19 years.

In terms of generation, it is necessary to explain several points. The large majority of the population of working age is composed of what has come to be referred to as 'first generation'. Two out of every three persons between 0 and 25 years are children (31.7% are under 10). This means that at least 10 more years are required before the so-called 'second generation' has sufficient impact to be



able to change the objective characteristics of our community. This gap, however, is much more noticeable outside of New York City where the Puerto Rican population is younger, where there are less adolescents and the proportion of 'first generation' is even greater.

The dispersion of Puerto Ricans to cities outside the state of New York also has noteworthy characteristics. They have moved to other cities in search of semi-skilled employment which is growing scarce in New York. With the establishment of direct flights between San Juan and cities such as Newark, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago, there began a migration of Puerto Ricans who left their hometowns and went directly to other cities in this country, without passing through New York. Furthermore, many migrants who come to work in agricultural camps for specific periods of time, remain and settle in nearby towns instead of returning to Puerto Rico when the harvest is completed. Thus, new settlements of Puerto Ricans are initiated. The majority of such settlements expand due to family ties and friendship, and thus create more closely-knit communities than those found in New York. These also have a more direct relationship with Puerto Rico than does the 'old community' of New York."

We continue with the demographic aspects:

"The fact that many Puerto Ricans return to Puerto Rico (although not the majority, and although it is difficult to determine exactly how many), while many are continually arriving, establishes a constant renewal of the Puerto Rican community, a constant flow of 'first generation' that keeps the national bonds strong. The Appendix establishes, for example, that 92.3% of all Puerto Ricans in the U.S. over 14 years of age (69% of all Puerto Ricans in the U.S.) were born in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, according to the U.S. General census of 1970, 72% of all the Puerto Ricans who live in this country use Spanish as their chief form of communication."

The conclusions and positions we have arrived at regarding this issue are fortunately not the product of any theorists' club. They are based upon collective research and practice. This is why I will once again refer to *Desde las entrañas* in order to summarize our position, before arriving at some final conclusions.

The Political Declaration states:

"We believe that Puerto Ricans in the United States and those on the island

form one nation, the Puerto Rican nation.

The Puerto Rican community in the United States has certain particularities that distinguish it from the so-called national minorities that are said to form part of this country. They are the following:

Please note the aforementioned Leninist requisite to elaborate a national program being carried out:

"1. A constant movement of Puerto Ricans between the island and the United States made possible by the air bridge established between San Juan and New York.

2. Constant communication and interrelation between Puerto Rican individuals, families, and communities from Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans in the United States made possible by the constant flow of travelers, correspondence, news on the radio, television and in the newspaper.

3. Both parts of the Puerto Rican nation, the one that resides in the United States and the one that resides on the island are constantly faced with the same type of cultural aggression, which, although in different degrees, has the same genocidal purposes.

4. Puerto Ricans on the island and in

the United States are subjected to capitalist superexploitation by the North American ruling class in terms of labor power as well as in the sphere of commerce.

5. Because of racism and national discrimination, the Puerto Rican community has been subjected to social and political alienation from the rest of society, a process that turns our community into a ghetto.

6. Puerto Rican workers on the island and in the United States have followed similar patterns of proletarianization in their class formation. This process of proletarianization has been accelerated during the last 30 years.

The difference in the degree of assimilation that exists between Puerto Ricans on the island and in the United States is based on geographic factors. The reality of living outside our national territory, in the midst of a hostile society, affects Puerto Ricans in the United States with more impact, and speeds up the process of destruction of their national identity. Such is the case with Spanish, Puerto Rico's national language; the loss of Spanish is more dramatic for Puerto Ricans in the United States.

On the other hand, those differences then are lessened for both negative and positive reasons. Because of the constant

flow of Puerto Ricans between the island and the United States, and the process of assimilation on the island, these differences are lessened. At the same time, and to the same degree, that the struggle for national liberation extends itself to the Puerto Rican community in the United States, a resistance starts to develop that restrains the process of assimilation here and in Puerto Rico.

This dynamic reality changes the factors that define the Puerto Rican nationality. The important thing is that collective resistance protects the existence of our nationality, presently threatened by imperialist aggression.

That is why we maintain that Puerto Rican workers on the island and in the United States have to establish for themselves the objective of obtaining the independence of Puerto Rico. Our independence is indispensable in order to guarantee the survival of our nation."

These are all the quotations from the Political Declaration.

Comrades, the aforementioned does not deny, and our practice corroborates it daily, the necessity the Puerto Ricans have to struggle for democratic rights and for social change in the United States. Our practice has proven that it is incorrect to draw a dicotomy between the struggle for Puerto Rican inde-

pendence in the United States, the struggle for the democratic rights of Puerto Ricans residing in the United States or the struggle for social change in the U.S.

These three facets of one struggle are related dialectically. They complement each other when more than to discuss them, a decision is made to carry them out and incorporate them into a daily practice.

However, there are two additional objections that can be stated. In the first place, how is it that a Party that calls itself Marxist-Leninist gives so much importance to the national question, in detriment (according to our critics) of the class struggle, on the island and in the United States. Let us examine carefully these two objections. In his work concerning the national question, Lenin says:

"Where the oppressed nations are concerned, the separate organization of the proletariat as an independent party sometimes leads to such a bitter struggle against local nationalism that the perspective becomes distorted and the nationalism of the oppressor nation is lost sight of."

Here is the key to the issue. Because of our colonial situation, the workers Party is forced to give special consideration to the national question.

In this same work, Lenin points out:

“National wars against imperialism are not only possible and probable: they are inevitable and they are progressive and revolutionary.”

As Marxists, our interest in the national question is not in the nationality in and of itself, but in socialist revolution. A while back, we described a reality of isolation to which Puerto Rican workers are submitted, in relation to their North American working class brothers and sisters. We described that objective reality but we are not nor ever will be party to it. On the contrary, we give a call for the integration of Puerto Rican workers into the active class struggle of all workers in the United States. If we organize them in the Puerto Rican Socialist Party it is because we begin from an objective national reality that imposes it. This is dialectical and therefore, not eternal. We look forward to the day when Puerto Rican workers, as well as Black, white, Chicano, and other workers will have one party of the working class in the United States, capable of giving direction to the revolutionary process up until the seizure of power.

On the other hand, paraphrasing Marx and Lenin, and taking into consideration Marx's final thoughts about Ireland as a British colony, a people that oppresses another cannot be free; therefore, the independence

of the colony is necessary for the freedom of the workers of the empire. It is not adventurous to expect the national independence of Puerto Rico before the socialist revolution in the United States. What's more, our national independence *is indispensable* to the socialist revolution in the United States. In fact, both struggles are dialectically interrelated and only to be clearly understood do we separate them in this manner.

Comrades, we are speaking about a national war for independence, for the Democratic Workers Republic. Of a war directed and presided by the Puerto Rican working class. Our position regarding the national question is related to the development of this war here and in the “belly of the beast”.

This is then, according to the circumstances of this historical moment, our greatest contribution to the development of the class struggle and the revolution in the United States. In this sense, we are a national liberation movement; Puerto Ricans here and there struggle for our national independence and in this sense our United States Branch is inserted into the left in the United States.

In his piece on the national question, Lenin states:

“To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a

section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc. to imagine all this is to repudiate *social revolution*. Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is."

Finally, the pressure under which we had to prepare this piece did not allow us to look further into some cases and situations that we consider very important for the topic we are discussing. In any case, we want to warn the static ones: regarding the criterion of a common territory as imperative for the nation, you must stop a moment to think about the necessary conclusions concerning the Palestine nation. Aside from the ways in which this case differs from ours they are also a nationality displaced from their original and national territory, through the force of imperialism.

Some lines by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez from his article on Lenin and colonialism will end this work:

"Neither the class alliances necessary for the defeat of imperialism can be the same in all countries, nor can the traffic

signals necessarily be found in Lenin's complete works. What is in them, when one studies them, is a method for analyzing social reality and an example of how a revolution was made, more difficult and complex than any of ours because it was the first to successfully achieve the assault on heaven in search for which the communers of 1871 were gloriously defeated. If we are able to assimilate him, Lenin will allow revolutionaries to abandon ancient schemes, and not continue to stereotype life. Those who imagine that it was only one revolutionary praxis that allowed Fidel Castro to direct the first socialist revolution in America are mistaken. It was the praxis of one who, blessed with that same discerning and total vision of Lenin's, had also known how to extract from his many theoretical readings the necessary ingredients to immediately know 'where he is going'. And in this America of ours in which soldiers and priests begin to find a different meaning in their trade and their faith, while students, workers and peasants allow themselves to die for their land in the land of Mariategui, Mella and Che Guevara —Betances and Albizu Campos— we add, that is the Leninism we need".

Thank you very much.