

EDITORIAL

The ruling class of the United States is the biggest criminal in the world. They have developed immense monopolies that exploit and oppress the people of this country. And they have extended their exploitation throughout the world. Its oppression is most vicious in Africa and Latin America, where large North American corporations make super-profits at the cost of the super-exploitation of the workers of these nations by armed force. But the people of the world are rising up to destroy North American Imperialism. Some examples are Vietnam, the Phillipines, Mozambique, Angola, and Puerto Rico. And the poor and working people are uniting more and more to struggle against the monopoly capitalists (the ruling class) and their programs of raising prices, taxes, lowering salaries, lay-offs, speed-ups, rising unemployment, and run-away shops that move away and abandon the workers. More and more people are understanding the relationship between the exploitation of workers here and the super-exploitation in other nations. We are learning that their victories are our victories. And that what we do to better our lives and weaken the North American ruling class benefits their struggles.

This takes us to a few key questions. What is the role of Puerto Ricans in the United States? What is the relationship between the struggle for the national liberation of Puerto Rico and the defeat of North American imperialism. These are questions that have been raised by many organizations and people. Recently, El Comite in an issue of Unidad Latina of February 24, presented their answers to these questions, and criticized the position of the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization regarding these very important questions.

The position of our Organization is very clear. This position appears in Volume 4, Number 26 of Palante. But we are going to speak about it some more to clear up the discussion.

The United States is a multi-national state. It contains many oppressed nationalities. But there is only one working class. What happens to Puerto Ricans when they get off the plane from Puerto Rico, asks El Comite. Do they leave their nationality behind? No. They continue to be Puerto Ricans, but not Puerto Ricans as part of the Puerto Rican nation, but Puerto Ricans as part of the Puerto Rican national minority in the U.S.

We believe that Puerto Ricans in the U.S. are a national minority. And the majority of Puerto Ricans here are workers, part of the U.S. working class. The U.S. working class is multi-national; that is, it is made up of Blacks, Chicanos, Asians, Whites, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and other Latins. We have to find ways to unite these different

sectors of the working class in the U.S. so that we can build a multi-national organization that will fight in the interests of the entire working class and will lead the struggle to defeat U.S. imperialism. We think this is the primary task of Puerto Ricans here in the U.S.

This is not to say that Puerto Ricans do not have a distinct culture as do the other sectors of the multi-national U.S. working class. We are not and have never suggested that our culture and traditions be abandoned. We feel they must be strengthened and defended against attacks, and in turn they will make us stronger and more unified. But culture and language alone do not make a nation. Puerto Rico is a nation because it is "a historically developed stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up as it exists in culture." Puerto Ricans in the U.S. do not have a separate territory or economic life. Their territory is the United States and the economic system they function within is the economic system of the United States.

We see that Third World workers and White workers face a common exploitation and oppression. This forms the basis for building unity against the common enemy - the imperialists, the capitalists and monopolists. It is true that when Third World workers and White workers work side by side, the Third World worker has to do the dirtiest job. Understanding this we recognize that one way of creating unity among the working class is by struggling against racism and discrimination which the ruling class uses to keep workers divided.

We are in agreement with Lenin, one of the leaders of the Russian revolution of 1917 and teacher of revolutionaries throughout the world, who wrote that the revolutionaries main question is the class question the victory of the united working class over the ruling class. Lenin denounced those that failed to struggle against oppression and discrimination, but he also denounced those who raised the national question (our oppression as Puerto Ricans, Blacks, Dominicans, etc.) over the class question (our common exploitation as workers). This is a tendency we must guard against.

What then is the relationship between the struggle for Puerto Rico's national liberation and the destruction of U.S. imperialism? We believe that all sectors of the U.S. working class must unite to defeat those responsible for exploitation and oppression here and abroad. A key struggle is the fight for the liberation of all colonies. It is the particular responsibility of the Puerto Rican sector of the U.S. working class to educate other workers about the Puerto Rican national liberation struggle and to unite with all those in the U.S. that can be united with to defeat U.S.

imperialism. The development of the anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. strengthens the struggle for liberation in Puerto Rico like the struggle in Puerto Rico or Vietnam strengthens the anti-imperialist struggle in the U.S. The two are interconnected.

As one step to develop the broad anti-imperialist struggle in the U.S., many groups have come together to form the November 4th Coalition. The Coalition is multi-national and is composed of anti-imperialist workers, community, and student groups. In their editorial, El Comite agreed that an anti-imperialist front that "unites the struggle of our people with that of the North American working class" is necessary, yet they have not actively participated in the struggle to form such a group by building the Nov. 4th Coalition. We feel this is incorrect and shows a disunity between theory and putting theory into practice.

We also think that one of the tasks of revolutionary organizations is to study and learn from revolutionaries that

came before us. The concepts of what is a nation and what is a national minority were not made by us, as El Comite implied. We studied and learned from those who led the October Revolution in the Soviet Union in 1917 and the successful revolution of the People's Republic of China. These concepts developed in the long struggle to build socialism in these countries and guarantee democratic rights for all people there. It is our task now to study and apply to our own situation the things learned by comrades before us.

Finally we want to criticize El Comite for weakening the people's movement as whole within the U.S. While we know this is not being done intentionally, we feel that it is the result of the politics they are putting forward. The overwhelming majority of Puerto Rican people are workers. Puerto Ricans are exploited and oppressed as workers and as a national minority. We have to fight against both these aspects and not separate them.

We have to unite the U.S. working class, not divide it further, because that is the only class that can ultimately destroy imperialism. And it is by destroying U.S. imperialism that we will end discrimination against our people, end attacks on our culture, end exploitation in the workplace, advance the Puerto Rican national liberation struggle, and ensure our democratic rights. UNITE ALL THOSE WHO CAN BE UNITED TO DEFEAT THE COMMON ENEMY!

Palante