

## PUERTO RICO

# Superports Symbol of Imperialism

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The fact that it is a colony of the U.S. makes Puerto Rico a reserve of imperialism, it's most important reserve, as a matter of fact. Reserves serve imperialism as safety valves. That is, every time the imperialists have a crisis, or are undergoing grave problems, they turn to their reserves in order to relieve or solve temporarily such problems.

And how has imperialism used its reserve, Puerto Rico? In the beginning of their regime in the island, the yankees were mostly interested in producing sugar for consumption in its internal market. So, they made a gigantic sugar plantation out of the Puerto Rican national territory. At the same time, conscious of the fact that because of its geographic position Puerto Rico offered great military advantages, they initiated the militarization of the island. This militarization has reached such an extent that 13% of the national territory serves such a purpose.

The stage of the gigantic sugar cane plantation ended in the '40's - not because of a decision by Puerto Ricans but because it was convenient to the imperialists. They now started the industrialization under the auspices of a program designed so that foreign capital could take over completely the economy of the island. Thus we find today that 90% of industrial capital in P.R. is in the hands of the yankees.

Other processes were happening simultaneously to these, all of them geared towards solving imperialism's problems. Excess production of the capitalist society soon found in almost 3 million Puerto Ricans a captive market where to get rid of these excess products. P.R. became the 5th market of the U.S. products in the world (2nd only to Canada in this continent). Also, the need for a cheap labor force, especially in services and manufacture, was satisfied for the imperialists by a program of massive emmigration which brought to the North American territory thousands of Puerto Ricans - one of the greatest emigrations ever registered in modern history.

Needless to say, a great number of the industries established in the island do

Cont. on p. 13

# RESISTENCIA

Cont. from p. 5

so as a result of strikes and other worker actions in the U.S. In P.R., besides being able to pay the workers less and not having to pay any taxes to the government, they have the advantage of a "massive army of the unemployed" which guarantees labor to remain always cheap. And last, but not least, imperialism operates its repressive apparatus from the soil of P.R. against Latin America. It is in Puerto Rican soil that they experiment on new forms of aggression, not just military, but also cultural, political and economic against our Latin brothers and sisters.

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The above description of the meaning of a RESERVE is very important in the light of the most recent plans of imperialism for P.R. It is known by all that they are talking of building a superport in the island as part of a refining complex for the petroleum destined to the North American market. These superports, wherever they have been built, have adversely affected the soil, infected the waters, contaminated the air, destroyed almost completely sea life and also hurt the health of those that inhabit the areas where such superports are located. This situation has in the past triggered the creation of pressure groups in the U.S. which have firmly opposed the construction of such superports, miniports, refineries, or any other thing that means the same: petroleum. These pressure groups have been effective enough in their actions. Since it is a fact that the superports hurt everybody - except of course the investors who build them - the protests have been supported by civic and religious groups, labor unions, the capitalist press and many liberal politicians. Together they have been able to make it almost impossible for the big capitalists to build new refining plants within the continental U.S. It has become just as difficult for them to build such facilities in other Latin American territories. The capitalists have to remember the sour experience of having their refineries nationalized in

There is a mistake in the article, "Nixon-Brezhnev Summit: Internal Weakness Brings Thieves Together", in Vol. 5 No. 5. On page 5, Column 3 the last two sentences of the first new paragraph should read, "The imperialists are fighting tooth and nail to combat the falling rate of profit by imposing arbitrary restrictions and by holding back commodities such as can be seen by the so-called food and gasoline shortages. But for all their efforts, there will inevitably be a decline of prices."

Cuba, and deal at the same time with the rising of radical nationalist governments in Panama, Peru and Ecuador. Also opposition is increasing every day against the whole petroleum enclave. These are "times of political upheaval" in Latin America and the yankees want to protect their skin (their interests) well. And where better than in P.R. to do it? Where better than in their Caribbean colony?

This being reality, the imperialists, counting on the unconditional cooperation of their servants and lackeys of the colonial government of the island, prepare themselves to commit another great crime against the Puerto Rican people, a crime that, if committed, will do irreparable harm which many generations of Puerto Ricans will have to suffer.

WHAT CAN WE IN THE U.S. DO TO STOP THE SUPERPORT? First of all we have to understand that if the imperialists have continued in their plans despite the opposition of great sectors of the Puerto Rican nation, the petty bourgeois independence movement included, they are not going to stop because 50, or 100 or even 1,000 Puerto Ricans demonstrate in New York or in Washington, or wherever, against the superport. Thus, the mechanical answer given to all problems by the independence movement in N.Y. ("Let's demonstrate!"), is definitely not the correct tactic. What we CAN do is take the matter to the awareness of the working class in this country. And very especially to its most advanced sectors. We must make clear that the superport is part of the imperialist tactic of the U.S., and that the victory of the imperialists over the colonies determines the victory of the capitalist class over the working class of this country.

We must show clearly that the principle of "International solidarity of the proletariat" (the working class) is not merely a slogan but that it must be made concrete in our daily practice. Finally we must show the relation which exists between the struggle of the working class in this country and the struggle of Puerto Ricans for independence and socialism in P.R. "No one may be free that enslaves others." The struggle in the U.S. against the superport has to take the same characteristics of the struggle for socialism. IT HAS TO BE MULTI-NATIONAL, IT HAS TO BE BASED IN THE WORKING CLASS, IT HAS TO ESTABLISH ALLIANCES ON THE BASIS OF CLASS, NOT NATIONALITY. To the extent that we advance this process will we be helping to defeat, not just the superport, but the whole system that is behind the superport. All else are the fairy tales of those that believe in "having omelet without breaking the eggs, revolution without revolt."