



MPI: Doctrine of the New Struggle

In the following pages the reader will find chapters II, VI, and X of **The Doctrine of the New Struggle**, political theses of the Puerto Rican Pro-Independence Movement (MPI) approved May 4 of this year by the highest leadership body of the organization, the Pedro Albizu Campos National Mission. These new theses constitute the ideological and programmatic base of the MPI and replace the earlier theses, **The Hour of Independence**.

Chapter II

Political and Military Domination

I. Constitutional History

THE DOMINATION of the United States over Puerto Rico is based on Article 2 of the Treaty of Paris, which put an end to the Cuban-Spanish-American War. Through this article Spain ceded the possession of Puerto Rico to the United States.

Washington totally ignored the Autonomous Government and installed a military government. According to the so-called territorial clause of the United States Constitution, Congress has the power to decide the destiny of territories acquired by purchase or conquest. On April 12, 1900, the first Organic Law, known as the Foraker Law, was approved, setting up a civil government. But although a House of Delegates, elected by popular vote, was installed, the real power remained with the Governor and the Executive Council, named by the President of the United States.

Seventeen years later, on March 2, 1917, Congress approved a second Organic Law, which is known as the Jones Law. This law eliminated the Executive Council and replaced it with a popularly elected Senate, which, together with the House of Representatives, would form the Legislative Assembly. There was no other change in the colonial structure; however, this law had deprived the Puerto Ricans of their natural citizenship and declared them citizens of the United States.

It wasn't until thirty years later that the second Organic Law

was amended, and this happened on August 5, 1947, when the Congress of the United States authorized the popular election of the Governor. Three more years had to pass, however, before it was amended to any real extent. On July 3, 1950, the 600 Law was approved, which repealed certain clauses of the Jones Law and allowed the Puerto Rican people to rewrite these clauses into a Constitution by means of a Constitutional Assembly. The rest of the Organic Law of 1917 would remain in force under the new name of the Law for Federal Relations with Puerto Rico. And so began the process of the so-called Associated Free State.

II. The Associated Free State

The reforms of the colonial regime are the result of two factors: 1) the persistent struggle for independence of vanguard sectors of the Puerto Rican people, crowned at times by heroic actions, and 2) the process of abolition of world colonialism which began after World War II. Faced with the inevitable need for change, Yankee imperialism thought that colonial liberalism would be the most effective means of perpetuating its colonial control over Puerto Rico.

In spite of the 1950 reforms, the real political situation hasn't changed. The Senate and House Committees which took part in the writing of the 600 Law, upon recommending its approval to Congress, made the following statement:

The operation of the Law for Federal Relations with Puerto Rico and the exercise of federal authority in Puerto Rico have not been reduced in any way by the Constitution of Puerto Rico and that Constitution will not be affected by any future amendments to or by any Puerto Rican law that could conflict with the Law for Federal Relations with Puerto Rico, or by order of the Constitution of Puerto Rico, as expressed in the 600 Public Law, or by the Constitution of the United States, or by laws of the United States that could be applied locally; for they will be null and without effect.

The 600 Law was submitted to a referendum, which offered the people no other choice but to accept the amendments to the colonial regime or to continue under the colonial regime without the amendments. Although an extraordinary number abstained, the majority chose the amendments, which conceded the Governor power to name all the executive and judicial functionaries.

Evidently, the Government of the United States was interested in legitimizing the Associated Free State, and, because of this, in 1953 it informed the United Nations of this so-called change. On November 27, 1953, the UN, through its General Assembly, approved a resolution that excused Washington from its obligation to inform the UN about Puerto Rico, accepting the word of the US delegation that Puerto Rico had "effectively exercised its right to free determination," that "it had been invested with the attributes of political sovereignty" by means of an "association

established by common agreement," and had gained a "new constitutional status."

III. Appearance and Reality

According to the Law for Federal Relations with Puerto Rico, all laws of the United States "have the same effect and validity in Puerto Rico as in the United States," with the exception of those that would be "locally inapplicable." These words are the same as those found in the first (Foraker) and second (Jones) Organic Laws, and they reveal the classic colonial character of the regime in power in Puerto Rico.

The United States Government regulates and controls all political, economic, and social activity of the Puerto Rican people. Congress exercises exclusive jurisdiction over foreign relations, nationality and citizenship, emigration and immigration, the armed forces, military recruitment, customs, transportation, money, mail, radio and television, bankruptcy proceedings, patents, quarantine laws, and finally, the administration of justice.

The authority of Congress is so unrestricted that it even reigns over agricultural production. A federal law decides how many *cuerdas*¹ of land can be used for cultivating sugar cane, what proportion of the sugar production can be refined, and what quantity can be exported. Federal agencies created by Congress dictate rules concerning all kinds of industrial and commercial activities. Also Congress decides which youths are subject to the draft and Puerto Rico's participation in every kind of war, declared or not, which might be waged by the United States.

Federal agencies control customs, with power to prohibit, according to their own criteria, the entry into Puerto Rico of any kind of product including books, magazines, and newspapers. They also regulate air and sea transportation and establish the freightage. Radio and television stations cannot be set up without their authorization.

The commerce of Puerto Rico is subject to US trade laws and everything that is exported or imported must go in US ships.

A Federal Court operates in Puerto Rico. Its judges and officials are named by the President of the United States and its procedures are carried out exclusively in English.

There are certain areas in which the Puerto Rican and United States Governments can act interchangeably. These are known as areas of concurrent jurisdiction, and have to do with worker-employer relations, hours of work and minimum wages, forced expropriation, monopolies, agricultural production, land transport, railways, forests, mines, and judicial administration.

The concurrence of jurisdiction ceases, however, as soon as conflicts arise between the two, and, when that happens, federal jurisdiction has preeminence. An example of this is the Federal Labor Relations Law, known as the Taft-Hartley Law. Although

¹ One *cuerda* is equivalent to 3.929 m². (Ed. note)

there is a Puerto Rican law covering this matter it is the federal law that governs the more important commercial and industrial activities. For all the practical effect it has, with few exceptions, it is as though the Puerto Rican law didn't exist.

The power of forced expropriation is exercised by both governments. The United States Government has resorted to this power many times when it has wanted to appropriate great expanses of land for military purposes. On lands once owned by Puerto Rican landlords, it has established air and naval military bases, worldwide radio stations, radar centers and other means of electronic espionage. As a result it has deprived the Puerto Rican people of more than 110 000 **cuerdas** of land, or around 13% of the cultivable land.

In regard to monopolies and other areas of concurrent jurisdiction, the power of the colonial government is limited by norms outlined by Congress, which include, naturally, the power of veto, exercised directly or indirectly.

The administration of justice is shared by both governments, but the sentence of any Puerto Rican by the Federal Court is doubly cruel. In addition to being judged in a language that is not his own, under laws which he, as a citizen, has not taken part in, he is forced to serve his term in federal prisons in the United States, where his family and friends can't possibly visit him.

The concurrence of jurisdiction is in a certain sense a myth, since in the end all sentences of the Puerto Rican courts are appealable, including decisions of the Supreme Court, which can be appealed to the United States Supreme Court. However, this procedure is so costly that only very wealthy individuals and business corporations can see it through. This, clearly, guarantees the interests of Yankee imperialism in Puerto Rico.

IV. A Military Fortress

The United States has transformed Puerto Rico into the most important strategic military base outside its territory and a training center for mercenaries, espionage, and all other types of special services. Armed expeditions to Guatemala, Cuba, and Santo Domingo have departed from here, and on one occasion paratroopers were concentrated for an attack on Venezuela that never materialized. In short: Puerto Rico is the counterrevolutionary base of Yankee imperialism in America.

The US Naval Command of the Caribbean and the Antilles is located in the extreme eastern part of the island at the Ensenada Honda Base, also known as Roosevelt Road. It is an atomic submarine and guided missiles base, and includes installations for nuclear missile aircraft.

In front of Ensenada Honda is Vieques Island, where US Armed Forces have seized 24 000 of the 27 000 **cuerdas** of the island, depriving the 12 000 inhabitants of their main livelihood and forc-

ing many to emigrate. On the island and its adjacent waters, the Navy carries out extensive maneuvers every year.

The Strategic Air Command of the United States is found in Punta Borinquen, in northeast Puerto Rico, at Ramey Base, which is considered the largest air base in the hemisphere. There bombers armed with atomic bombs maintain a permanent air guard.

A radar base and a training camp for the National Guard and Reserve units operate on the south coast, where there is also another training camp known as Fort Allen.

On Isla Grande, in front of San Juan Bay, the General Quarters of the Tenth Naval District are found. Fort Brooke, the center for military recruitment, is in Old San Juan in the ancient fortress of El Morro, and close to it is Camp Buchanan, the troop transport center.

The forest reserve of Luquillo is used periodically as a training center by the special forces in antiguerrilla warfare (Green Berets). A swarm of radar stations is also maintained there.

The National Guard has permanent quarters in every city and important town.

Also, training camps for the so-called Peace Corps and other similar organizations are operated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), some totally secret, others poorly disguised. A powerful radio station, supervised by the CIA, which transmits and collects information from all over Latin America is located in the southeastern part of the island. On the northern coast there are various satellite tracking stations, and communications and electronic espionage installations.

The entire range of US agencies dedicated to intelligence, counterintelligence, espionage, and repression — especially the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)— can be found in Puerto Rico. The first acts more or less openly, one of its principal duties being the persecution of the independence fighters. For this it uses personal pressure, coercion, and threats, permanently conspiring to isolate the patriots from the community, from their parents, friends, and neighbors. The second carries out a surreptitious role of provocation, subsidizes enemy groups, introduces spies and agents provocateurs, sends anonymous letters, and, in extreme cases, will even resort to murder.

Puerto Rico is one of the most densely populated countries of the world, and because of its small size the inhabitants would have almost no protection in the event of an atomic war. Nevertheless, the United States refused to subscribe to the Treaty of Mexico, which prohibits nuclear arms in Latin America. Although it did not oppose the inclusion of Panama and Guantánamo, it absolutely refused to agree to the prohibition of thermonuclear armament in Puerto Rico. This is conclusive proof of the im-

portant part Puerto Rico plays in the war plans of the United States.

V. New Attempts at Reform

In 1959 the Puerto Rican Legislature approved a Joint Resolution petitioning the Congress of the United States for a series of amendments to the Law for Federal Relations with Puerto Rico. These consisted of:

- 1) That the Associated Free State have the power to decide whether or not it would join the commercial treaties entered into by the United States;
- 2) That it be permitted to gradually assume certain functions that the Federal Government exercises through its agencies;
- 3) That appeals go directly to the US Supreme Court without having to pass through any intermediary courts; and
- 4) That the restrictions to the loan absorption capacity of Puerto Rico be eliminated.

These timid demands, which were reduced even further as they were translated into a proposed law, were opposed by every department of the Federal Government (Defense, Interior, Agriculture, etc.) in the course of the legislative procedure. In the end, only two insignificant concessions were made: direct appeal to the US Supreme Court and increasing the loan limit to fifteen percent of the national income.

In 1960, at the initiative of the Soviet Union, the UN General Assembly approved the historic Resolution 1514 (XV) which concedes independence to colonized countries and peoples. To implement this proposal a Special Committee on Decolonization was created, known later as the Committee of 24, being composed of that number of countries.

The Movimiento Pro Independencia (Pro-Independence Movement) made use of this new situation to initiate an intensive international campaign for the independence of Puerto Rico. In addition to persistent conversations with UN delegations, it took part in numerous international conferences and congresses. All this culminated in the Conference of Chiefs of State of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in Cairo in 1962, which approved a resolution entreating the Committee of 24 to discuss the case of Puerto Rico. Before that the Cuban Revolution had given the Puerto Rican people unyielding and untiring support for their cause in the different bodies of the UN and in its General Assembly.

All this provoked an exchange of letters between the Governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Muñoz Marín, and the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, initiating a new attempt at reform in the colonial regime, and motivating an intense debate. An almost unanimous conviction prevailed that the indispensable factor in any reform of the Associated Free State was sovereignty. And responding to this criteria, on December 3, 1962, the Legislature approved a Resolution petitioning the Congress of the United

States to consent to a plebiscite to determine once and for all the political status of Puerto Rico on the basis of recognition and affirmation of the sovereignty of its people.

That petition was partially incorporated into a bill. But in the end, the Congress of the United States limited itself to approving a law setting up a Commission of 13 members, the majority from the United States, to Study the Status of Puerto Rico.

The Commission operated for two years, completing its work on July 25, 1966. Its Conclusions and Recommendations proposed that the Legislature of Puerto Rico, and not the Congress of the United States, should arrange the holding of a plebiscite on the question of status. The decision, naturally, did not absolutely obligate the Congress, and the plebiscite became a mere contest of sympathies with an extraordinary number of abstentions.

This is the present situation in Puerto Rico regarding the political and military domination by the United States.

Chapter VI

The End of the Colonial Period

I. Confronting Assimilation

The colonial period has no defenders in Puerto Rico; it is indefensible theoretically. Not even the most shameless agents of imperialism try to defend it, although they secretly help to carry it out.

Colonialism, until recently, had its defenders, just as slavery, which lasted until it became economically inefficient and socially unacceptable. The colonial system follows a similar process in our times. No one in the world today disputes that, as a system, it is condemned to disappear.

This doesn't mean, however, that some of its vestiges will not last, and even many of its worst characteristics.

But in any case, it will not be the same thing as before, at least in its formal aspects. An example of what we mean exists now: it is the new phenomenon known as neocolonialism.

Because colonialism will be inevitably abolished there is a need to find a solution to the problem of Puerto Rico. There are three possibilities: assimilation of the colony by the metropolis, independence of the colony, and autonomy.

Assimilation in the form of a "federated state" is preached as a culmination of the "manifest destiny theory," carried out by the United States in order to impose its dominion in the Caribbean. Since Puerto Rico was won as a prize of war it should accept that as a geographic or economic decree, or by the will of the gods, its fate is sealed. To reach such a decision the will of the people must be given the least value, and yet what is at stake is the survival of the Puerto Rican nationality!

No country aspires to commit suicide, but there can be forces

that push it toward its death. It is evident that such forces, by the very objective they pursue, are foreign to that nation.

The relations between the peoples of the world are still relationships of force. International law, diplomacy, treaties between states, are dictated by the balance of power. But it isn't a static and unchangeable situation; on the contrary, the power relationships in the world are in constant evolution — more precipitous than ever before in history. Unquestionably, in the case of the United States and Puerto Rico, there exists a great inequality of forces. But there are also factors that counteract assimilation, among which the following are worth pointing out:

1) **Nationality:** The number of inhabitants of Puerto Rico, which now approaches three million, plus the differences of language and culture, represent insurmountable barriers for a nation like the United States, which is not multinational. The sharpening of the racial problem of the large Afro-American population raises new doubts about the wisdom of trying to impose total assimilation on Puerto Rico.

2) **Economy:** Industrial development, fostered by imperialism, has taken place on the basis of exemption from federal taxes and salary differentials. In addition to that, the new petroleum industry is built on the basis of special quotas of imported petroleum. Such concessions are foreign to the principles of equality that exist between federated states. Added to this is the fact that Puerto Rico is a much poorer territory than the poorest of the states, and will be considered a burden from the fiscal point of view.

3) **Representation:** Given its population and under the hypothetical conditions of a "federated state," Puerto Rico would have greater representation in the House of Representatives than almost half of the other states. The scant population of Hawaii and Alaska didn't give rise to this problem. It is, therefore, extremely doubtful, not to say impossible, that those who propose the suicidal idea of statehood can some day obtain the support of the majority of the House of Representatives of the United States.

4) **International Ties:** It is not a matter of a country lost in the midst of the ocean, with a population in the process of disappearing, as was the case with Hawaii. Puerto Rico is a nationality hundreds of years old, and by origin and historical ties belongs to one of the great families of peoples of the world — the Latin-American family of nations.

5) **World Situation:** The opinion of mankind, as expressed in the basic resolutions of the United Nations, does not coincide with the assimilation of Puerto Rico into the United States. On the contrary, it tends to fortify the principles of sovereignty and independence, and proclaims them as attributes of all nationalities, large or small.

The recognition of such factors is what forces the most outstanding exponents of state annexation to postpone its carrying out to an indeterminate future. Demagogically they speak of twenty years, thirty years, or the year 2000. But whatever term they set, history has shown that in order for the Congress of the United States to declare Puerto Rico a "federated state," the island would have to have a predominantly Anglo-Saxon population, if not by origin, by adoption and, what is still more decisive, this Anglo-Saxon population would have to have the power over the economy, the politics, and society in general. Such prerequisites imply genocide.

II. The Intermediate Alternative

The impossibility of assimilation and the fear of the inevitability of independence has given rise to a third alternative: autonomy. But this intermediate way out is also impossible.

Constitutionally the United States was not designed to form that kind of confederation of autonomous regions that marked the evolution of the British Empire to the present British Commonwealth of Nations. The United States cannot alter the equilibrium of its constitutional system to invent a specific formula for Puerto Rico.

The development of the present regime within the limited areas of autonomy has reached the maximum point to which it can go (which isn't much of course) without taking one or the other position: the total assimilation as a "federated state" or independence. This is because, with the so-called Associated Free State, they have placed in the hands of the Puerto Ricans functions which ordinarily the governments of federated states perform, or which are ordinarily in the hands of the government of a republic in the case of independence. But, from here on, any additional function given to the people of Puerto Rico would mean an orientation toward independence, since the functions which could be transferred are not those exercised by the federated states in the United States.

The proponents of state annexation understand this very well, and that is why they oppose all kinds of actions tending to confer greater powers to the Government of Puerto Rico. And that is also why Washington is reluctant to accept the theory of the so-called "growth" of the Associated Free State. Which leads to the conclusion that this can't be the solution for US neocolonialism regarding the problem of ending the classic colonial period in Puerto Rico.

The United States counts on its own mechanisms and institutions to exercise the neocolonial domination that it maintains in a great part of the world, especially in Latin America. Its mode of operation is manifested through its embassies; the so-called defense pacts, such as NATO and SEATO; and the international banking and financial institutions. In the specific case of the

Western Hemisphere, it has in addition the Organization of American States (OAS), which acts as a branch of the State Department. When the United States sees that it is urgent to solve the colonial problem in Puerto Rico, it will do so through the mechanisms it has already instituted for its neocolonial domination.

III. The Inevitability of Independence

The United States maintains its dominion in Puerto Rico using the present colonial structure of relations, because through it it obtains extraordinary benefits. These benefits are of four types:

1) Its capital investment in industry, commerce, financial businesses, etc., produces profits way over the predominant levels in the United States.

2) Also, Puerto Rico constitutes for the United States a monopoly market which is second in its size in the hemisphere and fifth in the world.

3) Puerto Rico, furthermore, is a first-class naval, air, and military base for the United States, a center for training and war maneuvers, and its principal point of support in the Caribbean.

4) Finally, Puerto Rico is used by the United States as a base for a counterrevolutionary front against the Cuban Revolution and to maintain and extend its dominion in Latin America.

As long as the colonial regime produces huge benefits, the United States will maintain this condition in Puerto Rico. And inversely: the reduction of such benefits would create the possibility of a new relationship.

International experience proves this thesis. The imperialist powers withdraw from their colonies when the economic, military, and political disadvantages surpass the benefits and threaten to grow beyond control. There are no important exceptions. In spite of Puerto Rico's peculiarities, this thesis is operative there, just as it has been all over the entire world.

Puerto Rico can reduce the benefits of that colonial domination in two ways: nationally, through the resistance and struggle of the people, and internationally, by means of its allies in the anti-imperialist struggle.

Of course, the internal struggle is decisive in Puerto Rico. Great mobilizations are brought about under the call for independence. But general slogans are not enough; it is necessary to carry out concrete campaigns that strike hard at imperialism in its monopolistic businesses. That is why the struggle waged by the unions based on the slogan: equal pay for equal work, is so important. Other examples are the campaigns against mining concessions and the draft. But it is necessary to extend these campaigns and base them on the anti-imperialist struggle in general.

Parallel to this struggle, international support and solidarity with the independence cause must be procured. The defeat of the

United States' imperialist policy in Latin America is of special importance. The future of Puerto Rico is linked to the triumph of the national liberation revolution in Latin America and of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The realization of independence will result due to a crisis in the colonial period and the resulting sovereignty will be more real the more profound the crisis. If the crisis goes deep enough to shake the imperialist structure at its roots, independence will be accompanied by social transformation. If, on the contrary, the crisis only affects the juridical framework on which the present colonial regime is based, then the United States would be able to ward it off with the mere recognition of formal independence, salvaging its established interests in the country.

The growth of the crisis and its dimension will depend on many internal and external factors. To these must be added the factor of consciousness represented by the militants of the vanguard, which in a given moment can decisively influence the development and deepening of the crisis.

Whatever will be the outcome, the experience of three quarters of a century of US domination dictates these two conclusions:

1) No event less than a crisis of the colonial system will be able to produce Puerto Rican independence, either formally or really, and

2) Once the crisis of the colonial system occurs, the United States will have no other way out than to recognize the independence of Puerto Rico, its degree of sovereignty depending on the relationship that exists at that moment between the imperialist and anti-imperialist forces.

IV. Illusions and False Suppositions

Traditionally, the Puerto Rican independence struggle has been fought on two fronts: as reformist movements for independence, reduced at times to demands for plain autonomy, which have been represented in their diverse variations by Muñoz Rivera, De Diego, and Concepción de Gracia; and revolutionary nationalism as put forth by Albizu Campos, who devoted himself to fight imperialist domination head-on in a heroic although unequal armed struggle, while the others tried to side-step open conflict, hoping to convince Washington that it was in its interest to concede independence or, if not, a broad autonomous regime.

This reformist solution is based on two fallacies: that elections are the expression of the sentiments of the people (in respect to the political status they desire) and that the Government of the United States is obliged to take their results into account and, respecting the supposed will of the majority, design the political future for Puerto Rico in accord with this decision. Nothing is further from the truth.

The elections do no more than provide for the selection of colonial functionaries. They constitute, every four years, a simple

accident in the life of the country. They have always been a political carnival and nothing else can be expected under colonial conditions. In recent times they have degenerated to the point of becoming simply a debate among publicity agencies, who are interested only in the millions of dollars that are split among the newspapers, radio, and television.

The slight influence their results have had in Washington on the policy toward Puerto Rico can be demonstrated by the historic electoral landslide of the Unionist Party in the time of Muñoz Rivera. Much more recently, this was demonstrated by the repeated attempts through diverse congressional projects, under the leadership of Muñoz Marín, to add additional powers, of a simple reformist character, to the Associated Free State.

It is clear that the theory of "supplication," the "in peace and harmony" maneuver, the supposed "convenience" of the United States to give greater liberties to Puerto Rico, and the concession of independence, "if the Puerto Ricans are in agreement and ask for it," are totally false. Whoever still at this stage cultivates these illusions either does it for political opportunism in order to ingratiate himself with Washington or is completely ignorant of the phenomenon of imperialism. Such illusions do not help the development of the independence struggle — on the contrary, they deviate it.

There are other kinds of illusions but these come from a different direction. The inequality of forces must be recognized and therefore it is necessary to discard the head-on struggle. One must guard oneself from becoming desperate and keep from doing individual acts. It does not mean that it isn't possible to face imperialism — on the contrary, confrontation is an indispensable part of the anti-imperialist struggle. But it must correspond to a plan, within the general strategy, and conform with the tactics that can be applied.

V. The Line of the Vanguard

One must not confuse the failure of a political party after a quarter of a century of government, with the failure of a colonial regime. Political parties come into public life and they disappear, as was the case with the Unionist Party, the Socialist-Republican Coalition, and is today the case of the Popular Democratic Party. The colonial regime remains. Without any basic changes, the newly initiated government is a simple succession of the one before. In the long run, Ferré is the political heir of Muñoz Marín, and his government is a type of "Muñozism" without Muñoz.

The fundamental task of the vanguard is to show that independence is desirable, necessary, and possible. This must be brought about, not only by proselytizing, but also, above all, by mass actions against the effects of the imperialist exploitation and domination.

The political reality of the people is as it is and not as those who

refuse to learn from history would want it to be. Imperialism is a tangible phenomenon that cannot be avoided, those who try to ignore it are deceiving themselves, and those who believe that they can deceive imperialism are doubly mistaken.

Imperialism exists, and nothing and no one can force it to change by appeals to love, peace, righteousness, and justice. The righteousness that backs the cause of the people, the justice of their claim, and the love and peace that they seek can be helpful only when they are backed by force. In the case of Puerto Rico, it is battling in an unequal contest, confronting the most powerful capitalist country on the earth. But it doesn't help the cause of the Puerto Ricans to accept the rules of the game set up by imperialism, to fall into the temptation of fighting in its field of operations, or to answer to abusive and provocative insults used only to cause the militants to fight at an absolute disadvantage. On the contrary, the vanguard has to confront imperialism, which is the source and the power of colonialism in Puerto Rico, on the basis of the vanguard's rules of the game, in chosen moments and places, using the arms most suitable to the cause, at every level or degree and on multiple fronts. This will bring the end to the colonial period and will lead to the independence of Puerto Rico and, subsequently, to its national liberation.

Chapter X

Questions of Organization

I. The Concept of the Vanguard

Organization puts theory into practice. It is the job of the political leadership to show the direction in light of the realities of the country. Interpretations are worth little or nothing, even if they have theoretical value, if the direction that arises from them isn't translated into action. This is the purpose of organizational policy: to transform political thought into social fact.

The Pro-Independence Movement is based on the concept that the vanguard is the determinant factor in the struggle. This implies that it is a part of a totality: the Puerto Rican people. It does not try to group all of the people, it aspires only to organize the most advanced part of the people. Therefore, only the most conscious and politically developed individuals in Puerto Rico should join the MPI.

The vanguard is built around not a leader but an idea, or, better, a concept. In our case, the concept of independence that the movement itself elaborates, using as sources the historical experience of the country and of those who have fought and are fighting for their national liberation, and the Marxist theory that pervades the richest revolutionary experience of our time.

The concept of a vanguard discards the simplistic idea of the leader as a messianic messenger, putting the role of the leader,

and of leaders in general, in its proper place. Free of those anarchistic and old-fashioned attacks against leadership, the vanguard clearly and firmly states that every struggle requires leadership. It also recognizes that within a body of leaders some would be more outstanding than others, depending on the circumstances. But the main determinant is the following: leaders are exponents of the deepest feelings and the greatest aspirations of their people, and are the more outstanding the more their actions correspond to historical development.

This new concept of leadership is tied to the conviction that independence will result when the struggle of the vanguard is joined to the people. It is foolish to imagine it otherwise. Multiple factors determine the (close or distant, easy or difficult) realization of independence: some are international, others are peculiar to the sphere within the US and still others, undoubtedly the most decisive, emerge from the internal conditions of the country. Whatever the circumstances may be, Puerto Rican independence will not be conceded graciously by imperialism, and this is why the organizational policy of the MPI has to be based on the principle of a persistent and continuing struggle.

II. Characteristics and Principles

The organization forms and methods of work must be in accordance with the principles of struggle, and this is why there are three characteristics that define the organization of the MPI: 1) it is a membership organization, 2) it is a grouping of committees, and 3) it is a work center.

To be part of the MPI one only has to meet the requisites of its Bylaws, which are: to accept the concept of independence and to contribute to the extent of one's capabilities to the struggle for national liberation. Every member, once admitted, is part of the organization. But it isn't a matter of a simple membership organization. These members must be grouped into committees, from the highest leadership to the base. These committees are defined as work centers — that is, each one of them, at every level of the organization, acts within a determined sphere and has different tasks to complete.

The structure of the MPI is based on five principles that direct the life of the committees and the members. They are:

1) **Democratic Centralism:** Struggle requires a centralized leadership which can group forces together and direct them toward the same goal, giving unity to the different actions of individuals and groups. This common will can only succeed by comparing the diverse opinions and propositions and then adopting agreements that are binding on everyone. This common will, achieved through discussion, fully and certainly expresses the objective needs of the struggle. This is why, in practice, democratic centralism means:

a) the elective character of all the leading bodies, from top to bottom, and that periodic reports from the leadership to the base

must be given;

b) that the committees at the base must give periodic reports to the leading bodies;

c) the subordination of the minority to the majority; and

d) the carrying out of the decisions put forth by the leading bodies by the lower committees.

2) **Collective Action:** Individual efforts are multiplied in geometrical progression when they are united behind a single goal. The work of a group produces more than the arithmetical sum of its individual production. Therefore a truly revolutionary struggle requires joint action, or rather collective work.

3) **Organizational Discipline:** All collective work requires a certain amount of discipline. Rational discipline is indispensable in a revolutionary organization, and one cannot behave collectively in any other way.

4) **Review of Decisions:** Plans that can't be put into practice are worth nothing. If decisions are not followed by the study of their application, the committees become demoralized. Therefore it is necessary to maintain a strict watch over those decisions, which should be realistic and totally capable of being carried out. The seriousness of a revolutionary organization rests on this principle.

5) **Criticism and Self-Criticism:** One learns from one's own errors. To err is human, as has been said from the beginning of time, and the intelligent thing to do is to correct these errors. The worst thing is to continue making the same error. The quickest and most effective way to keep from making an individual or collective error is through criticism. And criticism should always be combined with self-criticism, because nothing helps self-development more than to examine oneself critically and have the courage to recognize one's errors.

III. Organizational Policy

The organization of the MPI is a swarm of cells whose forms and work relations can vary, but always following the same general scheme. The changes that are adopted are determined by circumstances and by a correct interpretation of experiences. The organization is geared to the principle that the basic unit is the work center.

Within a determined area, the Central Missions and the Patriotic Missions which belong to them coordinate and carry out appropriate actions under their own leadership.

The national leadership, elected by the National Assembly, is rooted in a representative organism: the National Mission. This Mission distributes its principal tasks among three permanent commissions: the Political Commission, the Organizational Commission, and the Financial Commission. These commissions carry out their work in coordination and in harmony with the different Secretariats that are also designated by the National Mission.

The role of the Political Commission is to elaborate the line of action which is to be carried out from day to day, basing it on the concept of independence, and the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the National Mission.

The function of the Organizational Commission is to put the political line which has been elaborated into action, and at the same time, together with the Financial Commission, to direct the administrative and routine work.

The organizational policy, which is applied through this structure, is based on the following general principles:

1) **Policy of Concentration:** The organization must not be erratic or improvised — on the contrary, it must be planned with perfectly defined objectives at all times. It should be concentrated and applied systematically. This is why organizational policy is defined as a policy of concentration.

2) **Division of the Country:** The geographical and political divisions that have been accepted traditionally do not always agree with the policy of a revolutionary organization. Furthermore, the changes that take place in a country usually make such divisions obsolete. Therefore, for organizational purposes it is necessary to divide the country into regions or zones that possibly have nothing to do with the existing divisions. The determining factor should be the principal means of production in that area, and not the geographic or political lines of cities and senatorial districts. In general terms, the country should be divided into: the Metropolitan area of the Capital, cities with dense population, industrial zones, and agricultural zones.

3) **Campaigns:** At the same time areas are concentrated campaigns should also be concentrated. The virtue of this principle consists in that it identifies the independence struggle with the concrete questions of the moment, helps to break routine and stagnation, and gives urgency and drama to the movement. The selection of the theme, as well as the extension of the campaigns, is a matter to be decided politically. But its execution is an organizational task. As in other aspects of organizational policy, an order of priorities should be followed.

4) **Classification of Members:** The circumstances of the struggle and the political objectives determine the forms of organization, and because of this, two levels of membership are established: the first level is open, while the second level is closed. The first level, whose norms and conditions are fixed by the national leadership, is made up by the **militants**, who carry the major burden of daily activity, and the **affiliates**, who collaborate and contribute to a lesser degree. The second level is composed of individuals who are not identified as members, but who serve the cause of independence in different forms or who constitute a reserve. The existence of these different levels or categories enables the MPI to extend its influence beyond the limits of its organization

and through the number of fronts the struggle for independence requires.

5) **Fronts of Struggle:** The very concept of a vanguard implies that independence can't be carried out by one particular organization. Not all the sentiment and militancy for independence, in their diverse manifestations, fit into a single mold. The struggle for independence has to be carried out by a number of organizations. The necessities of the struggle and the level of development reached will determine the way and the means. It has to be so, because a nation is a complex entity, composed of different social classes and sectors of the population. The approach has to vary according to the circumstances, and the interests and political level of the different sectors and classes. With this in mind, the MPI has made as part of its policy the promotion of groups with a specific goal and who struggle not against all of the aspects of imperialism but only against one, as is the case of the campaign against the draft. This type of unifying action, founded on a broad organization, is also effective in the case of certain national campaigns. Now in a more permanent form, and following the same principles, the MPI is promoting the organization of youth, students, and women. These sectors, naturally, require particular forms of organization. A well-elaborated plan would take into account these different fronts and, with a proper order of priorities, would distribute its militant cadres in the most effective manner.

6) **The Militant Cadres:** A vanguard organization is based on its militant cadres. The cadres are not simple gears of the structure, but rather conscious agents of struggle. The constant promotion of cadres to responsible positions is the cornerstone of the policy of the organization. But promotion is not simply determined by activity and dedication. It must be accompanied by ideological self-improvement. This requires — and it is the first responsibility of the national leadership — a continuing and effective program of political education.

IV. Evolution of the MPI

The position of vanguard is not reached by anyone's designation, and even less by self-nomination — only the masses can confer that recognition. The only way to win the title of vanguard is to obtain the leadership in the great popular struggles against imperialism.

The MPI has had three more or less definite stages in its progress:

The first period, in which it was conceived of as a broad united front;

The second period, in which it was defined as a patriotic vanguard; and

The third period, in which it became conscious of the need to evolve toward a revolutionary vanguard.

It is not a simple evolution founded on mere organizational structures. Each period corresponds to a distinct ideological level.

The MPI is still far from being the revolutionary vanguard that the fight against imperialism demands, but it is definitely on the road toward this end. There are still some gaps between its theory and its organizational practice, gaps which arise from the remnants of old customs and past atavisms. But all this recedes before the onslaught of the positive experiences which have given a deeper meaning and a broader dimension to the national liberation struggle of Puerto Rico.

This situation requires that the members of the MPI, especially the militants and affiliates, keep constantly reeducating themselves politically. Dogmatism and sectarianism can stop the development of an organization. And the organization that becomes stagnant and doesn't renew itself, no matter how high its objectives, is condemned to death.

It is necessary to protect the unity of the vanguard as life itself. This unity must also exist in its work committees, whose functions must not be doubled. By its very nature, a revolutionary organization rests on ideological and organizational unity. The ability to strengthen these two basic pillars, at all times and under all circumstances, is the highest proof of political capability.

V. Bonds with the People

There are numerous tasks to carry out and work fronts to cover. The independence struggle has to manifest itself, in some manner, level, or form, in the working class, among the peasants, the intellectuals, professionals, merchants, and manufacturers. It has to manifest itself among the students and youth in general, from where the greatest contributions can be expected. Independence activity, in the most imaginative expressions, has to be felt in work, study, and recreation centers. All of which shows the need to develop the great number of militant cadres that the new struggle for independence requires.

This new type of leader, a truly new man, spiritually liberated from the entire colonial complex, a nationalist in the deepest sense of the word, and at the same time an internationalist in the broadest sense of the word, has to be, above all, an organizer of the people. The best organizer is not the one who produces the most individual work, but rather he who is best able to stimulate others and to direct them in collective work. Ready to carry out any type of work, the most necessary at that moment, he understands that the struggle requires specialization. Faced with the complexity of modern problems, the anti-imperialist independence struggle needs specialized organizers, educators, propagandists, etc. These professional revolutionaries constitute the nucleus of the militant cadres of the vanguard, the nerves and marrow of the organization. The great objective of political education is to prepare more and better cadres; and creating stronger ties between the vanguard and the people, especially with the working class, is the key to organization.