

# FROM THE PODIUM

## ON ARMED STRUGGLE AND UNITY

Comrades, representatives of fraternal organizations and invited speakers:

We take this opportunity to put forth political positions and propositions of our organization, the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional (M.L.N.), which I have the great pleasure of representing here as coordinator of the eastern region of the Federated States of North America (erroneously named the United States). I have two themes, which are themes of great importance at this time—armed struggle and the question of unity.

### ON ARMED STRUGGLE

The theme of armed struggle is one of the most discussed and least understood in the Puerto Rican political atmosphere, misunderstood because of the lack of practical experience we have in the present epoch; and misunderstood because of the confusion, at times purposeful, with which the armed actions of the patriotic Puerto Rican forces have been covered up. However, thanks to the insistence of the Liga Socialista Puertorriquena on this theme, and the writings and discussions of its Secretary-General, Juan Antonio Corretjer, armed

struggle is at last a theme of general discussion in Puerto Rico.

The discussion is certainly very healthy. It revolves around the centrality of this form of struggle in the independentist contest for definitive national liberation, and concerning its character, primary or secondary to the organizations of masses, or the equitable contribution of armed struggle and mass struggle. The majority of those in the discussion, even when they have never put the theory of armed struggle into practice, have in fact learned as part of observing the process, as much in Puerto Rico, as on an international level; and using the science of Marxism-Leninism as a leverage have expressed themselves concerning the current stage, the reaction of the peripheral sector to this form of struggle and the popular expressions concerning its impact on the masses.

As always, things are colored by the light in which they are seen—some offer as a consequence of the analysis, the absolute necessity of the proper construction of the Party. They see armed struggle in the current stage as a dangerous obstacle that threatens to unchain a repression for which they have not prepared themselves. Others believe that they already have the

Party, and they oppose armed struggle at the present as a hindrance to the mobilization of the masses of the Puerto Rican people, and to their own political program.

We, the MLN, and the LSP, put forward that the Party (and clearly we are referring to the party which is going to lead the struggle for independence and socialism) is being forged in clandestinity, in the bosom of the clandestine politico-military organizations, and that it will surge forward to the surface when conditions are appropriate. We say that we know much more about what takes place in legality than that which is taking place in clandestinity, which, even with the inevitable losses, remains much further from the eyes and ears of the repressive agencies than all of this Puerto Rican political legality. We can also say that when clandestinity is attacked, none of its detractors have any notion of what they are saying—not on the practical level, nor on the level of knowing the organizations they are denouncing.

At the general theoretical level, however, we all have a series of points of coincidence that are worthwhile to point out, without

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having illusions that we will soon be able to reach an agreement concerning common practice. Both the clandestine (and therefore politico-military) organizations and the legal organizations renounce "focoism," the position that a very few, by the military road, can create the conditions whereby the entire people are aroused into a struggle against the empire that colonizes us. We all agree in a serious rejection of "militarism" that tends to see everything in terms of armed struggles exclusively.

We agree on the combination of armed struggle with the struggle to organize, to give political direction and leadership to the struggle of the Puerto Rican masses. It is the combination of these factors which we call protracted peoples war. We do not agree with the insistence of the legalists on postponing the armed struggle for an indeterminate future. While they emphasize legal work, we emphasize the creation and development of military cadres, who can acquire experience in practice and are developing the nucleus of military leadership. We emphasize equally political work with a view towards popularizing armed struggle, organizing the most conscious sectors of our proletariat, students and patriotic professionals to defend and advance the struggle for our national liberation—a struggle which to us, is for independence and socialism, and for nothing less than independence and socialism.

All of our study of guerrilla action indicates (if we read and study their writings carefully) that in independentist thought there is no sector more anti-sectarian, with a politics more popular and unifying, than the clandestine organizations. This is why even when diversity, sectarianism, and the malign influence of sectarian and hegemonic blocs at the international level influence Puerto Rican patriotism as much as they divide it, the clandestine groups function in a unified form and content. There is Sabana Seca, there are the synchronized attacks on targets in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, with

the first Joint Communique to the People on September 23, 1979, and here is the whole process of unity that will bring clandestinity to forge one single political military organization in the near future.

Meanwhile, clandestine unity grows, and we have a slogan which reflects this: "Se dare la Patria Unida, en la Lucha Clandestina." ("The unified homeland will be obtained through the Clandestine Struggle." While unity grows among the Puerto Rican political-military organizations, the legalistic groups find themselves not only divided, but in the process of more division and more disintegration. What is happening?

Legality itself is our own worst enemy. Our whole history cries out to us that yanki imperialism has manipulated legalism. It manipulated the Republicans and Federalists of statehood from 1899 to 1900, making them believe that votes would bring them statehood, and when they were ready, imperialism gave them a blow of permanent colonialism in the Foraker Act, ratified by the imperialist Congress on April 12, 1900.

The electoral forces realigned themselves within the Puerto Rican Unionist Party and on Feb. 19, 1904, initiated the legalist electoral process for Puerto Rico's independence, which brought this party a massive triumph, and put it in power from 1904 until 1912 with a radical demand for independence. The result—in 1917, imperialism imposed Yanki citizenship against our popular will and as a form of accentuating colonialism. It was worth nothing that the Unionist Party won, alone or in alliance, all the elections until 1936, because the yankis never granted anything.

Henceforth the Nationalist Party is founded, which then on May 11, 1930, was taken from the hands of the legalists by Pedro Albizu Campos and the nationalist youth in order to transform it into a revolutionary and anti-electoral party.

In all the countries of the world, legalism and revolution have been currents in contention. This was so in the past and is so in the present.

Albizu said, and consecrated it in the Nationalist Platform of 1930, that the Party "will deal without pity with natives or foreigners who, with good or bad intentions, endeavor to guarantee the colonial regime, in whatever form it is presented to the country."

There are some who find Albizu guilty of narrow nationalism. But if there is indeed any necessity to convince anyone of what Corretjer said of Albizu in his defense—that Albizu was the greatest of all the anti-imperialists of his epoch in Latin America—let me cite the following:

"We will free the worker

immediately of the chieftans of disoriented workerism, of Yanki origin, which under the suggestive denomination of socialist, but without the definition of any politic, and who are therefore the most effective and skillful defenders of colonialism, who have carried the North American flag, under whose shadow is ruling this colonialism which has turned us into slaves to the North American industries and corporations."

I do not want to leave any doubts, comrades, about how revolutionary and anti-imperialist this position was—that we have to hit reformism hard no matter what disguise it may have at the moment. It is worth citing Lenin so that no doubt remains. In his work entitled "Against Revisionism," the great architect of workers' revolution says:

"The dialectic of history is such that the theoretical triumph of Marxism, internally rotten, tries to be reborn in the form of socialist opportunism. The period of preparing forces for the great battles is interpreted by them in the sense of renouncing these battles..."

Further along, Lenin says, "These people have been so corrupted and so brutalized by bourgeois legality that they cannot even understand the necessity of other illegal organizations to lead the revolutionary struggle."

I would say that there is a high degree of unity between Albizu and

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Lenin, more unity than exists between revisionism, so-called socialism and the revolutionary socialists.

All I have said is geared to emphasize why there exists such contradictions between legalists in Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican revolutionaries, and why they attack each other so much. We propose, just like Lenin and Albizu, that to denounce collaboration with our enemy, to denounce revisionism and the political "moguls" is not sectarianism, but a patriotic obligation. We would be failing in our patriotic duty if we did not fulfill our political mandate of opposing and speaking against the pacification of our people.

The reformists, for their part, speak to us of military deviation, of "broad fronts," of unity despite political and ideological differences. They present to us alternatives they say are patriotic. In the same breath, they present opposition to the armed struggle and the clandestine organizations. We say that this is all a great cynicism because since yesterday, many thousands of our workers passed to lumpenism for lack of work, and this is part of imperialist genocide. Cold and cynical is he, who contemplates armed struggle with theoretical disdain while the enemy sterilized our women and men, rendering a zero-birth rate in 17 villages of Puerto Rico in 1980, and closing birth control centers in some areas because there does not remain a single woman who has not been violated by sterilization.

No, comrades! We defend and advance the armed struggle, until it becomes the principal form of struggle. We will defeat every intention of underestimating the guerrillas. We will hit the manufacturers of lies hard, wherever they come from.

#### UNITY

On certain occasions the Movimiento de Liberacion (M.L.N.) has stated its position in regards to various calls for unity that have been made. Tonight we will analyze the present calls and offer our own

unity proposal in order to contribute to a dialogue which we feel is ultimately necessary.

The MLN is a revolutionary organization—not by self-proclamation but because the political content of our organization, its practice and experience define it as such. We were born in 1977 as a historical necessity to broaden support for the armed struggle which had taken a new turn after 1974 with the appearance of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (F.A.L.N.), and a year later with the emergence in Puerto Rico of an armed clandestine movement, which we also moved to defend.

As soon as we began the work, one third of our leadership was jailed by Federal Grand Juries in New York, Chicago and New Mexico, organized to repress the attempt to popularize the armed struggle. In the face of this enemy attack, we applied the Marxist-Leninist principle of "transforming defeat into victory," and that is what we did. A year later, when the 11 of us who were imprisoned came out of jail, we found that the organization had grown and had established itself firmly in those places where we had only one representative.

The repression however did not cease, as it has not ended yet. But neither has the struggle and the revolutionary determination to carry our strategy forward. Today, after four deaths, three disappearances, and eighteen prisoners, we can assure you with all objectivity and sincerity, that we are stronger than before on all levels, and better prepared to carry out the strategy that our organization began that June of 1977 when we met in Chicago to begin the task assigned to us of popularizing the armed struggle on a basis of the Marxist-Leninist political-military theory of prolonged armed struggle.

From the first moment we have rejected focoism, but we embraced the principle of the practice of armed nuclei as the only way to verify the methods and structures appropriate to the task. We commit ourselves to the proposition of

popular mobilization, understanding how long and difficult a process it will be. We will never underestimate the enemy forces and their allies who oppose us, not only our theory but also the very existence of our organization. We anticipate traps, penetration of trained agents, campaigns of bribery and campaigns of isolation. All of these have been used and continue to be used against the M.L.N., especially in New York City, where 80% of our Puerto Rican population resides.

We can say, with sober caution, but also with the highest pride, that today today we are the only organization in the entire Puerto Rican independence movement that is being persecuted to the death by imperialism. As the great thinkers of history have shown, the ones who are persecuted are those who truly represent a threat to the empire. Those who do nothing, those who play at reform, those who remain at home, those who do not deal with the people, have nothing to fear from the enemy.

Today the M.L.N. represents the political prisoners and prisoners of war, by virtue of their political principles and not because of tricks and manipulation. All those present who have had the opportunity to deal with us respect us for the consistency of our principles, ideology and practice.

I do not want to make you believe that we are perfect. There is no such thing, even less in an organization so young and with such limited resources. We lack technique in many areas. As diplomats we are very poor. We are behind in economic levels. We lack important contacts and support at the international level, in the quantity and quality a movement of this nature requires. We have committed many errors in practice, particularly in the practice of the clandestinity of structures.

However, our experience continues to accumulate and to be more disciplined. We believe that our ideas represent the future of our independence struggle, and that beyond the appearances of the moment we will

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arrive at the strategic goals set four years ago, at the founding of our organization. The struggle will be long and bloody.

I believe that having said this, you will accept the fact that we are capable of contributing something to the debate over patriotic unity:

These days unity is much discussed - socialist unity, independentist unity, broad unity of all the patriotic sectors, and there is even talk about unity of purpose, anti-annexationist unity and unity of coincidence.

The PIP speaks of unity with the annexationists of Romero Barcelo, and with the surrenderers of Hernandez Colon in order to resolve the evils that plague the people; among them, violence and criminality.

In earlier times violence was a question of the attacks against the independentists. No one protested. Today it is a question of the degeneration of the colonial structures, which generates a climate of social disorder in which no one (understand by this also the colonialists and the comprador bourgeoisie) feels secure. Every one is building prisons with bars in Puerto Rico. They are transforming their homes into prisons so robbers can not enter. The police can not cope with the state of disintegration. Now there are more than 700,000 Puerto Ricans who do not believe in the elections, and because of this it is said that the electoral system is in crisis.

To us, what is in crisis is the colonial system, and the proof of this is the degeneration in the colonial society. Read Fanon: "The Wretched of The Earth," to see Puerto Rico on the eve of its liberation. Because for us the crisis is good, and colonialism should not be saved by delivering independentism into an alliance with those who want to sell Puerto Rico as real estate to the empire. The Puerto Rican people, so peaceful in the past for the lack of patriotic work, are violent today; and because of this, they are coming to understand revolutionary violence more and more - and

finally they will accept it as the only road.

There is talk of anti-annexationist unity between the PSP and the PPD of Hernandez Colon. We do not believe it will happen. The PPD is still very strong, and moreover they are not crazy to unite their greater force to such an insignificant force in the Puerto Rican scene. Moreover, we believe that this proposal is illogical. The entire history of Puerto Rico teaches us loudly that reformist alliances, of whatever nature they may be, have always served the colonialist empire and have never advanced the cause of independence.

A new independentist-autonomist alliance would only serve - and the PIP is entirely correct in saying so - the interests of the PPD to save their hide and prolong the life of a colonial party, which deserves nothing but to disappear from the historical map of our homeland. For this reason, we firmly oppose this tendency toward alliances with all our fervor and strength.

Comrades, the MLN sees the question of unity from three very specific revolutionary anti-imperialist perspectives. We see the necessity for unity; we see the question of patriotic unity; and we see the unity which exists among the forces inimical to our national liberation. Each one of these contains its own problems. The first two can be achieved. The last we will have to struggle to destroy.

Anti-imperialist revolutionary unity is being achieved now, and we have only to move toward its culmination. Two years ago in Lares, a clandestine proclamation was issued, signed by the majority of the organizations of the armed struggle: the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN), the Ejercito Popular Boricua-Macheteros, the Fuerza Armadas de Resistencia Popular (FARP), and the Organizacion de Voluntarios por la Revolucion Popular (OVRP). The only organization of armed struggle still active that did not sign this document was the Comandos Revolucionarios del Pueblo (CRP). But I can assure you tonight that they

too are following the same path and the same process, and that unity is being forged among all the clandestine organizations, towards the inevitable future construction of the Revolutionary People's Army.

This unity represents for us not just a military unity. It also represents the political unity of forces who, from clandestinity are taking up at full steam, the political-military construction of the vanguard of the Puerto Rican people coagulated in blood, fire, solidified in the experience of clandestine work in all the mass fronts: unions, parties, committees, etc. This is the most valuable and enduring of all possible forms of unity which the long and difficult struggle of the Puerto Rican people can produce for their independence and for socialism.

On a secondary level we see patriotic unity. Broad unity of all the sectors in struggle against colonialism; independentists in all social spheres, and Puerto Ricans - professionals, students and workers who will enter, are entering, or have already entered into open contradiction with colonialism in Puerto Rico and in exile. This unity, however, cannot be obtained by voluntarism, partisanship, or by the wish of an organization to involve everyone within their strategy. It cannot happen by decree. It cannot be achieved by pressure of any foreign nation - be it socialist or otherwise - who wishes to enclose us within their policy. This unity will be obtained when revolutionary unity combines with the appropriate conditions to obtain it.

We, by our own will, individual or party-based, want to develop it. We will initiate the process, a semblance of unity can be constructed for the public, but as in earlier epochs - like the Mesa de Lares at the beginning in the 60's, or like the unity dialogues of that other part, it will explode in the face of the reality of adverse conditions, of enemy strategy, of sectarianism, and internal conflicts.

The MLN does not believe present conditions lead themselves to the unity of independence sectors

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which are still fighting on the level of strategy. If revolutionary unity is being built it is because there are common purposes. All revolutionaries support the armed struggle as practice in the same process of constructing the political-military vanguard. They cooperate, do joint work; there is no conflict over objectives - and even when there are differences over analysis, the unity already acquired is strong enough to wait calmly until practice confirms the truth.

The public unity which has been presented to us among diverse independence organizations is loaded with contradictions. They want to implement this over deep objectives and differences on such a political level, that they seem to us more like an abyss than a puddle that has to be jumped over.

We do not believe it will be easy at this stage, in which the theories of struggle in Puerto Rico are still untested by some, for unity to be achieved. That is, if unity is a serious thing with depth and not merely a political scheme to delude the incautious or to mobilize the anxious liberals and idealists of the moment. For example: we have to resolve the question of using the elections. What enduring unity can there be, when some of us are certain to enter into electoral campaigns on the one hand, and on the other, we are going to do everything possible to ensure that the people do not vote? What unity can there be when some put forward the necessity of a people's war, and on the other hand another sector denies it, fights against it publicly, does everything possible to prevent the advance of that ideology? What unity can be achieved when some of us do everything to break the political nexus with colonialism and others seek forms to cement them? Comrades, every antagonism and contradiction, however slight it may seem, deepens the discord and wins mutual enmity among independentists.

We firmly oppose with revolutionary spirit everything which tends to consolidate colonialism in Puerto

Rico. We oppose all grades of cooperation between the enemies of independence, and the independentists, however pretty it may sound. We firmly oppose on a strategic level, because it is totally opposite to our immediate and long-range goals, any understanding between the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño and the statehood leaders, be they PNP or PPD, over how to rescue the colonial structures from their present crisis. We oppose, and as you already know, we will do everything possible to break, the agreement made in 1978 between the PSP and the PPD of Hernandez



Colon to bring Puerto Rico out towards the status of Free Association, founded on the basis of the status already obtained by the Marianas Islands which, in exchange for a formal constitution of independence, would surrender to the U.S. the recognition and the authority to maintain Puerto Rico as a military colony. A status, by which we would be sovereign in title, but the U.S. would maintain its military bases in Puerto Rico, the right of military intervention, and control of Puerto Rican armed forces.

The MLN wants and directs itself towards full sovereignty - towards true independence and true socialism.

Comrades, we have spoken about what we want and what we do not

want on the level of unity. Let us now present what our organization believes would be the basis for a true unity.

We believe that as a beginning, there should be a public commitment of all the patriotic organizations, to attend a summit meeting on the leadership level in Puerto Rico. Appropriate delegates should be named to elaborate, in accordance with the interests of each party, the agenda of this series of meetings. That as a first step, there should be a public announcement of the intention to not enter into any type of compromise with the colonialists and neo-colonialists. That after that announcement all party attacks end, on the public level and also the clandestine level. That we prepare for this dialogue with all honesty and all possible spirit to build our homeland.

For our part, the MLN does not ask for nor want representation. For us what will suffice is the integrity and resolution, the revolutionary commitment and seriousness of the Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña, and of its chief representative - also our representative - Juan Antonio Co-retjer.

We are so committed to true patriotic unity, that if reaching an agreement of purpose after emerging with a strategic accord, we are asked to dissolve our organization, or we are assigned the duties of cleaning the floor of our new unitary center every day, we will do it with all the pride, the joy and all the pleasure that we have in participating here today, together with Lolita Lebron, together with you, and with the pride of representing the politics and integrity of the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and the F.A.L.N., which yesterday, today and tomorrow are prepared to sacrifice everything for our homeland.

Comrades:

Independence or Death:  
We Shall Win!