

EDITORIAL

P.R.S.C. - SOLIDARITY WITH PUERTO RICO

El Comité-M.I.N.P. has consistently (based on the principles of Proletarian Internationalism) raised the importance of developing a solidarity movement—particularly among the working class—in support of Puerto Rico's national liberation and, within that context, raised the impact Puerto Rico's liberation would have in furthering the struggle here. This understanding has guided our relationship to the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee and its task of developing a solidarity movement.

El Comité-MINP and the PRSC

Recently, after two years of existence, the PRSC celebrated its second National Conference (see article on page 7). During those two years, the PRSC has grown into a nationwide organization, with chapters in twenty or more cities in the U.S. Although not forming part of the PRSC during the period just ended, we have recognized the political significance of the PRSC and its serious efforts of solidarity with Puerto Rico. On the other hand, we have been consistently critical of its errors and shortcomings. At all times we have attempted to be principled and aboveboard in our criticisms. This has not been the practice of members of the PRSC toward our organization; some have openly engaged in slandering the political views of El Comité-MINP while others have remained silent in the presence of such unprincipled conduct. In essence the basis of our criticisms toward the PRSC were: the uncritical acceptance of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) tactical and strategic conceptions; its isolation from other forces in the Puerto Rican Liberation Movement; the negation of the role of the Puerto Rican national minority in the US, both in the struggle for liberation and for socialism in the US; and lastly, its incorrect interpretation of international solidarity. Therefore, in light of these criticisms, we consider it very healthy that the recently concluded PRSC Conference set the basis for a break with these conceptions, a situation that can very well lead toward the broadening of the solidarity movement.

Conference debates and approves new statement

The conference was marked by intense ideological debate over: what is imperialism and its impact on Puerto Rico's social development, what does solidarity work entail, what is the role of armed struggle in the liberation process, etc.. This debate was a key instrument in reaching clarity and defining differences.

The new political statement that will guide the work of the PRSC for the next period, although having some limitations, is an improvement over its predecessor and points to the rectification of the incorrect perspectives that have hindered the work of the PRSC. This did not result magically but as consequence of the debates that arose in the course of the conference.

In the process of debate there emerged various political perspectives among the various groups, tendencies and individuals representing the different chapters of the PRSC. The original draft of the Political Statement, which served as the basis of discussion throughout the conference, represented the view that imperialism oppresses all countries and peoples alike, negating in the process the class character of the National Liberation struggle. Taken to its logical conclusion, this view sees the struggle of the Puerto Rican

people as merely one for independence and negates the reality that as an industrial colony both the leading and principal force in Puerto Rico is the working class, which dictates a struggle for independence and socialism. This understanding has led all organizations involved in the Puerto Rican liberation struggle to include the question of socialism within their programs.

Moreover, this view, represented within the official draft statement, negated that armed struggle will play a determinant factor in the liberation process. Both of these critical weaknesses, as well as other shortcomings of the original draft, led to organized opposition and the drafting of alternative documents which attempted to fill its voids. However, these documents also reflected errors in essence and form. Principal among these errors were the emphasizing of nationality above class and raising armed struggle outside the context of a strategic perspective corresponding to the concrete reality of Puerto Rico and its correlation of class forces.

The discussions around the original draft statement led to a number of amendments which strengthened its weak points, and resolved some of the points of debate. The final document will recognize, among other things, the centrality of armed struggle; the need to expand the PRSC relations to other forces in the Liberation Movement; the strategic significance of the oppressed national minorities and the US working class (including the Puerto Rican national minority); as well as present a clearer definition of the character and nature of imperialism in Puerto Rico.

Toward Principled Unity

In the process of waging political struggle on the divergent perspectives, there was not always respect given by some comrades toward those whose practice has shown serious commitment to actively support the Puerto Rican people's struggle for national liberation but who may lack a consistent class perspective. In particular this was the attitude assumed toward members of the San Francisco Chapter as well as observers in the Conference. On the other hand, there were some among the latter comrades who did not practice principled ideological struggle and who substituted obstinate conduct, which at times hindered the work of the conference, for ideological struggle. Both these attitudes are in our view incorrect, and do not lead to productive results. We hope that in the process of implementing the objectives established by the Conference these shortcomings are rectified; as the conference demonstrated, ideological struggle, when properly carried out, is in the interest of all the participants.

As the PRSC enters its third year of existence, it continues to meet its responsibility toward the people of Puerto Rico and its leading forces. In wishing success to all its members and chapters we cannot over-emphasize the need of principled unity among all its components. In this context, we urge each and every member to deepen their understanding of the concrete reality of Puerto Rico, as only in this manner will we be able to educate the Northamerican working class and people on their responsibility to the people of Puerto Rico and their struggle. Anything else is to plant the seeds of an ineffective solidarity movement that will not be in correspondence with the character and nature of the National Liberation Movement.