

PUERTO RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY

(Pro-Independence Movement)

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS; TO ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD:

At this time when the plenary Decolonization Committee of the United Nations (Committee of Twenty-four) is about to begin discussing the inclusion of the question of Puerto Rico in its agenda, the United States of America and its colonial Government in Puerto Rico are unleashing violence and repression against the Puerto Rican independence forces on an increasing scale, a development which demonstrates the colonial nature of the system.

As we noted in the document which was circulated on 19 May 1971 to all States Members of the United Nations (NV/245), the reluctance of the Committee of Twenty-four to comply with its legal obligation to consider the colonial status of Puerto Rico (together with the fact that for several years the pressure exerted by the United States, a nation which is interested in keeping the colonial case of Puerto Rico isolated and forgotten by the world, has been yielded to) has encouraged the repressive United States agencies operating in Puerto Rico to step up their persecution of the forces which are fighting for national liberation.

Now we have discovered and denounced to the Puerto Rican people the existence of a plan approved by the colonial Governor, Luis A. Ferré, and the Secretary of Justice, Wallace González Oliver, to fabricate accusations of alleged conspiracy against the leadership of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (Pro-Independence Movement): PSP-MPI

In this connexion we wish to state that we have in our possession sworn testimony by persons who assert that high officers of the police of Puerto Rico have offered them large sums of money and other privileges in return for agreeing, in some cases, to act as undercover agents within the PSP-MPI and, in other cases, to make false statements implicating socialist leaders and advocates of independence in the commission of crimes. These documents constitute clear proof of the intention of the colonial Government to fabricate "evidence" against the principal leaders of the independence movement of our country.

On 20 May 1972 the Miss United States contest was held at the Hotel Cerromar at Dorado, Puerto Rico. On that same day, during the afternoon, PSP-MPI picketed the hotel in a mass demonstration protesting the holding of the contest on Puerto Rican soil. At night, when the closing ceremony of the contest was being held, a number of devices exploded in various parts of the hotel, causing material damage amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars. This act of sabotage was carried out by the Comandos Armados de Liberación (Armed Liberation Commandos) (CAL), according to the press release of that armed organization published by the country's newspapers. The CAL is, as we have on several occasions informed the members of the Committee of Twenty-four, a clandestine body which has been carrying out armed actions against Yankee intervention in Puerto Rico for more than five years. The authorities have never been able to arrest any of

its fighters. The PSP-MPI has publicly recognized that this organization represents a legitimate form of struggle for national independence. On various occasions we have stated that we do not have and cannot have any organic link with the CAL since we operate within the narrow limits of the legal framework existing in the country, whereas they operate clandestinely. At the same time, however, we assert that the importance of the clandestine and armed actions of the CAL within our independence struggle will increase in proportion to the narrowing of the legal framework within which the struggle of the masses represented in the PSP-MPI and the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueno (Puerto Rican Independence Party) (PIP) is taking place.

What the colonial Government is trying to do is to establish on the basis of false, fabricated evidence an organic connexion between the PSP-MPI and the CAL. For that reason it offered Alberto González-Fernández, a former militant of the PSP, a salary of \$1,500 per month, in addition to dropping various court cases (non-political) which were pending against him in return for his services as a false witness against various national leaders of our party. Similar offers have been made to a number of other compatriots.

We denounce before the entire world this conspiracy on the part of the Government of the United States and its colonial régime in Puerto Rico to suppress the independence fighters and try to slow down the rapidly accelerating pace of the mass struggle among our people.

The anti-Puerto Rican and anti-popular repression in our country as it has developed so far during this year may be summarized as follows:

1. Repression against those who are reclaiming the land: use of the Police Shock Force to destroy the worker communities of Villa Hostos (in the city of Mayagüez) and El Yeso (in the city of Ponce) and other communities in the towns of Santa Isabel, Salinas and Naguabo. In addition to this destruction, charges have been brought against hundreds of persons for erecting crude dwellings for their families on land belonging to the great United States corporations, such as the Central Azucarera Aguirre, or on Government lands. Hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans are entirely without housing and find themselves obliged to build houses for themselves on unoccupied land.

2. The renewal of accusations against young Puerto Ricans who refuse to serve in the armed forces of the United States. These cases are being prosecuted in a United States court operating in Puerto Rico whose proceedings are carried out in English and under the laws of the United States. Among the accused are the Secretary for Workers' Affairs of our party, Angel Agosto, and the Associate Editor of the bi-weekly Claridad, the newspaper of the independence movement, Manuel de J. González, both of them members of the Political Committee of the PSP-MPI.

3. Gangs of hoodlums, paid by the party of the colonial Governor, on one occasion fired on the national offices of the PIP; they made an attempt on the life of the President of that party, Ruben Berríos-Martínez; they have attacked members of the PIP and the PSP-MPI who were making public collections or selling newspapers; they have attacked the property of advocates of independence and socialists with incendiary devices in San Juan, Bayamón, Jayuya, Utuado, Salinas and Naguabo; they have shot at militants of the two independence parties in Santa Isabel and they have attacked the offices of the PIP and the PSP-MPI in various towns on the island.

4. The Police Shock Force brutally attacked the striking workers of the Puerto Rico Telephone Company, a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT). It brutally attacked striking workers of the newspaper El Mundo, a United States-owned enterprise. A journalist working for that newspaper, Bienvenido Ortiz-Otero, who is Vice President of the Unión de Periodistas, Artes Gráficas y Ramas Anexas (Union of Journalists, Graphic Arts and Related Branches) (UPAGRA) was clubbed on the head and had to be hospitalized. The police of Puerto Rico allied themselves with the enterprise to break the strike, using helicopters piloted by police officials themselves. When the CAL destroyed the helicopters, the police falsely accused completely innocent employees of El Mundo of offences involving explosives. Not content with those outrages, the United States court in Puerto Rico imposed fines of more than \$10,000 on the Unión de Periodistas for exercising the right to strike and to picket. All this forms part of a general pattern of repression against the labour movement, which is coming into the forefront of the struggle for independence and the national liberation of Puerto Rico.

5. A similar pattern of repression has been developing against the student movement. The President of the Federación de Universitarios Pro Independencia (Federation of Pro-Independence University Students) (FUPI), Julio Muriente, was expelled from the University of Puerto Rico and barred for life from studying there. A young woman militant of FUPI, Rosa Mercedes Mari, was kicked by a policeman because she was going to present a national flag of Puerto Rico to the Catalan singer Joan Manuel Serrat after a concert given by him at the theatre of the University. Later this same young woman was accused of felonious assault against four policemen. The youth, Luis Fernando Coss, President of the Federación Estudiantil Pro Independencia (Federation of Pro-Independence Students) (FEPI), an organization of secondary-school students who are partisans of independence, was expelled from the country's public schools.

6. Two powerful bombs were placed in front of the building occupied by the newspaper Claridad and one of them exploded, causing damage to the office of the management of this biweekly. A gang of terrorists organized by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), called the Comandos Anticomunistos (Anti-Communist Commandos), claimed responsibility for the felony. Several months earlier, a gang made up of members of the United States Secret Service broke into the Claridad building by force, breaking doors and upsetting the files and other equipment, without any legal cause or justification. A young militant of the PSP-MPI, José Banch, was brutally attacked by an agent of the CIA while he was selling the newspaper Claridad, and hung between life and death for a number of days at the Medical Center in the captial.

7. In the town of Manatí a gang of members of the party of the colonial Governor broke in on the President of the Ateneo Puertorriqueño, Eladio Rodríguez-Otero, while he was delivering a commencement address to pupils of the high school because he had made a reference to the fatherland and to the obligation of young Puerto Ricans to serve it. The gang prevented the continuation of the commencement exercises.

8. Twenty prominent members of the Partido Nuevo Progresista (New Progressive Party), the party of the colonial Governor, met to plan the hiring of United States gunmen to come to Puerto Rico and assassinate the leaders of the two independence parties: Ruben Berríos-Martínez, President of the PIP, and

Juan Mari-Brás, Secretary-General of the PSP-MPI. This was revealed to the country by Representative Bennie Frankie Cerezo, a dissident legislator belonging to the same Government party.

9. Last week two hooded men fired from a moving automobile on the militant socialist Robinson Torres in the town of Santa Isabel. In the town of Caguas a band of terrorists of the CIA partially destroyed automobiles belonging to various members of the independence movement in front of a ball park while the owners were attending a match in which a visiting team from Cuba was participating. There was also an attempt to set fire to the office of the Movimiento Obrero Unido (United Workers' Movement) (MOU), a body which co-ordinates the trade union activities of the most progressive unions in the country.

Thus it may be seen that violence is on the increase in Puerto Rico. If the Decolonization Committee (Committee of Twenty-four) continues to postpone the consideration of the colonial case of Puerto Rico it will be helping to provoke a civil war in our country. The repressive activity of the colonial régime against the growing movement of the masses in favour of national independence is contributing to the likelihood of such a war.

On behalf of the independence fighters of Puerto Rico we appeal to all members of the Committee of Twenty-four to fulfil their duty with respect to Puerto Rico now. If they wait, it may be too late.

San Juan, Puerto Rico, 6 June 1972

THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

PUERTO RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY
(PUERTO RICAN PRO-INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT)
