

HANDBOOK

ON PUERTO RICAN WORK

75¢

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This report is an earnest effort to pose the problem before us, advancing some modest opinions as to its nature and character.

In this report we are forced to deal with the basic facet of the Puerto Rican question, namely the Puerto Rican nation. This is unavoidable for two reasons; First, the very close relationship between the Puerto Rican nation and the Puerto Rican minority does not allow for any absolute separation. Second, the obvious lack of understanding on the Puerto Rican question forces us to discuss the nature of this basic relationship between the Puerto Rican nation and the Puerto Rican minority in New York.

The question may be asked, why must we have such a report at this time? The answer is: (a) because we have never had a basic discussion on the nature and character of the Puerto Rican minority, (b) because the minority facet of the Puerto Rican question is growing and developing at a terrific pace, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and as a result new factors and trends are affecting the life and relationship to the rest of the people of New York, and (c) the ruling class is reacting to these changes and displays a deep concern for what it terms "the growing Puerto Rican problem in New York."

Therefore, the task that we have before us is both unavoidable and urgent.

Heretofore, we have given but scant attention to the question of Puerto Rican immigration, yet, understanding the nature of Puerto Rican immigration is basic to the understanding of the origin and character of the Puerto Rican minority. But the fact is that we can no longer ignore this question. The ruling class is very busy trying with might and main to distort and obscure both the nature and the causal reasons for Puerto Rican immigration. A veritable army of sociologists, ethnologists, economists and assorted ideologists of imperialism are endeavoring to give a "scientific" answer to the question.

Among this mass of "scientists" and sycophants of American imperialism, it should be noted, there are to be included a whole host of officials representing the so-called Puerto Rican "Commonwealth" as well as some petty-bourgeois representatives of the Puerto Rican minority.

There is common agreement on the "basic" cause for Puerto Rican immigration. This basic cause, they claim, is. . . "over-population."

Let's listen to some of these "scientists" pose and answer the question.

Chanault says in his book THE PUERTO RICAN MIGRANT IN NEW YORK, pages 46 and 47....

"Estimates have been made that show that Puerto Rico cannot support more than 1,000,000 people through agriculture. It has few available land or mineral resources, and there is little in the way of industrial development. It is also dependent, for the most part, upon outside sources of food. In spite of this fact, a terrific growth in population is taking place....There is little chance that the severe pressure of population in Puerto Rico will be relieved through a voluntary limitation of births. In fact, there is practically the opposite trend and the population is growing at a more rapid rate than ever."

William Nicholas in an article which appeared in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC magazine, issue of April, 1951, stated:

"The main trouble with Puerto Rico.....is that there are too

many Puerto Ricans."

Labor Secretary of the Puerto Rican "Commonwealth," Sierra Berdecia states:

"If you took all of the people of the world and put them in the United States, first taking away all of the natural resources of the country, you would have some idea of our problem in Puerto Rico."

THE NEW YORK POST declares in its issue of July 20, 1953:

"And so the Puerto Ricans spilled out of their over-populated Caribbean Island and poured into New York in a stream that still flows strong and unabated and with no end in sight."

Emilio L. Guerra, in the MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL, issue of October, 1948 says:

"Perhaps the chief reason for this modern hegira (exodus) has been the upsetting of the island's economic balance by the pressure of growing population."

And finally, the NEW YORK TIMES editorializes on July 7, 1950:

"Puerto Rico simply could not exist outside American tariff walls without American government subsidies. She is one of the most heavily populated areas of the world and one of the poorest."

The hired scientists of imperialism have merely dusted off and refurbished the old Malthusian theories, already exposed as a class apology for the exploitation of the European working class, and are using this embryo as a rationale for imperialist plunder of the colonial nations.

As far back as the last century, Karl Marx had thoroughly refuted Malthus' theory of "over-population." In Vol. I of CAPITAL he dissected these so-called "scientific" theories. On page 694 he states:

"The whole form of the movement of modern industry depends, therefore, upon the constant transformation of a part of the labouring population into unemployed or half-employed hands...Even Malthus recognizes over-population as a necessity of modern industry, though, after his narrow fashion, he explains it by the absolute over-growth of the labouring population, not by their becoming relatively super-numerary....After Political Economy has thus demonstrated the constant production of a relatively surplus-population of labourers to be a necessity of capitalistic accumulation, she very aptly, in the guise of an old maid, puts in the mouth of her 'beau ideal' of a capitalist the following words addressed to those supernumeraries thrown on the streets by their own creation of additional capital:-

'We manufacturers do what we can for you, whilst we are increasing that capital on which you must subsist, and you must do the rest by accomodating your numbers to the means of subsistence...'

"The condemnation of one part of the working-class to enforced idleness by the over-work of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists, and accelerates at the same time the production of the industrial reserve army on a scale corresponding with the advance of social accumulation."

If, as clearly shown, this theory of "over-population" is just a smoke-screen to hide the nature of the real problem, what then is the basic reason for Puerto Rican immigration?

Extraction of maximum profits by American monopoly capital and not Malthusianism is the root of the problem.

Fifty-five years of robbing the Puerto Rican people of their land had resulted in the emergence in Puerto Rico of imperialist latifundia in its crassest and most criminal form. Two-thirds of the land, the best land, is now in the hands of American sugar corporations.

Julius Pratt, in his book AMERICA'S COLONIAL EXPERIMENT states:

"...of land in sugar cane farms, the (sugar) mill companies own or control 396,000 acres or 51.4%."

This has resulted in the creation of a landless peasantry which has no parallel anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, and very few in the world.

But landlessness is not the only problem with which the Puerto Rican masses are confronted. Puerto Rico has been converted into a huge sugar cane field, and forcefully adapted to a one-crop economy, with sugar representing 72% of its total production. It is precisely monoculture which forces Puerto Rico to import most of what it consumes. Even its staples which it could and did produce under a diversified system of agriculture, have to be imported at a higher price than are sold in the United States market.

One fast look at the government statistics of Puerto Rican imports and exports makes this clear:

"...the food bill is big....It represents a third of the island's total purchases from the mainland. There were \$326,295,000 the past fiscal year. The cost of foods offsets over 83% of the returns from the sale of sugar products to the mainland."

Again we quote Pratt:

"A survey in 1947 showed food accounting for 50.8% of all expenditures of urban-wage-earning families, and 68.5% for rural highland families."

And Diffie, in his book PORTO RICO: A BROKEN PLEDGE asserts that the typical Puerto Rican worker spends 94% of his income for food as compared with 30% spent by the average American.

Even the tools of American imperialism in Puerto Rico cannot sufficiently doctor the figures to hide the facts. We quote from their BULLETIN published by the Office of Puerto Rico, which stated in its May, 1949 issue:

"...Continued high unemployment, increased prices averaging 25% above those on the mainland, and the failure of workers' wages to balance the cost of a decent living still loom as big labor problems."

The low purchasing power of the Puerto Rican producers is evident in the prevalent miserable wage standards as revealed by the following statistics:

FORTUNE magazine in 1950 in a very appropriately entitled article PROFIT HUNTERS IN PUERTO RICO points to the existing depressed wage levels there:

"Here are samples: handicraft and novelties 15¢ (per hour); fruits and juice canning, 16¢; leather goods, 17¢; wearing apparel, 24¢, textile products, 25¢."

The 1948 report submitted by the United States to the United Nations included the following statistics on Puerto Rico:

"Families receiving less than \$300 yearly income equal 57% of total. Families receiving less than \$500 a year equal 80.9% of total."

The quest for maximum profits as the basic law of capitalism is expressed in a constant and ever increasing process of exploitation. New techniques of production have been introduced in all phases of the sugar industry in Puerto Rico.

First, cutting, loading and transporting the sugar cane to the sugar mills is now done by machine in the main. Second, the sugar mills are highly mechanized and electrified. Third, the transportation of raw sugar to the United States is being carried out lately through a method which resembles that of transporting mineral ore; that is, by pouring the raw sugar into the holds of the ships instead of transporting it in sacks, as previously done.

Here we may add that the concentration and centralization of capital in Puerto Rico is something to behold.

Julius Pratt states:

"In 1898 there were almost 500 sugar mills producing not over 125 tons annually per mill. In 1938 there were 41 centrales with an average annual production of 20,000 tons each."

We add the fact that there are today only 35 sugar mills in Puerto Rico. All of them are either owned or controlled by American finance capital.

All of this, of course, has its reverse side of the coin. The fantastic enrichment of the sugar corporations has resulted in the most abject indigence and misery of the people. The law of the absolute and relative impoverishment of the working class and all the toilers finds its clearest and most brutal expression in the existence of hundreds of miserable squatters settlements such as "El Fanguito" throughout the whole length and breadth of the Puerto Rican nation.

The 47th Annual Convention of the Puerto Rican Medical Association reported in 1950 that:

"About 95,000 families live in urban slums and their numbers are increasing rapidly as farmers move into the city looking for employment."

We must note that the figures given in the above mentioned report do not include the miserable hovels and shacks which predominate in the villages scattered throughout the island.

Expressive of this dismal situation also are the terrible social and economic conditions which gives rise to a permanent army of unemployed which is estimated in the hundreds of thousands in a nation of 2-1/4 million people.

Among the many incentives used by the Munoz Marin crowd in order to entice American business enterprises to Puerto Rico, they dangle the fantastic number of unemployed as bait, as is clearly seen in the pamphlet **FACTS FOR BUSINESSMEN** issued by the Puerto Rican Economic Development Administration. This booklet states the following:

"....103,000 unemployed and 187,000 underemployed are ready to join the growing number of factory workers. When there is added to this group the persons who work in low paid, marginal jobs, the result is a ready reservoir of 400,000 workers anxious to work in industry."

The rate of increase of the army of unemployed workers in Puerto Rico is shown in these figures:

Percentage of Labor Force Unemployed

1900	.....	17%
1926	.....	30%
1930	.....	40%
1945	.....	45%

This last figure would be equivalent to 28 million unemployed in the United States!

Extreme economic misery and terrible social conditions resulting from imperialist plunder and exploitation is what forces the Puerto Rican to migrate.

Nor can the ruling class in the United States plug this flow of migration without exposing itself to the serious danger of an internal explosion in Puerto Rico. Of course, hunger and misery, resulting from finance capital's extraction of maximum profits, does not occur in Puerto Rico alone, but rather represents a general problem in the whole colonial and semi-colonial world.

Faced with the mounting anger and threatened revolt of the colonial peoples, the imperialists throughout the world seek for an ideological rationale in order to strengthen their shaky hold on the colonial nations.

Neo-Malthusianism is their new ideological weapon!

But it should be noted that in posing the so-called "problem" and advancing solutions to it, they expose their fascist tendencies in the genocidal character of the remedies proposed.

Speaking in the United Nations, Britain's representative Sir Gladwyn Jebb voiced the general concern of the imperialist nations with the so-called over-population problems in their colonies. His statement follows:

"If the population problems of under-developed countries are not solved, one of two things are likely to happen. Either there will be an outburst of anarchy, or some attempt will be made to solve their problems on Stalinist lines."

In recent years a whole new literature based on this "Neo-Malthusianism" has made its appearance in the United States.

Tens, hundreds and even thousands of books, magazines, fiction publications, weekly and daily periodicals, etc., carry out a constant barrage of propaganda striving to "prove scientifically" that the problems of hunger and squallor in the colonial world stem from innate natural causes, originating from within the colonial nation.

Professor William Vogt has emerged as the chief ideologist of the new school of Neo-Malthusianists and "geneticists" with a new look.

However, the corps of his camp-followers is immense.

Rabid chauvinism is the very essence of these fascist "theories" of "over-population".

We would like to make a few choice quotes of this pseudo-scientific gender:

"Next to the atom bomb," says Robert C. Cook, Editor of the JOURNAL OF HEREDITY, "the most ominous force in the world today is uncontrolled fertility. The scramble for bare subsistence by hordes of hungry people is tearing the fertile earth from the hillsides, plunging millions of human beings into utter misery. The people of all nations are rushing into a desperate genetic crisis."

Professors Burch and Pendell in HUMAN BREEDING AND SURVIVAL have the following to say:

"When the 20,000,000 unnecessary births are considered along with the 20 to 30,000,000 unnecessary births that result in early deaths, we reach the shocking conclusion that there are between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 unnecessary births in the world each year... In reality, high birth rates are hangovers from animal and savage times."

How do these "scientists" propose to stem the tide of "animal fertility" of the colonial peoples? We again quote from Burch and Pendell.

"Since blind population forces are the most persistent influences barring the way to the world-wide attainment of freedom from want and from war, and the attainment of government by the people, then to sponsor those goals is sanctimonious twaddle or pious fraud, except as one is realistically ready to control the population forces. In connection with sterilization, it appears that what the United Nations needs to do is to recommend to all nations the adoption of laws which will..... actually lead to the sterilization of all persons who are inadequate, either biologically or socially... Surgical substitute for contraception...would have special appropriateness in China, India and Puerto Rico.....* (page 100) (underscoring ours.)

We note that Burch and Pendell find the logical concretization of their "theories" in the Puerto Rican question and the reason should be obvious, but here too, they are not alone. Other neo-Malthusians are in general agreement with them as the following statements of theirs indicate:

Kingsley Davis in THE ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, issue of January, 1953, states the following:

"The growth of population in Puerto Rico, the multiplication of human beings in relation to resources causes assets to be spent on direct consumption rather than on income-generating industry."

Kingsley Davis again in FOREIGN AFFAIRS, issue of July 1951, states:

"For a permanent improvement of living standards in Puerto Rico, fertility must come down....Obviously, much hinges on Puerto Rico's future birth rate. Since the death rate has been lowered faster than in other countries in the past, the birth rate could presumably also be lowered faster than usual."

In an article written by Albert Q. Maisel for LOOK magazine of October 23, 1951, we read as follows:

"Ravaged, starved, hopelessly frightened, these Puerto Rican children, and their thirty-year old mother are victims of run-away fertility that threatens the world."

"We have paid over a billion dollars during the past 50 years to keep our tiny island of Puerto Rico from drowning in its flood of swelling population....American scientists and medical men have helped create population headaches....we have exported our life-saving sciences."

Since they arrogantly claim credit for saving the lives of the Puerto Rican people, the American imperialists now claim the right to destroy them in the best way they see fit -- by the genocidal fascist method of sterilization!

A further development of the ideological rationale of neo-Malthusianism is involved in the current theories of genetics in relation to immigration. Here is how Burch and Pendell project them:

"No one....will claim that the immigrants are superior. Though in general it is probable that immigrants are not better than average folks, yet in order to get them we have condemned to the might-have-been, a host of additional descendants of Benjamin Franklin, Robert Fulton, Ralph Emerson and John Adams; and have relegated to the limbo of never-to-be a few more children of Thomas Edison, Clara Barton and Mark Twain. The whole displacement principle, though it is the heart of the immigration problem has derived importance that is even farther reaching, in that it illuminates the internal displacement already referred to - the displacement of the additional might-be children of the people in Who's Who - displacement by homegrown American moronsIncidentally this shows that this is not a matter of class conflict."

Aside from the fact that the Who's Who is represented only by Anglo-Saxons, there is also the further fact that present immigration to the United States involves in the main colonial and semi-colonial peoples, especially Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. It is then implied that it is the Puerto Ricans and other colonial peoples that "threaten" to "displace" the Anglo-Saxon herren volk by substituting "hordes" of "brown morons" for individual "blond supermen."

This whole theme is further related to the Puerto Rican question.

In the above mentioned article by Maisel, we meet with the following statement:

"We cannot blame such overcrowded areas for the repeated crisis which sends them begging to our doorstep."

And the Hearstlings, Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer, in their filthy book, U.S.A. CONFIDENTIAL, place the so-called Puerto Rican "problem" right in New York as follows:

"We were there, we saw, we listened, we smelled....Nor will we discuss the dirt, the squallor and lack of sanitation found not only in the slums but even in good houses and expensive restaurants... that is not the fault of grasping imperialists."

"In the last twenty years some 600,000 of the Little Brown Brothers have been funneled into our town, mostly in East Harlem."

Thus is the case stated; through contortions, distortions and outright fascist slander and lies, the "problem of colonial over-population" is artificially constructed. And from this flows the so-called "growing menace of Puerto Rican immigration."

Neither Goebbels nor Hess in Hitler's Germany did a better job of elevating the filthiest, most criminal and savage attacks against the oppressed and exploited colonial peoples to the category of "scientific effort."

However this fascist hogwash should not be underestimated. Its impact is being felt tremendously by all the people of the United States.

The dangerous "breeders" are not the Puerto Ricans or any other colonial people, but those responsible for the abject poverty and misery resulting from the relentless drive for maximum profits.

The real dangerous "breeders" are those who rob the people of their land; those who rob the colonial peoples of their natural resources; those who hogtie the potentialities for international commerce for the colonial nations; those who force the system of monoculture on the colonial peoples, forcing them to a condition of absolute dependency on the imperialist import market.

These are the "breeders" of mass squallor, misery and death!

They are the criminal imperialists, with American imperialism leading the pack!

But how could the imperialists keep these facts which are becoming so obvious in their naked bestiality from the democratic and liberty-loving peoples in their own country and in the whole world?

How could the American imperialists explain the most glaring effect of colonial plunder and exploitation, the fact of the forced immigration of the people of Puerto Rico from their homeland to the United States?

Simply by hiring the army of so-called scientists and propagandists and charging them with the task of finding excuses and inventing smokescreens behind which they could hide the criminal nature of imperialist colonial policy in general and American imperialist colonial policy in particular.

Before we proceed, we would like to make two pertinent observations, in relation to the so-called problem of "over-population" and the migration drives that result from it.

First, both Britain and Belgium, among other nations, equal Puerto Rico's population density. But nobody proposes emasculating or sterilizing either the British or the Belgians. Second, immigration trends do not occur only in so-called "over-populated" nations.

Explaining the causes for immigration trends, Lenin dealt with the concrete problem as it existed in Czarist Russia and the United States. In his **NEW DATA ON THE LAWS OF DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN AGRICULTURE**, he asserts

"To characterize the South it is necessary to add that the population is fleeing the South to other capitalist regions and towns, in the same way as in Russia the peasantry is fleeing from the most backward central agricultural gubernias, where the survivals of serfdom are most preserved, is fleeing from the tyranny of Valyay-Markovs, to the more capitalistically developed regions of Russia, to

the capitals, to the industrial gubernias, and to the South. The sharecropping region, both in America and in Russia is the region of the greatest stagnation, where the toiling masses are subjected to the greatest degradation and oppression."

These same basic economic causes that Lenin found in Russia and the United States in 1914 act as the motive force of Puerto Rican emigration, accentuated, of course, by an even higher degree of stagnation, degradation and exploitation.

* * * *

THE BASIC HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THE PUERTO RICAN NATIONAL MINORITY

In the past, Browder's theories and policies in relation to the Puerto Rican minority had the effect of obscuring the real historical and political character of the Puerto Rican national minority. This resulted in the acceptance of a concept which had neither historical nor political validity. According to his theories the Puerto Rican minority represented an amorphous conglomeration of Puerto Ricans, identical with those in Puerto Rico and devoid of any class stratification.

Even today no clear differentiation is made between the concepts "nation" and "national minority." These two concepts are very closely related but they are not identical. Equating these two concepts will result, as in the past, in creating confusion and making it impossible to determine the correct line of struggle in relation to the Puerto Rican national minority.

The Puerto Rican minority represents a specific socio-historical phenomenon which emerged as the result of the concrete relationship between the oppressor imperialist nation - the United States - and the oppressed colonial nation - Puerto Rico.

Historically, this phenomenon is an expression of the capitalist process known as the "dispersion of nations." The theoretical principles which underline this "dispersion of nations" was advanced by Stalin in this fashion:

"There is no doubt that in the early stages of capitalism nations became welded together. But there is also no doubt that in the higher states of capitalism a process of dispersion of nations sets in, a process whereby whole groups separate off from nations in search of a livelihood, subsequently settling finally in other regions of the state; in the course of which these settlers lose their old contacts, acquire new contacts in their new domicile, from generation to generation acquire new habits and new tastes, and possibly a new language... One asks: Is it possible to unite into a single national union groups that have grown so distinct? Where are the magic hoops to unite what cannot be united?" (NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION, Page 31)

It is clear that what we have in a minority is something specific, something with its own particular character.

This does not mean that the minority is unrelated to both the "old" nation from whence it emerged and to the "new" nation within which it is developing. On the contrary, real understanding of the national minority presupposes a correct appreciation of that duality of relationships. What's more, this understanding must not only be concrete but, first of all, dialectical, taking note of the changes in these relationships, especially seeking that which is new and developing.

The difference, the special character of the minority, as distinct from both the "old" and "new" nations must be established.

First, as to the differences between the national minority and the "old nation."

The national minority does not exist as a mere reflection or prolongation of the "old" nation. It has its own specific phenomenal existence - its own particularity.

The general theoretical principles on the specific character of national minorities were projected by Stalin in this manner:

"What is it that particularly agitates a national minority? A minority is discontented, not because there is no national union, but because it does not enjoy the rights to use its native language. Permit it to use its native language and the discontent will pass of itself.

"A minority is discontented not because there is no artificial union, but because it does not possess its own schools. Give it its own schools and all grounds for discontent will disappear.

"A minority is discontented not because there is no national union, but because it does not enjoy liberty of conscience, liberty of movement, etc. Give it these liberties and it will cease to be discontented." (NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION, Page 58)

Hence the particularity of the Puerto Rican national minority must be found in the concrete problems which arise in the specific conditions and relations within the "new" nation.

The Puerto Rican national minority has a direct and intimate relation hip with the people of the United States nation. It represents a distinct, yet component part of all the people of the United States nation.

On the Difference Between the Puerto Rican National Minority and the "New" Nation

While the Puerto Rican minority is growing and developing within the United States nation, it does not follow that the indistinct term "American" applies to them. Why?

Two factors operate to emphasize the obvious distinction between the members of the Puerto Rican minority and other members of the United States nation.

The first factor is the fact of the relatively recent emergence of the Puerto Rican minority resulting from Puerto Rican immigration to the United States nation, as a result of which there still are prevailing differences between the "old" culture, including language and traditions, and those of the new environment.

The second factor is of a political character. It has its roots deeply imbedded in the economic and political relationships between the oppressor United States nation and the oppressed Puerto Rican nation,

Virulent chauvinism, the basic ideology that conditions all aspects of the life of a minority does not drop from the sky.

National and white chauvinism, the ideological rationale of the oppression and exploitation of the colonial and semi-colonial nation also serves the ruling

class in connection with the oppression and exploitation of the national minority.

It is precisely this political factor that must be fully grasped, for our general line and program will lack content and our tactics will be ineffective if this basic understanding is missing.

Stalin posed this general theoretical problem from the standpoint of Party tasks in this way:

"There finally remains the question of national minorities. Their rights must be specifically protected. The Party therefore demands complete equality of rights in educational, religious and other matters and the removal of all restrictions on national minorities."
(NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION, Page 66)

So, another aspect of the particularity of the Puerto Rican minority is the fact that it exists not only as a component part, but specifically and precisely as a disfranchised segment of the "new" nation - as an oppressed national minority, for which a special approach, involving the demand for its full political rights, must be advanced.

When we grasp this basic historical and political character of the Puerto Rican national minority, then it will be possible to dispel some prevalent misconceptions as to the nature and character of the Puerto Rican minority.

Too often do we make the mistake of confusing the two concepts "national group" and "national minority." While it is true that in European Marxist literature these terms were used interchangeably, nevertheless, in the specific conditions of the United States, a qualitative difference must be recognized between the national group and the national minority. Nor does this difference involve just a "greater degree of discrimination," but something much more basic.

A national minority in the United States must originate from a nation which is oppressed by United States imperialism.

British Imperialism oppresses and exploits the Irish nation. British anti-Irish chauvinism serves as a basis for the oppression of the Irish people in England. The United States imperialists do not oppress or exploit the Irish nation. Therefore, there is no economic basis for anti-Irish chauvinism in the United States. This does not mean that all national groups are free from the effects of chauvinism in the United States.

The Jamaican national group, for instance, faces problems which are rather similar to those of the Negro, Mexican and Puerto Rican minority. Why is that so?

Because white chauvinism is the historically concrete essence of the ideology of national oppression in the United States. It affects all national groups where the color factor is present.

Therefore, neither from the standpoint of direct national oppression, nor from the standpoint of the color factor, can we confuse the Puerto Rican national minority with the national group question, such as the German, Irish, Italian, etc.

To sum up - the similarity between the national group and the national minority in the United States exists in the fact that both are expressions of a similar historical process.

Explaining this capitalist process of the assimilation of nations, Lenin referred to its concrete manifestations in the United States when he stated:

"An approximate idea of the dimensions of the general process of assimilation of nations that is taking place under the present conditions of advanced capitalism can be obtained, for example, from the immigration statistics of the United States of America...New York State, in which, according to the same census, there were over 78,000 Austrians, 136,000 English, 20,000 French, 480,000 Germans, 37,000 Hungarians, 425,000 Irish, 182,000 Italians, 70,000 Poles, 166,000 people from Russia (mostly Jews), 43,000 Swedes, etc., is like a mill which grinds up national distinctions. And what is taking place in New York is also taking place in every big city and factory settlement. Whoever is not immersed in nationalist prejudices cannot fail to perceive in this process of assimilation of nations by capitalism immense historical progress, the breakdown of the national hideboundness of the various backwoods - especially in backward countries like Russia." (CRITICAL REMARKS ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION - Page 26)

In an historical sense, then there is no difference between Italian, German, Irish or Jewish national groups in the United States and the Puerto Rican or Mexican national minorities.

The difference is political. The fact of the oppression of the national minority is what makes them distinct - - An oppression that has its roots in an oppressed nation by the same ruling class that oppresses the minority.

* * * *

THE PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK

Puerto Rican immigration is the fountainhead, the original source of the Puerto Rican national minority. The Puerto Rican national minority has its historical beginning, during and especially since the first World War.

This immigration showed a steady, though limited flow of about 4,000 a year up to and until the depression of the 1930's. A slower tempo during the 1930's and then a constantly increasing pace during the second world war. And since the end of the second world war, an unprecedented exodus from Puerto Rico to New York which few of us appreciate in its full scope and social and political impact.

The Puerto Rican minority has three specific sources of growth. The first and still main source is represented by immigration from Puerto Rico. The following chronological table shows the specific rate of Puerto Rican immigration to New York City:

1941.....	633	1947.....	24,511
1942.....	1402	1948.....	32,775
1943.....	3204	1950.....	34,703
1944.....	11,201	1951.....	52,899
1945.....	13,573	1952.....	59,103
1946.....	39,911		

What these figures show is no mere increase of the rate of immigration but the staggering rate of increase of 9,000%, if we take the years 1941 and 1952 as a comparison. When we add the Puerto Rican immigration figures for the first four months of 1953, that is 30,500, then we can understand what the chauvinistic and reactionary spokesmen of the ruling class mean when they say...."and the end is not yet in sight....." (NEW YORK POST)

Not computed or related to those figures are the nearly 16,000 Puerto Rican migrant workers, who arrive every year during the planting and harvesting seasons,

especially to New York and New Jersey, quite a number of whom remain in New York. With this fantastic rate of immigration it won't be difficult to understand the accelerated tempo of growth and development of the Puerto Rican national minority.

Total figures for the Puerto Rican population for New York City taken chronologically shows the following:

1910.....	554	1940.....	76,800
1920.....	7,564	1950.....	246,306
1930.....	53,900	1952.....	376,000
		April, 1953.....	405,900

The percentage of increase of the Puerto Rican minority since 1950 is 67%, since 1940 it is 502%, and since 1930 it is 700.5%. The total Puerto Rican population in New York at present represents 5% of the City's total population, or one out of every twenty.

The chronological breakdown of the Puerto Rican population of New York City by Borough gives us the following figures:

	1930	1940	1950	1952	1953
Manhattan	41,700	54,000	138,507	211,000	227,800
Bronx	1,500	10,100	61,924	94,000	101,500
Brooklyn	9,600	11,200	40,299	62,000	65,000
Queens	900	1,300	4,836	8,000	8,500
Richmond	200	200	740	1,000	1,090

From these figures we make the following observation. One - Manhattan "New York County" has the majority of the Puerto Rican population in New York City (56%). This represents 11% of the total population of the Borough of Manhattan, or one out of every nine. Two - there has been an absolute growth in every Borough of the City. Three - the fastest growing Puerto Rican community is that of the Bronx. It has overtaken and surpassed Brooklyn as the second largest Puerto Rican community in New York.

As could be seen the total figures for Puerto Rican immigration does not add up to the total increase of the Puerto Rican minority. The reason for this seeming discrepancy lies in the fact that there is an internal source of growth as well as an external one. This internal source of growth was represented up and until 1950 by the local births of 58,820 children of Puerto Rican parentage. As of April, 1953, there are 86,000 New York born Puerto Rican children.

The tremendous absolute and relative growth of the Puerto Rican minority in New York has brought about extremely important social and political changes within the Puerto Rican minority. These changes must be noted and fully grasped.

The most notable change which has occurred in the last few years has been the spread of the Puerto Rican community to different parts of the city.

In the Bronx, the original East Bronx community has extended itself to the South Bronx and to the Morrisania area. In Brooklyn, the original Boro Hall community has spread to the Williamsburg-Greenpoint sections and to Red Hook-Gowanus. In Queens, the Astoria Puerto Rican community is still growing, while at the same time the Puerto Ricans there are slowly, but surely, finding their ways to other areas.

In New York County, the spread of the Puerto Rican community is indeed spectacular! In Manhattan, it is not just a question of the Puerto Ricans moving to certain areas, but actually to most of the districts of the Borough.

There are in Manhattan County eight distinct Puerto Rican communities. These are Lower Harlem, West Side, Manhattanville-Lower Heights, Washington Heights, Lincoln Square, Chelsea, East Side and East Midtown.

These Puerto Rican communities vary from each other in terms of numbers, compactness and other characteristics.

The main Puerto Rican community, and still its political, civic and cultural center, is Lower Harlem. It is the most compact, with a population of 60,000 Puerto Ricans. The term Lower Harlem as applied to the Puerto Rican community is fast becoming a misnomer. The reason is that this community is constantly shifting as well as expanding in a South-East and North East direction. It is receding from the 14th Assembly District and penetrating rapidly the 10th North and the 16th Assembly Districts, both in the very heart of East Harlem.

In the West Side, the Puerto Rican community which a few years ago had its main center on Columbus Avenue from 107th to 109th Streets, whose west limit was Amsterdam Avenue and its south limit 99th Street, has spread tremendously both West and Southward.

To give a concrete example of the spread of the Puerto Rican community in the West Side - P.S. #9 at 82nd Street and West End Avenue was reported to have less than 10% Puerto Rican students in 1947. What constitutes less than 10% we do not know. But we do know that the present enrollment of Puerto Rican children in P.S. #9 represents 33% of the total enrollment of the students.

In Chelsea, the estimated Puerto Rican population is 25% of the total area population.

In the Lower East Side there has been developing for some time an important Puerto Rican community. Despite the fact that the Lower East Side Puerto Rican community still is of the honeycomb variety, nevertheless, it is growing very fast. It won't be long, judging from previous experience, before the East Side community develops into one of the main Puerto Rican communities.

In the East Midtown area a small community of Spanish speaking people from Tampa now has developed into a thriving predominantly Puerto Rican community. And growing very fast too.

The Manhattanville-Lower Washington Heights Puerto Rican community is one of the most compact and fast expanding sectors.

The Washington Heights Puerto Rican community is the smallest and weakest, but even there increase and growth is noted, even if slowly.

These new Puerto Rican communities should not be seen as fixed quantities in relation to the rest of the given areas, for in the main they constitute the growing and developing element.

Nor can we see these communities as appendices of Lower Harlem for while it was true that in the early period of their formation these new Puerto Rican communities depended almost exclusively upon Lower Harlem ("El Barrio") for their social, cultural and political life, the fact is that that period already belongs to the past.

No more do the residents of the new Puerto Rican communities go to the Teatro Hispano or to the Teatro Latino, they go instead to the Metropolitan on 14th Street, or to the Edison at 103rd Street and Broadway. No more do they go

to the Park Avenue Market, but instead they go to Orchard Street Market or to the Market on 9th Avenue and 40th Street. No more do they have to go to the Marcantonio Club in Lower Harlem, but instead they go to their local club in the 7th, the 4th, the 5th and 3rd A.D.'s. No more do they have to go to the Temple Bethel at 110th Street, but instead they go to their local church.

Without exception, every one of these local Puerto Rican communities has its own internal economic, social, political and cultural life.

Representative business enterprises, theatres, churches, social and political organizations, all these are specific features of the new Puerto Rican communities.

As we note this development, growth and spread of the Puerto Rican community, we must single out one of its special aspects which represents a qualitative leap in the social-economic structure of the Puerto Rican community.

In the period before the Second World War, the composition of the Puerto Rican minority was almost totally working class. Only a very sparse, minute business strata, representing small time traders, existed. A few grocery stores, barber shops, meat markets, and second hand furniture dealers were more or less representative of the sprouting middle class. A handful of professionals rounded out this embryonic middle class sector.

At the present moment the picture is altogether different. First, a small business is no longer minute, but quite substantial, relative to the population. Second, business enterprises are not limited to grocery stores, barber shops, etc., it now includes:

- 1) - Small manufacturers - garment contractors, food product manufacturers, refreshment bottling concerns, etc.
- 2) - Real estate enterprises.
- 3) - Garages and used car dealers.
- 4) - Travel agencies.
- 5) - Big scale radio programs.
- 6) - Summer resorts (Newburgh area)
- 7) - Jewelry merchant houses (Casa Rodriguez, Casa Lopez, etc.)
- 8) - Furniture dealers (no more second hand stores - but large furniture establishments such as Casa Boro, Frank P. Diaz, Colon Bros., etc.)
- 9) - Department stores (Mario Gonzalez).
- 10) - Theatres (Circuito Ansell).
- 11) - Undertaker Establishments (Funeraria Gonzalez, Funeraria Ortiz, Funeraria Echevarria).
- 12) - Newspapers and Magazines (Diario, Pensa, Temas, Ecos, Grafico, Borioua)
- 13) - Banking (Banco de Ponce).

The professionals, doctors, lawyers, etc. have increased in relative proportion to the population. There are over 200 ministers.

All of this spells out one thing, and that is that the Puerto Rican middle class is a hard reality and has to be reckoned with. They are already an important social force and exert their class influence in the life of the Puerto Rican community.

This social strata represents about five per cent of the Puerto Rican minority. The trends among this social grouping, its specific role must be ascertained in order to determine the concrete approach to this class.

The petty bourgeois strata within the Puerto Rican national minority is not

of a homogeneous character. There are two distinct though related rungs: an upper and lower. The upper rung consists of a very small grouping of the most prosperous business concerns and the most successful professionals. The economic base of the Puerto Rican petty bourgeoisie is semi-Jim Crow in character. The market upon which the Puerto Rican petty bourgeoisie is dependent, consists in the main, but not exclusively, of Puerto Ricans and other Spanish speaking people.

Two definite trends are noticeable among the petty bourgeoisie. One trend is toward collaboration with the U.S. ruling class, and the other one oscillates toward the working class strata of the Puerto Rican minority.

It is primarily among the upper rung of the petty bourgeoisie that the ideology of the U.S. ruling class is absorbed and transformed into conformist ideology. This ideology they attempt to infuse and disseminate among the Puerto Rican minority. The bulk of the small traders and businessmen, as well as some individuals among the upper rung, show a disposition to struggle and react favorably to the problems and issues facing the Puerto Rican minority.

As we struggle to attain the greatest unity within the national minority, we must always bear in mind that unity will remain a dream so long as the ideology of conformism is not exposed, combatted and decisively defeated.

We have said that winning the greatest number of middle class elements for a policy of struggle is possible. This is so because the bulk of the lower rung consists of petty traders and small professionals and church ministers, who are in very close and intimate economic and social contact with the working class sector of the minority.

Just examine the composition, role and program of the "Comite de Unidad Hispana." In composition it is represented by trade unionists, ministers and small businessmen. Its role is that of fighter for the basic interests of the whole minority and also acts as its unifying center. Its program reflects those issues which are most keenly felt by the minority. This program includes political representation, literacy test in Spanish, jobs, housing and civil rights.

As can be seen, the aim and program reflects the issues and problems primarily affecting the working class sector. As a matter of fact, ALL of the issues on which this United Front is based have at one time or another been advanced by the working class sector of the Puerto Rican minority.

Only one issue of the five mentioned, namely the literacy test in Spanish, could be said to be "new" as a United Front base. However, this issue has not only existed objectively for a long time, but it has also been raised for years from within the working class sector.

Insofar as the struggle for unity within the Puerto Rican minority is concerned, there are ONLY two basic ideologies to be considered - one, the ideology of the United States ruling class, swallowed by the upper rung of the petty bourgeoisie and regurgitated in the form of conformist policies. Two, the ideology of the working class, concretely expressed in a spirit and attitude of resistance to the conditions of OPPRESSION which constitutes the basic political ingredient of the Puerto Rican national minority. Unity of the minority presupposes victory for the ideology of the working class sector over that of the upper rung of the petty bourgeoisie.

It should be made clear that the specific class ideology of the upper rung of the petty-bourgeoisie does not negate the possibility of participation of some of its individual members in United Front struggles. More than anything else we are trying to establish the all important question of the economic roots of ideo-

logy and its specific class character. In life we will find that there are some individuals among the lower rung of the petty-bourgeoisie and even among the workers, who are affected by conformist ideology, but that is not the main point. The essential question is to know the source of the ideological infection.

The working class sector of the Puerto Rican national minority consists of an estimated 95% of the population. It is homogeneous in character, with industrial productive labor as its main base.

Progressive trends within the Puerto Rican minority, past and present, originate and stem from its working-class sector. The great traditions of working class struggles run deep and powerful. Its background of the labor and socialist movements in Puerto Rico and other parts of Latin America, as well as the tremendous influence exerted by our Party still remain as a basic ingredient in the consciousness and ideology of the working class sector of the Puerto Rican minority.

We will not attempt at this point to spell out the general features of the relationship between the two basic classes, into which the Puerto Rican national minority is divided at present. Nor will we attempt to concretize right now the two trends within the middle class. We will do this instead when we deal with the concrete problems facing the minority. Then we will strive to show these relationships in the "real," "live" process of struggle, in a way which will establish, as clearly as possible, their specific class interests and positions.

The growth and development of the Puerto Rican minority, with its consequent social changes and especially with the emergence of a fully grown middle-class, has called forth the adoption of a new attitude by the United States ruling class. This new line is new only in its application to the Puerto Rican minority. As a matter of fact, this same approach has been previously advanced by the ruling class in relation to the Negro people and the Puerto Rican nation.

The specific character of this "new" policy consists of a two pronged approach - on the one hand, an intensification of the violent attacks against the Puerto Rican minority, especially against its working class sector, and on the other hand, in an attempt to win over allies from a specific segment of the Puerto Rican minority to be used as their agents and apologists.

The increased attacks against the Puerto Rican minority are being accompanied by a barrage of ideological heavy artillery. Where the neo-Malthusian pseudo-scientists leave off on the Puerto Rican nation, the hired sociologists and "experts" on the Puerto Rican question take over.

All the shades of the "sociological" spectrum are represented in the host of "theoreticians" who try to explain the so-called Puerto Rican "problem." From the vicious racist to the "objective" ethnologist; from the professional social workers to the civic minded city official; from the paternalistic "slum goer" to the friendly "defender" of the "misunderstood and persecuted" Puerto Rican; from the editors to the reporters of the New York Dailies, all of them taking turns at slandering the Puerto Ricans while writing on politics, economics or sports.

These hired sociologists and "experts" advance theories and opinions on every single question affecting the life of the Puerto Rican minority.

First, we will present their basic conception of the social nature of the Puerto Rican minority. LAIT & MORTIMER, already quoted, "explain" the "fundamental" character of the Puerto Rican minority thus:

"Not for more than thirty years did a mainland political shark visualize the political possibilities of more than 2,000,000 ready-made voters who could be bought and shipped for nickels. That protagonist of the common man....Fiorello H.LaGuardia, was the political prodigy who fell on and immediately began to work this gold-mine. He began the only pre-designed mass piping of qualified voters from beyond our borders. The lure - and it took little to bring them streaming from their overcrowded native grounds with its miserable economic conditions to the fabulous metropolis - was relief. Before they set foot on the continent, they had to be penciled in on the dole. And since that could be cut off by a wave of the hand, they voted in a body, successively, Republican, Democratic, and LaGuardia's own creation, the American Labor Party.

"Now they are in their second New York generation. Some of their children even speak English. They are precious. Many influential people and institutions feel that, by accepting our public gratuities, they have become our foster children. Their privileges have become vested rights. Mustn't say anything unflattering about them, though they have become the most vicious element in New York life....

"Conditions in Harlem and East Harlem are indescribably frightful....There is and there can be no attempt at law enforcement in the area. It is a jungle practically unpoliced. If you don't get killed first, you can buy a dame or dope on any corner. Thousands of the tens of thousands in this area, who are on relief....get welfare handouts, with which they buy dope. These animals have been fed on propaganda so long they assume the community owes them not only a living but junk money."

The DAILY MIRROR in its October 23, 1950 editorial, declares that:

"Marcantonio's strength comes from degraded, depraved slums within his districts. It comes from hordes of Puerto Ricans enticed here from their home island, for the value of their votes. And subjected to pitiful poverty, which Marcantonio has done nothing to alleviate, except to force thousands on relief."

And THE NEW YORK TIMES adds the following in its December 14, 1952 issue:

"In the middle of East Harlem, one of the most thickly settled communities in the nation....it is a frontier community where the new is ever mingling with the old and turbulence all too often erupts into violence, which have won it such newspaper denunciation as "a pariah community," "New York's worst spot," "A verminous, crime-ridden slum," and the most dismal, dangerous and troublesome section in the whole city. Once it was predominantly Jewish and Irish, later overwhelmingly Italian. Today it is overflowing with Puerto Ricans and immigrants from other Spanish-speaking lands."

Those are some of the openly chauvinistic characterizations....Now we have three quotes from Gauletier #1 and "theoretician" on the Puerto Rican question, Clarence Senior.

(1) "The Puerto Rican migrant, a product of cultural and racial conflict on his island, produces further ethnic conflict in New York City; he is a victim of both conflicts, and, like most people caught in ethnic diversity he sometimes turns on his own group to rend it, and in so doing, further victimizes himself."

(2) "Thus, the Puerto Rican who doesn't understand or speak English is conspicuous as a member of a different language group, but to no greater extent than members of any other of the numerous language groups. But if he causes the authority trouble, he then becomes conspicuous as a member of a group outside the whole of the New York world, and his conspicuousness is differentiated from all other language groups."

(3) "The American is realistic, concise, exact, irreverent, competent, prompt, and dependable; the Puerto Rican tends to be romantic, diffuse, vague, superstitious, inefficient, dilatory, and unreliable. Where the American is modern, the Puerto Rican is medieval; where the American is scientific, the Puerto Rican is poetic.....The American is impatient with the casual attitudes of the Puerto Ricans; the Puerto Rican is irritated by the exacting demands of the Americans."

And now comes the "friend" of the Puerto Ricans -- Professor Don W. Dodson from N.Y.U., advises a group of Puerto Rican leaders thusly:

"1 - You have migrated from a folk society to an industrial one. To succeed you need education and lots of it.

"2 - Don't mistake problems which are common to us all, such as the housing shortage, as problems which are yours alone.

"3 - Don't mistake clannishness among Americans as prejudice. If peoples from this continent migrated to Puerto Rico in large numbers, the natives would be clannish toward them also.

"4 - Don't let the contrast between yourself and the upper socio-economic strata in this country cause you to despair. These social distances were probably as great or greater where you come from.

"5 - Make generous allowance for the inability of the dominant group to communicate with you. Many people who make honest efforts to know and understand probably don't have the ability to bridge the chasm of cultural difference.

"6 - Don't take your frustrations out on some other group.

"7 - Don't excuse your own shortcomings by claiming you were discriminated against. Undoubtedly you will meet discrimination, but make certain that the cause for your being snubbed does not rest in yourself.

"8 - Don't let your disappointments with New York cause you to be lured into following dictators who promise to deliver you into the "promised land." The greatest betrayal of the century has been the promise on the part of dictators that they would improve the life of the "people". The Communist promise of thirty years ago is still a "Will-o-the-wisp" and the proletariat are no nearer freedom today than they were then."

Puerto Ricans can well do without these "friends!"

These and literally thousands of similar references form the ideological essence of the atmosphere with which the ruling class surrounds the Puerto Rican minority by poisoning the minds of the people of New York with this chauvinistic filth.

From this central theme of "national, racial and social inferiority" derives the whole pattern of relationships affecting the Puerto Rican minority.

In every field of activity, economic, social, or political, the Puerto Rican citizen experiences the pressure of his social condition as a member of an oppressed minority.

Three main forms of discrimination affect the Puerto Rican minority. These three forms are interrelated. They are not peculiar to the Puerto Rican minority since we find either one or all of them affecting other national minorities in the United States; however, these three forms of discrimination in their totality spell out concretely how chauvinism affects the Puerto Rican minority in New York.

The three forms are: First and most extensive - discrimination on the basis of language. Second and most vicious, discrimination on the basis of color. Third, discrimination on the basis of lack of skill.

Throughout our examination we will show how either one or all three effect the specific question under examination.

THE PUERTO RICANS IN INDUSTRY AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

As already stated, the working class sector constitutes the overwhelming majority of the Puerto Rican community in New York City.

But the importance of the working class sector can not be gauged properly by noting only its numerical preponderance. It is the great political and social role which the working class sector of the Puerto Rican minority plays, that must be grasped.

The working class sector of the Puerto Rican minority has a long and heroic history of struggle.

The Puerto Rican workers in New York have not at any time given up or slackened the struggle. Sometimes led by our Party; momentarily led by some fighting members of the petty bourgeoisie, or spontaneously, they have formed their battle lines in defense of their rights as workers, or as members of the oppressed Puerto Rican national minority.

The Puerto Rican workers were there by the thousands when the World Telegram was picketed for its campaign of slanders which it leveled against the Puerto Rican minority in 1947.

They participated by the thousands in the numerous protests organized against the attempted police murder of Herminio Miranda in 1949.

Whole police squads could not stop them during the protest actions against the police-murder of Sergio Rodriguez in 1950.

Spontaneously, they started the powerful campaign of protest which swept the Bronx when King Gonzales, the 16-year-old Puerto Rican youth was murdered by the police in 1952. It was the Puerto Rican workers who scared the daylights out of the police, the landlord and the editors of the El Diario when 700 demonstrated against the eviction of Mrs. Marina Gomez on September 3, 1951, in the Bronx. It was the militant Puerto Rican women, who, with the support of Negro and Italian women, forced the closing of the block where two Puerto Rican children were killed by a truck.

Who chased the Hearst fascist-minded reporters from Lower Harlem in 1952? The Puerto Rican workers and youth did! And this despite the drawn guns of the police who were acting as bodyguards for the men from the Journal-American.

Who was it that fought the bosses and the police on the picket line at Simplicity Patterns on East 102nd Street in 1948? Puerto Rican and Negro young women workers did!

Every day of the week in some part of the city these struggles take place. On police brutality, on housing, on political representation, or the trade union picket line, you find the Puerto Ricans on the battle line. Men and women fighting for their rights.

This is the class with the indomitable spirit, the class that won't bow before insults, threats, police beatings or murders.

This decisive sector of the Puerto Rican National minority, because of its numerical predominance and because of its average age level of 24 years presents an astonishing labor force estimated at around 200,000. At least 45% of this labor force are women.

This labor force is concentrated mainly, but not exclusively, in the following industries:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Garment | 7. Toys and novelties |
| 2. Maritime | 8. Shoe |
| 3. Food and Hotel | 9. Domestic |
| 4. Radio & Electrical | 10. Distributive |
| 5. Laundry | 11. Furniture and Mattress |
| 6. Meat-Packing | 12. Baking |

Other industries where there is a noticeable rise of the Puerto Rican workers are: maintenance, auto and steel, and longshore.

If on the housing question color is the predominant factor in the discrimination of Puerto Ricans; if on the question of education language is the main factor; in industry all three main factors in the discrimination of Puerto Ricans - language, color and skill - are used by the bosses to keep the Puerto Rican worker alongside with the Negro worker in the lowest rung of the industrial ladder.

Menial, unskilled or semi-skilled categories of employment are reserved for the Puerto Rican worker in most shops.

Some shops refuse employment to Puerto Rican workers if they don't talk English fluently. The reason for this is obvious, the division of the workers and the guaranteeing of an ever-increasing rate of profit.

Some of the shops will not employ Puerto Ricans if they DO talk English!

Strange? Not at all!

Exclusive employment of Puerto Rican workers who cannot talk English takes place in the sweatshops in several industries.

The profit motive here is even more shameless and cynical. When this criminal practice of utilizing non-English speaking workers in order to pay them a pittance of a wage becomes a public scandal, then the authorities intervene. Last year Mr. Frank J. Muench, Director of the Wages and Hours Division of New York

and New Jersey, made the following statement:

"In Puerto Rico the average minimum wage in employment covered by the Federal Laws is less than 40 cents per hour. It is as low as 15¢ an hour in some trades such as hand-sewing operations in the leather and textile industries. Transplanted to New York, the uninformed islander eagerly accepts an offer of 50¢ an hour or less." (New York Post, July 24, 1953.)

Who is responsible for the terrible exploitation which victimizes these Puerto Rican workers? Who is to blame for the violation of the minimum wage law? "The Puerto Rican worker, of course. Who else!"

So the newly arrived Puerto Rican worker, who, after being rejected in most shops because of the so-called "language barrier," is forced to accept a miserable wage in a sweat shop, is then made the scapegoat by the official authorities. He, the Puerto Rican worker, and not the bosses, are responsible for sweatshop wage standards. He, the Puerto Rican worker, and not the bosses, with their method of using discrimination to jack-up their profits, is presented as the real culprit.

In the same way as in the housing question, discrimination often forces the Puerto Rican worker to submit to rent-gouging, and then is accused of being responsible for high rentals, in the same way, after being barred from the better-paying jobs by the bosses' discriminatory practices, he is then charged with being responsible for depressing the existing wage standards.

No wonder the owners and managers of the sweatshops continue along merrily exploiting thousands of Puerto Rican workers in the way we have stated.

Job discrimination of Puerto Ricans is never evident in the glowing figures of employment, official and private, that are handed out occasionally. For instance, there are over 300 Puerto Rican workers employed at the Waldorf-Astoria representing 12% of the employees.

They are employed in the following categories, according to management reports: Cooks, Housemen, Elevator Operators, Bus-Boys, Kitchen Helpers, Silvermen and dishwashers.

You would never know that discrimination is so fierce in this industry by just reading that statement. It's obvious that no white-collar, waiters or managerial categories are present here. But there's more to it, much more.

The question to be asked is: How many Puerto Rican cooks and housemen are there? How many of those 300 are dishwashers or kitchen helpers? They are not telling. But they don't have to: we already know by reading the official statement of Local 89 of the Food Industry. It says:

"Although some are cooks, most of our Puerto Rican members are kitchen workers...."

So, in the food industry, for the 20,000 Puerto Rican workers, the representative categories are those where the overwhelming majority of the Puerto Rican workers are employed. This category is where the kitchen menials are found. The silvermen, dishwashers, etc., better known as the "Blue Jackets." That goes for the whole industry - hotels, restaurant, cafeterias and clubs - including the Waldorf with its phony figures.

Moving up the ladder of skilled categories and ratings is a painful process for the Puerto Rican worker in all industries. Up-grading is rather the exception

than the rule. Even where a high level of skill is attained, after years of hard toil, "language" or "color" is used as the deterrent and barrier to up-grading.

In 1947 there were an estimated 20,000 Puerto Rican workers in the sea-going division of the maritime industry. The high rate of organization of the Puerto Rican workers in maritime proves that Puerto Rican workers can and do strive for trade union organization. In 1947, there were about 14,000 Puerto Rican workers in the N.M.U., about 3,000 in the S.I.U., and 2,000 in the M.C. & S., with an additional smattering in the other sea-going craft unions.

If we allow ourselves to be fooled by the reports on the distribution of Puerto Rican personnel aboard ship, based on general ratings, we get a distorted picture of reality. Why? Because in most key ratings in maritime you can find Puerto Ricans as Mates, Engineers, Bosuns, A.B.'s, electricians, carpenters, pump men, stewards, waiters, etc. But if we compare the different key-ratings and other specific categories, then we find that here, too, the overwhelming majority of the Puerto Rican seamen are found in the lowest ratings.

As a matter of fact, for the Puerto Rican seaman, the ship is in the main just a "floating hotel."

Forget the terminology and note the identity of the tasks despite the change of names: "kitchen-utility," "mess-men," "galley-boy." Call them whatever name you will, but still they are the ones that have to work in the kitchen and wash the silver, the dishes, and the pots.

It is in the very appropriately named "LaFonda," meaning "restaurant" in the vernacular of the Puerto Rican worker, that the stewards department finds its most descriptive title. And it is precisely in the "la fonda" part of the steward department where you find most of the Puerto Rican sea-going maritime workers.

Examine the composition of the "SS UNITED STATES" and the "SS AMERICA" of the U.S. Lines, or the Constitution or the Independence of the American Export Line, all passenger ships on the European run, and see what you find. A great many of the crew members are Puerto Ricans. But where, and in what department, do you find them? In the stewards department is where you find most of them.

Here is the breakdown of the composition of the S.S. United States:

Total Crew Members	1,100 men
Licensed Personnel	150 Puerto Rican0
Unlicensed Personnel	950 Puerto Rican134

Here is where the 134 Puerto Ricans are employed in the S.S. United States:

Deck Department	5
Engine Department	15
Steward's Department	114

And what is the base pay of the average Puerto Rican seamen? Here is a table based on the monthly wage rates according to ratings:

<u>RATING</u>	<u>MONTHLY BASE WAGE</u> <u>6/16/53</u>	<u>% Increase</u> <u>'51-'53</u>
<u>Deck Department</u>		
Boatswain	\$ 400.68	20%
Carpenter	375.08	25%
Deck Utilityman	343.98	25%
Able Seaman	314.41	20%
Ordinary Seaman	244.19	8%

<u>RATING</u>	<u>MONTHLY BASE WAGE</u> <u>6/16/53</u>	<u>% Increase</u> <u>'51-'53</u>
<u>Engine Department</u>		
Electrician	\$ 499.25	19%
Asst. Electrician	465.09	41%
Deck Engineer	380.88	27%
Oiler (Steam)	314.41	20%
Fireman (Watertender)	314.41	20%
Wiper	294.30	13%
<u>Steward's Department</u>		
Chief Steward	390.25	20%
Chief Cook	361.18	21%
Second Cook - Baker	361.17	32%
Asst. Cook	310.43	20%
Messman or Utilityman	242.32	7%

Note the low wages of the messmen and utilitymen, and note the low percentage of wage increase.

How many Puerto Rican seamen do you find in the dry cargo boats? Very few. Why? Precisely because, contrary to passenger ships, the steward department is very small.

Where we find exceptions to the general rule is in the ships plying the Latin American run, including Puerto Rico. That is why you find a relatively high percentage of Puerto Ricans in categories outside the steward's department on the Moore MacCormack and Grace Line Ships, and especially in the Agui and Bull Lines, that make the run to the Caribbean.

Of course, we have to note the improvement since the days of the 2% limitation policy against the Negro and Puerto Rican seamen by the U.S. Lines. Also the tremendous role that the rotary system of hiring has played in whittling down discrimination of Puerto Rican seamen by the shipping Companies. But any conclusion which says that all the problems of the Puerto Rican and Negro workers are covered by the effectivity of the hiring hall is either naive or worse.

The hiring hall protects the Puerto Rican seaman's right to his particular rating and nothing else. If the Puerto Rican seaman is strapped and bound to a specific low rating, as is the case, then the hiring hall cannot add one little thing to the fight for his rights to key ratings and upgrading. That problem still remains, no matter how strong the rotary system of employment might be. We want to emphasize the limitations of the hiring hall as a democratic vehicle in the worker's struggle and especially in relation to Negro and Puerto Rican workers rather than negate its great importance. This should be understood.

The shipowners have not given up their main slogan in relation to the Puerto Rican seamen which is "talk American." From the skippers down, all the officers see to it that the atmosphere of discrimination based on language is kept alive. Picking up the slogan from the shipowners, Joe Curran has made this slogan official policy for the N.M.U. through the union's leadership support of a bill that was pigeon-holed in Congress last spring. This bill, the so-called English Language Bill, S. 1255, together with another one introduced by Senator Magnuson, calls for the elimination of non-English speaking seamen from the industry. This bill is unquestionably directed primarily against Puerto Rican seamen. Curran's jingoistic arguments at the convention went unchallenged. That is very dangerous, not only for the Puerto Rican seamen, but for the union as a whole. The use of language qualifications, called "literacy tests," to disfranchise Puerto Rican voters

is now being transferred from the political to the economic scene.

It is very significant that what is tacit practice among the bosses, discriminating against the Puerto Ricans on the basis of language, may yet get a legal prop in industry.

And the N. M. U. leadership and the whole C.I.O. Maritime Committee supports that step. Here is what Joseph Curran had to say in relation to the so-called "English Language Bill." From his report to the 9th N.M.U. Convention we quote:

"On May 15, 1953, we testified before the Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee in favor of S. 1255, the so-called English Language Bill. That bill, also was introduced by Senator Magnuson.

"The first section of the Bill provides that 75% of the crew of cargo and tanker vessels and 100% of the crew on passenger vessels must be able to read and write the English language adequately to perform their shipboard duties.

"The practice of discharging American crew members upon termination of Articles abroad and signing on foreign crews is most deplorable when we consider the national defense aspect of the problem. At the outbreak of war we can depend on an American crew to run a ship to the United States or to a friendly port. We can only hope that a foreign crew would do the same.

"Despite the pressure by our office, this desirable bill was not brought up before the two Houses of Congress. We have not been able to obtain support of this measure by the companies. Passage during this Congress over their objection is unlikely."

First, note the title of the bill, and second, note the emphasis of the first section of this bill. In that section there is demanded that 100% of the crew on the passenger vessels (that is where the Puerto Ricans work) be able to read and write English. Thirdly, note also the appeal by Curran to the shipowners.

We should not be fooled by Joe Curran's demagogic cry against discrimination in his report. How could he be taken at face value on this question of discrimination when in his report to the Ninth National Convention of the National Maritime Union, he states:

"True, we still have people who occasionally raise the color question in the union. We are aware of the fact that there are still a few Communists on the ships. We know that these persons will use every strategy to divide the Union by creating false issues of discrimination..."

We should not follow the left sectarian tactics of making Curran the main target in the struggle for the rights of the seamen. For we know that their main enemy are their exploiters, the shipowners.

In the maritime industries the struggle for the rights of the Negro and Puerto Rican seamen must be based not only on the general problems facing all seamen but on the problems that effect them specifically.

An exception in the Maritime industry is the Marine Cooks & Stewards. This union does have a program of struggle for the rights of the Puerto Rican seamen. More than that, it fights for that program. In the New York Port local there are two Puerto Rican patrolmen and the union as a whole is leading the fight against

the so-called "language bill."

Another industry with large numbers of Puerto Ricans is the garment trades industry. This industry, without question, has the largest number of Puerto Rican workers in any given industry. In 1947 there were an estimated 30,000 Puerto Ricans in this industry. 10,000 were organized, especially in the IIG, and some in the Amalgamated. At present there are an estimated 50,000 Puerto Ricans in the garment trades.

Most of these are women. The reason for the overwhelming preponderance of Puerto Rican women rather than men lies in the fact that Puerto Rican women were already skilled in the needle trades before they came to the United States.

In Puerto Rico this industry constituted almost the only industry where women could be found in great numbers.

Does this mean that since Puerto Rican women are skilled and trained in the needle trades that they are not discriminated against? Of course not! "Language" and "color" still remain for the bosses to hang their hats on to get extra profits from them. Where are the Puerto Rican women employed who are members of the IIG? Are they subjected to special forms of discrimination and exploitation? According to Saby Nehama, one of Dubinsky's pets in Local 22, they are doing fine and are a contented lot. As reported to the New York Post last July 24, they are very happy earning from \$47 to "well over \$100." Well, all that old Saby has to do is produce a record of one Puerto Rican earning over \$100 for one single week and his case is proven.

But there happens to be many, many more than even the 2,000 Puerto Rican women Saby reported as members of Local No. 22. The question is: What is the average wage of the Puerto Rican worker in the IIG? Even the lower figure of \$47. a week is above average for the Puerto Rican needle trades worker. Where are the Puerto Rican women in Saby's Local employed? The "skilled" as finishers and operators, in the cheap lines in the popular shops below 35th Street - the unskilled as floor workers.

When we talk about Local No. 22, we are referring to a part of those who are organized. Conditions for the rest of the organized are more or less the same as those in Local No. 22.

But how about the two-thirds who are unorganized? How are they employed? What are the wage levels in these unorganized shops? What relation, if any, is there between the Needle Trades Unions, both the IIG and the Amalgamated, to the unorganized Puerto Rican needle trades workers?

On September 9th, 1951, the Director of the Wages and Hours Division, Mr. Muench, stated to the local Spanish press:

"There are in the City of New York large numbers of Puerto Ricans who are not receiving the minimum wage of 75 cents an hour, or any pay for overtime work."

In what industry, in the main, do we find these sweatshop conditions? Editorializing on Muench's statement, the El Diario commented:

"The truth is that thousands of Puerto Ricans, especially in the needle industry are receiving less than the Federal Law minimum of 75¢. In dozens of garment shops, where there is no union, workers do not get the minimum wage or pay for overtime work."

Yes, dozens, practically all of the unorganized sweatshops have such conditions!

And why don't these workers get organized?

The main reason is given to you directly by the unorganized Puerto Rican workers themselves. They all tell you that at one time or another they tried to get organized in such and such a shop. They get in touch with the ILG or the Amalgamated; or the reverse, representatives of those unions contacted them after the workers started getting together to demand better wages and conditions. But the result was invariably the same. After a protracted period in which the union did nothing whatsoever to help the struggle, the women had to return to work and never saw those union representatives again. In the rare occasion where the shops were organized, neither wage standards or conditions changed, and the women workers began to look for better conditions in the other unorganized shops. They tell you frankly:

"Those guys from the union and the contractors and the jobbers are in cahoots."

"They don't want to organize the shops in the Puerto Rican neighborhoods."

"I know so and so and so and so, who are members of the union, and they tell me that discrimination is so rampant that the only reason they stay in the union is because they hate to change jobs."

That's why you get such reactions from the Puerto Rican workers as expressed in a letter to the El Diario:

"Dear Editor:

Myself and 87 fellow workers belonging to Local 91 of the ILGWU want to change unions, and we are willing to vote for it."

Sad, but true.

Despite all that and pressured by the growing number, thousands of Puerto Rican women are streaming downtown and becoming organized, as members of Locals 22 (dresses), 23 (skirts), 91 (children's wear), 62 (underwear), and 25 (blouses). As a matter of fact, they - together with the Negro workers - represent the fastest growing group in the ILG. But the fact is that so long as the great majority of the Puerto Rican needle trades workers remain unorganized and super-exploited in the neighborhood sweatshops, the struggle against the bosses, jobbers, and contractors in the garment industry will be that much harder. It is no accident that the so-called system of sectional work, which now threatens the whole industry and the organized workers' wage standards, was first introduced and established in those sweatshops.

Another aspect of this question is the fact of the almost total absence of Puerto Rican men in the industry. Puerto Rican men are denied accessibility to the skilled categories such as cutters as in Locals 9 and 17 of the ILG.

The Puerto Rican needle trades workers can and will join the union despite the discriminatory policies of Dubinsky & Co., or Potofsky, but for that to happen the progressives in the ILG and the Amalgamated will have to fight in a way that convinces these workers that besides Zimmerman and Saby, there are the thou-

sands of rank-and-file members ready to strengthen the union and to fight for better wages, conditions, and against discriminatory practices by the bosses.

The toy and novelty industry is another where large numbers of Puerto Ricans are found. One local alone, Local 223, AFL, has 7500 Puerto Ricans out of its 10,000 total membership.

We do not have sufficient data on the Radio & Electrical Industry. Therefore, we can only give some facts, in relation to that section of the industry under the leadership of Local 430, U.E.

The membership of the local is between 3,500 and 4,000. Of this number 900 are Spanish speaking, 95% of them Puerto Ricans.

The proportion of Puerto Ricans in each category of the industry is as follows:

Unskilled-Assembly mainly Puerto Rican
 Semi-skilled - soldering and wiring some Puerto Ricans
 Skilled - testing none

<u>RATING</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>RATE OF HOURLY PAY</u>	<u>PUERTO RICANS</u>
Unskilled	Assembly	From \$1.13 to \$1.47	Highest %
Semi-Skilled	Soldering & Wiring	From \$1.20 to \$1.60	Some
Skilled	Testing		None

In the shops where there are machine shops the breakdown is as follows:

Semi-skilled	Drill Press		Some
	Punch Press		
	Riveting		
Skilled	Lathes, etc.	From \$1.70 to \$1.75	Some
	Machinist 2nd Class	\$1.92	None
	Machinist 1st class	From \$2.15 to \$2.20	None
	Tool and Die	From \$2.50 to \$2.75	None

The lack of upgrading of Puerto Rican workers even under the leadership of a progressive union such as Local 430, shows the lack of struggle on this vital front.

There too we note the absence in the leadership of Puerto Rican workers except that for a short period there was one Puerto Rican on the staff, but he was asked to resign because of retrenchment,

There are 65,000 organized Puerto Rican workers in New York City.

The following list of union locals in the different industries contain the bulk of the organized Puerto Rican workers. These are:

Garment: Locals 22, 91, 23, 25, 62, AFL
 Electrical: (UE): Locals 430, 475
 Maritime: NMU, CIO; M. C. & S., Ind.; S.I.U., A.F.L.
 Laundry Workers: Amalgamated, CIO
 Food, Hotel, Restaurant, Cafeteria & Clubs: Locals 89, 6, 302, 1, AFL
 Distributive: Local 65
 Toy and Novelties: Locals 223, 147, 130 IIG
 Furniture and Mattress: Local 140 CIO

There are 138,000 unorganized Puerto Rican workers, or two-thirds of the total Puerto Rican labor force!

For years, the Puerto Rican workers have participated in the trade union movement. The Puerto Rican worker has been equal to any other worker in militancy in the struggle and devotion to his trade union.

The Puerto Rican seamen participated and fought in the tough and rough days of the struggle to organize the NMU. In any strike action, or any kind of struggle in the defense of the NMU from the attacks of the shipowners, the Puerto Rican seamen have been in the forefront of the struggle. Twice, that we can remember, the whole community of Lower Harlem was mobilized by the Puerto Rican seamen in support of the NMU. We remember quite distinctly the old Mella Club as headquarters for the fighting seamen.

The Puerto Rican worker in Local 302 and in the other food locals have given a good accounting of themselves in the militant and heroic participation in strike actions and struggles around the organization of Horn and Hardart.

In Garment, in Laundry, in Electric, in every industry in which he is organized he has given a good accounting of himself as a militant trade unionist.

The Puerto Rican worker in New York understands that membership in a trade union is the answer to his security, insofar as the bosses' policy of placing him, together with the Negro worker, in the group last to be hired and first to be fired.

The Puerto Rican worker understands that the only real weapon he has to make the bosses pay him a standard wage is to belong to a trade union. The Puerto Rican worker knows that the only possibility he has of attaining a skill rating is by belonging to a trade union.

The Puerto Rican worker is very much aware that the bosses' slogan of "talk American" and "for whites only" which victimizes him cannot be eradicated in industry unless he belongs to a trade union which defends his rights. The Puerto Rican worker is as conscious, and with much more reason than many other workers, of the need for trade union affiliation.

Trade union consciousness is not something inborn, nor does it come from abstract intelligence. It is something the workers develop through experience and necessity. Which group of workers, besides the Negro workers, have such rich experience of oppression and exploitation as the Puerto Rican workers have? Which group of workers have a greater need to unite and defend the interests common to all workers?

The Puerto Rican worker cannot help but seek membership in a trade union. For him to join a fighting trade union is not a question of abstract ideal, but a matter of immediate self-interest, more than that, for the Puerto Rican worker it means survival.

Then why is it that there are 135,000 unorganized Puerto Ricans, or two-thirds of the total Puerto Rican labor force? Or why is it that so many Puerto Rican workers who are members of trade unions are - in the words of some trade union leaders - "apathetic" and "unconcerned" about attending meetings and other activities of his union?

Here is how this problem was projected at a joint AFL and CIO Conference on the "Puerto Rican Problem", which took place on December 20, 1952:

Among the 100 delegates attending were Zimmerman of the I.L.G.W.U., Morris Iushwitz of the City CIO Council, Mike Lopez of Local 302 AFL, Robert Clark of District 3 IUE, Ernest Dumont, Local 75, Wholesale and Retail, Aaron Pankin and Saby Nehama, Local 22, IIGWU, and Schneider, Local 91, IIGWU.

The first thing to be said about this trade union conference is that it is expressive of the growing concern by the leadership of the labor movement with the rapidly expanding Puerto Rican labor force in New York City.

When 100 leaders in the labor movement gather to discuss the problems of the Puerto Rican workers in New York regardless of their approach, it must be recognized as an important development. It signifies that no longer can the Puerto Rican workers be ignored by the labor leadership.

The main resolution of the conference stated the following:

"The failure to extend organization to Spanish speaking workers has resulted in serious challenges to the established trade unions. They, because of their economic situation, language difficulties and newness in the community, are like all new arrivals, the easiest to exploit. Such exploitation threatens to depress wage standards of organized workers."

Individually, or collectively, the opportunists in the labor movement, all agree with the bourgeoisie that the Puerto Ricans are to blame for the low wages forced upon them and that they constitute a "threat" to the organized workers. By the way, notice that Schneider from Local 91 of the IIGWU was among those present, and it is from his union that the group of 87 Puerto Rican women wanted to leave because of the crass chauvinism prevalent in the union against Puerto Ricans.

The first question, the question of the unorganized Puerto Rican workers, we have already discussed in relation to the garment industry and what holds true of garment is true of every other industry with large numbers of unorganized Puerto Rican workers. Here we would like to add a fact among the many in the experiences of the unorganized Puerto Rican workers who try to get organized. In most cases, the organization drive in a shop with large numbers of unorganized Puerto Rican workers starts from within. They themselves have to seek for the given trade union local which is willing to take them in. Now, who is "apathetic?"

Then, if the drive is successful, there is not enough protection for those Puerto Rican workers who gave leadership in the struggle for organization from the bosses' reprisals. However, if the struggle fails, then all of those Puerto Rican workers are quickly forgotten by the trade union organizers and leaders.

And how about the existence of "apathy" and "lack of concern" of those who do belong to a trade union? We will give some facts about conditions in the shops and the policies and attitudes of the leadership of the trade unions. This so-called apathy is caused by the chauvinistic policies and procedures which exist in the trade unions toward the Puerto Rican members.

Take the question of up-grading, for instance. Where is the trade union with a conscious policy of up-grading Puerto Rican workers? The fact is that in most cases where up-grading of Puerto Rican workers takes place it has come about as a result of the bosses' attempts to lower the cost of production by promoting a Puerto Rican worker at lower than average pay. It has been very rare indeed, even where the level of skill and seniority status exists that a trade union has insisted that an opening for promotion be given to a Puerto Rican T.U. member.

Then there is the question of trade union leadership. How many of the 65,000 Puerto Ricans in the trade unions form part of the leadership of their unions? We could count them on the fingers of one hand. Even where they constitute the bulk of the membership, as in Local 223, Toys and Novelties, or in the Meat Packing locals, you don't find them in any position of leadership.

An examination of the locals with token Puerto Rican leadership - and that's all they are right now, wherever it exists - will show that it is the right-led unions which have the most Puerto Ricans in any category of leadership and among these is Bakers' Local No. 405 which has a Puerto Rican secretary.

On September 13, 1953, a news item appeared in the New York Times which stated:

"Courses to teach Puerto Ricans how to be labor leaders will be started soon by the Association of Catholic Trade Unions. Robert Moxer, Executive Secretary of the New York Chapter, declared: The growing number of Puerto Ricans in New York has offered us a challenge in the field of labor education. The very evident exploitation of these workers by some employers and some union officials demands that these people be educated in their rights and duties as trade unionists."

And here it is once again: the problem of the Puerto Rican worker lies within himself. It's "lack of education" that ails him in the industrial field.

Isn't this the line of Messrs. Senior, Present, et al?

And how about Puerto Rican leadership in the trade union movement? Yes, pious Mr. Moxer agrees that there should be Puerto Rican leadership. But, what kind? "Puerto Rican labor school leaders to educate the Puerto Ricans."

How about educating the bosses by fighting to keep them from relegating the Puerto Rican worker to menial tasks and paying him substandard wages? How about educating, at least a little bit, the trade union opportunist leadership who have borrowed the ideology and the method of the bosses on the question of discrimination?

How about an earnest fight to integrate the Puerto Ricans in the trade union leadership in those industries where they work? We are sure that Mr. Moxer will not agree to any such "nonsense."

To sum up: The Puerto Rican Labor force in New York City is increasing at a very fast pace. There is no force that can contain it. Neither oppression nor discrimination can deter the Puerto Rican workers from joining the ranks of the labor movement. The question is not whether the Puerto Rican workers could play a positive role or not. The objective conditions of their existence has decided that already.

The question is: Will the trade union movement make it possible for the Puerto Rican workers to play the role that they can play to their full potentiality?

This question will depend for an answer on the rank-and-file of the trade union movement, and especially by the Communists in the trade unions.

* * * * *

POLICE BRUTALITY

Police brutality consists of thousands of incidents of police murder, beatings, mobbings and frame-ups, involving Puerto Ricans and other Latin American citizens. Many cases of murders of Puerto Rican youths at the hands of cops have been recorded since 1949. Among these we cite the following:

German Nieves, 23, killed on East River Drive, September, 1949
Francisco Gonzales, only witness to the above-mentioned murder,
found dead in Brooklyn, September, 1949.
Cesar Flores, 25, killed in the Bronx, December 17, 1952
Carmelo Figueroa, killed in the Bronx, April, 1952
Mario Lopez, killed at Suffolk St., New York, spring of 1953
Sergio Rodriguez, killed in Lower Harlem, fall of 1950
Jose Rafael Ramirez, killed in the Bronx, 1952
King Gonzalez, 16, killed in the Bronx, 1952

Dozens of others barely escaped with their lives. Space and time do not permit specifying all recorded cases. We recall the case of Herminio Miranda, 18 years old, who was saved from being murdered by a cop by the swift intervention of a neighborhood crowd when the policeman was about to finish him up, after having severely wounded Miranda.

Police beatings of Puerto Ricans are a daily occurrence. Among the most notorious cases on record are those involving Rafael Perez and Jesus Donato in August, 1952, at 52nd Street and Third Avenue, when 19 year old Donato tried to call an ambulance for his sister who was about to give birth. Another case was that of Rafael Bonet, on the East Side, in August, 1952.

Mrs. Rosa Viruet, mother of 8 children, at 307 West 48th Street, beaten up by several cops in 1952; Ramon Ramos; Rafael Sanchez, 16; Mrs. Lindsey; Herman Ramirez, 22; Ismael Soto; Carlos Sanchez; Victor Hernandez; Pedro Montalvo; and Eduardo Noriega, all of them innocent victims of police beatings.

FRAME-UPS

Typical cases of frame-ups are the case of Gilberto Mateo of West 92nd St. whose case was won after a very determined struggle put up by the progressive organizations on the West Side; and that of Amparo Roman, the Puerto Rican nurse accused of being a trafficker in narcotics because she carried a hypodermic needle in her bag.

MOBBINGS

Mobbings occur periodically in or near every Puerto Rican community. Experience has shown that in every case of mobbing the police are somewhere in the background.

We could list quite an impressive number of such cases. Suffice it to mention the attacks against the residents of the house at 109th Street and Second Avenue, where Jose Colon, Jose Carrillo, Rafael and Epifania Cruz were brutally beaten by a mob. Or the case of the Dionistio Rodriguez family of 435 East 147 Street, who were brutally beaten and their whole apartment wrecked by hoodlums. Or the grenade that was thrown into a bar two days before Christmas, 1952, injuring the following Puerto Ricans: Jean Garcia, Carmen Rodriguez, William Rodriguez, Estaban Melendes, Angel Gonzalez, and Luis Zayas.

And then the apologists for the ruling class point to the court records to "prove" the "criminality" of the Puerto Rican citizens. This is what the so-

called court records show for 1952:

Court cases involving Spanish names:

Felony Court.....	11%	of total cases
General Sessions.....	13%	of total cases
Youth Term.....	21%	of total cases
Domestic Relations.....	30%	of total cases

Indeed this shows a great record of criminality, especially police frame-ups of Puerto Rican youth as well as the phenomenal prosecution of unemployed Puerto Rican workers by the Welfare Dept. for non-support.

Faced with the rising anger and protest from the Puerto Rican community, the local authorities called on the so-called Mayor's Committee on Puerto Rican Affairs to "investigate." This is what the Committee reported:

"There is a wide and growing gulf between the police in East Harlem and the Puerto Rican people there. The two recent fatal shootings of Puerto Rican citizens, justified or not, have raised the tension between the citizens and the police to a new high pitch."

According to the Mayor's Committee's findings, the problem is reduced to the simple proposition of the existence of a "gulf" between the police and the Puerto Rican citizens in East Harlem. But who was it that got shot? How about the murder of Lopez and Flores? It is clear that it is the Puerto Rican citizen who gets shot, and not only in East Harlem, but all over New York. What does the Mayor's Committee propose to end police brutality and murder? Again we quote the Mayor's Committee: "There are too few police officers in East Harlem."

The solution, then, according to the Mayor's Committee, is more and better police beatings, more frame-ups, more murders, and to quote the Committee's own statement - "whether justified or not."

We can feel assured that Police Commissioner Monaghan is more than pleased with such an approach and will proceed to look the other way when trigger happy storm-trooper cops continue and increase their savage murders and brutality against Puerto Rican citizens.

Here we must point out to the specific role that those elements among the upper rung of the Puerto Rican middle class play, as they strive to throttle the fight-back of the Puerto Rican minority, and especially by the workers.

The Mayor's Committee includes several Puerto Ricans as members of that body, yet they not only permit but actually assist in the handling of these serious questions in the manner in which we have stated. The upper rung of Puerto Rican members of the Mayor's Committee on Puerto Rican affairs are in it not in order to fight in the interest of the Puerto Rican minority, but on the contrary, to assist and shield those responsible for such criminal practices as police brutality. This is how Mr. Manuel Cabranes, Secretary of the Mayor's Committee, deals with the question of police brutality:

"Cases of alleged maltreatment of Puerto Ricans at the hands of the police, that have occasionally reached the Mayor's Committee, have been referred to the Police Commissioner for investigation."

In this connection, we also would like to point to the specific role that the Spanish language daily, "El Diario," plays. This is the most influential and

"representative" of the existing dailies. The editors of "El Diario" beginning with Jose Davila Ricci play the same identical role as apologists and shock absorbers for the ruling class as the members of the Mayor's Committee. This is understandable. We know that it is Venezuelan-Rockefeller oil interests who are the chief sponsors of "El Diario." Besides, the so-called Puerto Rican Commonwealth is a heavy contributor to its finances.

On every important issue, on every occasion, when the Puerto Ricans move in struggle, the "El Diario" is right there, acting as the demobilizing element, creating confusion and false illusions.

This does not mean that the editors of "El Diario" are immune to mass pressure from the Puerto Rican minority. On the contrary, since the commodity that they peddle is their ability to immobilize and confuse, they are very vulnerable to pressure from below. Here are some examples of how "El Diario" "fights" police brutality:

"Five youths were accused of homicide yesterday as a result of the death of Elmer Olsen....Thirty cops were assigned to investigate the case,"

Here's how the New York Post reported the same case:

"A navy yard worker was stabbed and a companion slashed in a fight with four Puerto Ricans....Police said Olsen and three other workers visited a bar after they came off their jobs....as they approached the subway, they noticed four men....one of the navy yard workers called: 'What are you? Hindus?'"

Here's another typical reportage of the "El Diario," August 31st, 1952:

"Carlos Lozano, 21, was taken to Knickerbocker Hospital after he attacked a policeman....Patrolman Donovan of the 24th Precinct stated that Lozano was acting suspiciously at 4:30 a.m. in front of his house."

And still another reportage from the "El Diario":

"November 14, 1951. At the moment that they assaulted a victim, two Spanish speaking youths were caught by the police. They died as a result of the shooting when they disobeyed the order to surrender."

That is concretely how the upper rung of the Puerto Rican petty-bourgeoisie aid their masters.

But the ruling class does not feel that the local Uncle Toms have reached enough "maturity" as tools and apologists to be fully entrusted with the task of disorienting and demobilizing the masses of the Puerto Rican minority. That is why they have imported quite a number of officials of the Puerto Rican "Commonwealth" to act as instructors and tutors in the art of the "sell-out" to their less experienced prototypes.

The spokesmen for the ruling class are appreciative of the role that these true representatives of the Puerto Rican compradores are playing, not only in relation to the Puerto Rican nation, but also in relation to the Puerto Rican minority, as was indicated by the New York Times, on November 3, 1952:

"The Mayor's Committee on Puerto Rican Affairs in New York City will soon have four new members....Chancellor Jaime Benitez of the University of Puerto Rico, Mariano Villaronga, Secretary of Education, Fernando Sierra Berdecia, Secretary of Labor, and Theodoro Moscoso, Administrator of Economic Development. These men represent the new generation which, under the administration of Governor Munoz Marin, is achieving something like a miracle of progress in what was once a wretchedly impoverished island. They understand their own people, and their own people's problems, and can give us good advice as to how to improve the lot of the Puerto Rican who is temporarily or permanently a New Yorker."

In order to get the full meaning of the above quotation, we must, if briefly, explain the changes that have occurred in the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States.

All of the reforms in the Organic Act of Puerto Rico, from the elective governor to the so-called Puerto Rican Constitution, represent nothing else than gimmicks attempting to conceal the rape of the Puerto Rican nation by American imperialism.

The alleged changes in the political status of the Puerto Rican nation were made primarily in an attempt to quiet down the clamor of protest against the enslavement of Puerto Rico all over Latin America. That this was the chief aim of the American imperialists is proved by the following statement made by Justice Cecil Snyder, of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court, during the Congressional Hearings on the so-called Constitution Bill....

"The primary purpose of H.R. 7674 is that it firmly, definitively, irrevocably, once and for all negates the concept that Puerto Rico is a colony. The United States is not an imperialistic nation. It has not treated Puerto Rico as a colony. And H.R. 7674 is designed precisely to wipe out any last, lingering doubt on that score....I think that if this bill is not enacted, Congress will have failed to avail itself of a golden opportunity to make clear to the world, particularly to Latin America, the breadth of self-government which Puerto Rico has already achieved."

Painting the facade of the model colony in bright colors was a necessity called forth by the policies of world domination, conquest and war of American imperialism, since the end of the Second World War. This farce of national "Freedom" was made possible by the willing assistance of the collaborationist sector of the Puerto Rican bourgeoisie. The Puerto Rican compradores, willing and docile instruments that they are, have played their role to perfection.

Governor Luis Munoz Marin is today the leader and chief spokesman for the Puerto Rican compradores. He is carrying out his task of headman of the collaborators in a commendable fashion. No wonder his masters praise him to the skies. In a recent speech broadcast to the United States, he said:

"On the 25th of July, 1952, we formalized a new relation between the people of Puerto Rico and the people of the United States, which places us in a favorable position to interpret for the world the true meaning of liberty and democracy as it is lived by a Latin people of the west in association with the biggest democracy of the west. We are helping to eliminate some of the misunderstandings and suspicions harbored in relation to the economic and political power of the United States, specially among

the 170,000,000 other citizens of the New World, who inhabit the twenty Latin American Republics which also commemorate Columbus' bold voyage....."

But Munoz Marin and his minions have been given a new task. This is to extend their responsibility as "mayorales" (slave drivers) to the Puerto Rican minority in the United States. Previously, the ruling class very seldom called on them to assist in problems dealing with the minority, but lately, the intervention by Marin and company in the affairs of the Puerto Ricans here have been on the increase.

A new theory of the specific character of the citizenship of the Puerto Ricans in the United States is being projected. According to this new thesis, the Puerto Ricans in the United States are U.S. citizens only by virtue of the "new status." They are primarily citizens of the "Puerto Rican Commonwealth."

Therefore the authorities in the United States bear no responsibility for the Puerto Ricans here. Here is how the new gimmick is presented. Addressing the Puerto Rican minority in the U.S. on July 26, 1953, Munoz Marin said:

"Migration without proper orientation can create serious problems of adjustment for the migrant and for the community that he freely selects. The government of Puerto Rico estimates that it should reduce this risk. The Commonwealth discharges these obligations, fixed by law, according to its not so abundant resources. It is the first time in the long history of human migration that a government establishes this type of protection for its citizens who migrate."

Echoing Governor Munoz Marin, the official theoretician on the Puerto Rican minority, Clarence Senior stated in a speech delivered in May, 1953:

"The Puerto Rican migrants have the interest and aid of their own government, which few immigrants ever had."

Taking off from this "new citizenship" concept and in discharge of their tasks, the imported officials of the Puerto Rican Commonwealth act on the different problems facing the Puerto Rican minority in New York City. Here is how they understand and react to the specific problem of police brutality. Mr. Jose Monserrat, Director of the Office of Puerto Rico in New York, has this to say:

"The relations between the police and the Puerto Ricans have not always been what they should be. In many cases this is due to the language problem. Few policemen speak Spanish, and if the Puerto Rican does not speak English, it is easy for difficult and disagreeable situations to develop, sometimes even tragic, because they cannot understand each other."

But even the participation of the Puerto Rican compradores in the affairs of the minority does not fill the ruling class with a full sense of security. That is why they have introduced a few "gauleiters" of their own, who act as chief ideologists and supervisors. Among these gauleiters we find the above quoted Clarence Senior: professor sociologist, author, and chief ideologist and theoretician of the "Puerto Rican problem." Professor Senior, formerly of the Columbia University is at the present moment the head of the Migration Division of the Government of Puerto Rico.

Another specimen of the gauleiters is Mr. Harris L. Present: lawyer, philanthropist, and do-gooder. Mr. Present is now the legal and social adviser for the Spanish-American Youth Bureau.

Now the ruling class is all set and ready to deal with the "rising Puerto Rican problem in the United States."

These three sets of stooges can be observed every day acting separately or in unison as apologists and shock-absorbers, always striving to divert the Puerto Rican minority from the path of struggle.

* * * * *

EDUCATION

Another important question facing the Puerto Rican minority of New York is education. Here, as elsewhere, the ideological variations to the central jingoistic theme is noted. However, there is a special quality to the approach of the ruling class to the Puerto Rican minority on this question.

Let us introduce the subject in its general aspects first, and then single out its most important features. There are 1,200 schools in New York City: 802 are public schools; 398 are Catholic. There are 575 elementary public schools and 227 public high schools. There are 299 elementary Parochial schools and 99 Parochial high schools.

The 1947 report of the Board of Education shows the following percentage and distribution of Puerto Rican students in the city schools by boroughs:

Schools where Puerto Rican students are 50% of
Total Enrollment

Manhattan7 schools
Bronx1 school
Brooklyn.2 schools

Schools where Puerto Ricans form 11 to 49% of
School Enrollment

Manhattan24 schools
Bronx19 schools
Brooklyn.15 schools

The 1953 fall enrollments for public school students total 915,165. Of these, 59,000 are Puerto Rican students. There are 305,000 elementary parochial school students. Of these, 5,000 are Puerto Ricans.

The breakdown by categories and the ratio of Puerto Rican students is as follows:

IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Kindergarten	.....51,000	.....1,000	Puerto Ricans
Elementary	.....549,131	.....46,571	" "
Junior High	.....114,530	.....9,000	" "
High school:			
Academic	.....149,000	.....1,199	" "
Vocational	.....41,500	.....1,200	" "

The 1953 school registration shows that in Manhattan there are Puerto Rican students in every one of the 125 schools except three.

We would like to point out that the 1947 report of the Board of Education listed the estimated student Puerto Rican population as 25,000. In 1953, this figure has almost trebled. We have already given the example of P.S. 9 to note the rate of increase of Puerto Rican students in Manhattan schools. Therefore, it is logical to expect that there must be a relative increase in all the schools of Manhattan, and in many of the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens.

According to the New York Post of July 29, 1953, the "majority of the 475 elementary schools have at least 10% Puerto Rican enrollment, in some, the ratio runs as high as 80%."

Another notable change in the Puerto Rican student body in the city schools was the enrollment this year of 13,000 Puerto Rican students. This shows the rapid relative and absolute growth of the Puerto Rican student population.

On the 1953 enrollment data, we observe the following:

1. The percentage of Puerto Rican elementary school students is 6% of the total. The percentage of Puerto Rican high school students is only 1%.

2. The percentage of Puerto Rican vocational high school students is 3%. The percentage of Puerto Rican academic high school students is 8/10 of 1%.

Discriminatory practices in this field, PLUS economic pressures which specially affect the Puerto Rican minority are responsible for these discrepancies.

Now, let us examine the educational methods, approaches and procedures used in the New York City school system in relation to the Puerto Rican students. How do the spokesmen of the ruling class view the problem of the Puerto Rican students in New York?

Listing the so-called problems arising from the increased Puerto Rican minority of New York, the Board of Education stated they are:

"What are some of the problems raised from this increasing registration of Puerto Rican students? Briefly stated they are:

- "1. The students do not understand the English language.
- "2. The educational background is poor and inadequate.
- "3. Many of the children came to the schools at about 16 years of age, and because they do not adjust readily, apply for employment certificates soon after they register.
- "4. Many of the children present health defects. They do not cooperate in the remedial measures.
- "5. The children show a tendency of keeping apart from the rest of the students, and seem to persist in talking Spanish."

"The students do not understand the English language." This sweeping statement artificially blows up the language problem which in the main applies only to the recently arrived Puerto Rican child and which, in the absence of discrimination and segregation, could be eradicated in a few weeks or months, and projects it as the general problem of all the Puerto Rican children. From then on, the "language barrier" myth becomes the main prop of discriminatory practices in the schools.

Also, the clear effect of discrimination and segregation are rationalized as expressive of "a tendency to keep apart from the rest of the children and to persist in talking Spanish." So, it's that the Puerto Rican children do not like

to mix with the rest of the children, and not that discrimination keeps them apart.

Finally, characterizing the so-called problem of the Puerto Rican child as "restlessness, shyness, tantrums, and behaviour characteristics" is a very convenient method to distort the real problem of poverty and discrimination and transforms it into a subjective, psychological, near Freudian question.

The New York City Welfare Council lends a hand in establishing the so-called "great problem" of the Puerto Rican children. The following statement is found in the Council's 1948 "Report on the Puerto Ricans in New York City":

"The public schools, which have a large proportion of Puerto Rican students, and specially the high schools, have had much difficulty in inducting the children into the system. Teachers have found them slower to learn English than are many European-born children, and have not understood why this should be so. Nor have the teachers understood why so many Puerto Rican children should be unprepared to enter the classes normal for their age even if their English were sufficient."

Here again comes the "language barrier." But this time the emphasis is not in the elementary schools, but in the high schools.

Now, the bulk of the Puerto Rican high school students got there from the elementary and grammar schools. How come they "cannot" talk English? The fact is that the overwhelming majority, almost the totality, of the Puerto Rican high school students, do speak English, as well as the children of the other national groups. But since there is a need for a "language barrier," a slight exaggeration or distortion does not hurt.

And here it is, cynically and brazenly stated that the Puerto Rican children have something, some innate deficiency as compared to the European children which prevents them from learning, not only English, but any subject. The stigma of inferiority is made to stick.

We will come back later on to the problem of retardation that the Council says, "they cannot understand."

Here is how the New York Times shows the contrast between the Puerto Rican and the non-Puerto Rican children in the city schools. From an article by Gertrude Samuels in the Sunday Times, October 11, 1953, we quote:

"The youngsters present extraordinary contrasts. There are smartly dressed children, accompanied by chic young mothers; there are average children neither conspicuously elegant nor conspicuously shabby; and there are the recent arrivals from Puerto Rico, who are poorly dressed, volatile, and chatter in Spanish and English. The economic and physical gaps between the first and the third group are sharp."

You can substitute the phrase "recent arrivals from Puerto Rico" for "Puerto Rican children" and get what Miss Samuels means. Note also the reference to the "chatter in English and Spanish" and grasp what she means by "physical gap."

But by far, the worst feature of the Board of Education's policies in relation to the Puerto Rican students is the wide-spread establishment of the so-called "C", that is Corridor or vestibule classes.

Despite the repeated denials, these classes constitute a form of Jim Crow in the school system in New York.

The Board of Education protests that the purpose of what they call the "group classes" is to help the Puerto Rican child to learn the English language. It defends its own policy of segregation of Puerto Rican children by stating:

"The practice of a special temporary grouping can in no way be viewed as segregation, for it is obvious that the purpose of segregation is to deny opportunity and equality, while the purpose of grouping is to prepare children for equality of educational opportunity and full participation in the life of the school and the community."

"Equality" indeed is the aim. Just like the southern bourbons talk about "separate but equal facilities for the Negro."

We can see the kind of help Puerto Rican children get by the record and the experience of the "retarded classes" category in which the Puerto Rican children are placed if and when they leave the "C" classes. Isn't it a peculiar form of preparation for "equality"? Of course the Puerto Rican children are "advanced" from "C" classes to "retarded classes" after properly and "scientifically" being tested with the most "advanced" I Q methods.

Again we recall the low percentage of Puerto Rican students in High Schools and especially in the academic category. Is that how the Board of Education prepares students for "full participation in the life of the community?"

The student life of the Puerto Rican child is very hard, but you can count on the school authorities to help them endure it. How?

In the above mentioned article by Gertrude Samuels:

"To take the stigma away from the newcomers, the principal, Mrs. Selkove, invented a word. This is the word 'kwniline' from the words 'children whose native language is not English' -- which could apply to Puerto Rican, Turkish, French, or any children who do not speak English."

Isn't Mrs. Selkove humane and decent?

It is true that there are no Turkish children in P.S. 9. It is also true that 33 per cent of the enrollment there is Puerto Rican. Of course, that is merely incidental.

Practice and experience gives the lie to any claims that this vicious segregation is done in the real interest of the Puerto Rican child.

In an article in the New York Times, Peter Khiss reports the following:

"At P.S. 121, 232 East 103rd Street, Principal William H. Lane reported non-English speaking Puerto Ricans used to be kept in a special class. Study indicated that they might learn a few basic words faster, though they tended to keep speaking Spanish as a common tongue and also might suffer a feeling of segregation. Now the school tries to pair them with English speaking youngsters in regular classes."

Another facet of this same problem involves the question of Puerto Rican teachers. There are twenty Puerto Rican teachers employed by the Board of Education. All of them have been assigned to these special "C" classes. Thus we have a rounded-out picture of segregation, segregated classes for Puerto Rican children and Jim Crow Puerto Rican teachers.

Why aren't there any Puerto Rican teachers in the city schools except those recently employed in the Jim Crow classes? Is it because there are no Puerto Ricans with the required training and skill? No, not at all. Blake Clark inadvertently admits that there are trained Puerto Rican teachers. In an article in Reader's Digest of February, 1953, he says:

"A few thousand Puerto Ricans study in colleges and graduate schools in the United States. Each year, returning to Puerto Rico to useful, often brilliant careers, business and the arts."

Among those there are many teachers; besides those, there are hundreds of graduates from the University of Puerto Rico. Why aren't they employed here? Once more, the so-called "language barrier" is the gimmick.

A case in point was reported by El Diario, April 24, 1952:

"Mrs. Emma de Verne, a post-graduate student in CCNY, was told to sign a statement waiving her rights to teach in New York public schools before they could admit her for the second semester. She is a licensed teacher at Ponce, Puerto Rico High School and specializes in English. The reason given for the request that she should not teach in New York was that her pronunciation of the English language was not perfect."

Let's not kid ourselves. Even if their diction were "perfect" they would seize hold of some excuse to keep the Puerto Rican teachers out of the New York school system.

In a sense, we in New York are travelling in the opposite direction of New Mexico in regard to the struggle against segregation in the school system. In New Mexico, segregation which is practiced mainly against the Mexican school children is being fought every inch of the way.

To illustrate what we mean, we quote from Jet Magazine of March 5, 1952:

"A bill to end racial segregation in New Mexico's schools was defeated by the State Senate as sixteen white legislators voted in a block against fourteen Spanish-American legislators, after a bitter floor debate. Opponents of the move said the communities themselves are weeding out race bias in the schools."

In New Mexico, they are fighting to end Jim Crow in the school system, while here we are not aware that it exists.

In practically every community, the segregation of Puerto Rican children is taking place and especially in those communities with a middle-class population, such as the West Side, and Washington Heights. We say especially and not exclusively, since you can find similar developments at least in a limited way in such communities as the Lower East Side, Chelsea and East Harlem. The P.T.A. has done something about correcting some of these abuses. But even there, there is a gross underestimation of the scope and magnitude of the problem, as a result of lack of understanding of the Puerto Rican question.

We should not conceive the problem of the existence of segregation in the city's schools as a problem that ONLY affects the Puerto Ricans. The sooner the progressive movement begins to put up an earnest fight on this question, the better chance there will be in the general struggle for democracy and against fascism.

APPENDIX ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK CITY

Source: Board of Education, "A Program for Puerto Ricans in NYC," 1947

SCHOOLS WHERE PUERTO RICANS ARE 50% OF ENROLLMENT

P.S. 193	135th St. & Convent Ave.	Lower Washington Heights
P.S. 171	19 E. 103rd St.	Lower Harlem
P.S. 72	104th St. & Lexington Avenue	" "
P.S. 107	1680 Lexington Avenue (106th)	" "
P.S. 57	178 East 115th St.	" "
P.S. 83	219 East 109th St.	" "
P.S. 101	Lexington Avenue & 111th St.	" "

SCHOOLS WHERE PUERTO RICANS ARE 11% OF ENROLLMENT

P.S. 169	168 & Audubon Avenue	Washington Heights
P.S. 186	521 West 145th St.	Lower Washington Heights
P.S. 125	425 West 123rd St.	Manhattanville
P.S. 43	129th St. & Amsterdam Ave.	Lower Washington Heights
P.S. 120	120th St. & Madison Avenue	Lower Harlem
P.S. 103	Madison Avenue & 119th St.	Lower Harlem
P.S. 159	241 East 119th St.	East Harlem
P.S. 168	316 East 105th St.	Lower Harlem
P.S. 78	119th St. & Pleasant Avenue	East Harlem
P.S. 102	315 East 113th St.	East Harlem
P.S. 170	37 West 111th St.	Lower Harlem
P.S. 86	96th St. & Lexington Avenue	Yorkville
P.S. 99	410 East 100th St.	East Harlem
P.S. 121	232 East 103rd St.	East Harlem
P.S. 172		East Harlem
P.S. 165	225 W. 108th St.	West Side
P.S. 179	155 W. 101st St.	West Side
P.S. 54	Columbus Ave. & 107th St.	West Side
P.S. 11	314 West 21st St.	Chelsea
P.S. 33	281 9th Avenue	Chelsea
P.S. 14	225 East 27th St.	East Midtown
P.S. 19	344 East 14th St.	Lower East Side
P.S. 61	610 East 12th St.	Lower East Side
P.S. 188	131 Lewis St.	Lower East Side

SCHOOLS WHERE PUERTO RICANS ARE 10% OR LESS OF ENROLLMENT

P.S. 80	1st Ave. & 120th St.	East Harlem
P.S. 81	212 West 120th St.	Harlem
P.S. 10	St. Nicholas & 117th St.	Harlem
P.S. 113	7th Avenue & 113th St.	Harlem
P.S. 184	31 West 116th St.	Harlem
P.S. 157	St. Nicholas & 127th St.	Lower Washington Heights
P.S. 31	Mohroe & Gouverneur St.	Lower East Side
P.S. 42	Orchard St. & Hester St.	Lower East Side
P.S. 4	Rivington & Pitt St.	Lower East Side
P.S. 9	West End Avenue & 82nd St.	West Side
P.S. 160	Rivington & Suffolk St.	Lower East Side

8 of 36 vocational high schools, about 22% report absolute and relative increase in Puerto Ricans.

APPENDIX II

VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

		<u>Puerto Rican Students</u>	
		<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Bronx Vocational HS	330 East 152nd St. Bronx	55	3.9
Bronx Vocational Commercial Annex	St. Ann Ave. & Rae St.	42	4.5
Jane Addams Vocational HS	Union & Tinton Ave. Bronx	115	9.8
Samuel Gompers V.H.S.	Union & Tinton Ave. Bronx	63	.025
Central H.S. of Needle Trades	225 West 24th St.	171	8.1
Manhattan H.S. of Women Garment Trades	22nd St. & Lexington Ave.	45	.03
Murray Hill V.H.S.	237 East 37th St.	67	9.0
Yorkville H.S. of Women's Service Trades		200	24.0
VOCATIONAL TOTAL		<u>758</u>	<u>7.4</u>

EVENING SCHOOLS

Benjamin Franklin	116 St. & Pleasant Avenue	275	50.0
E. E. S. 120	120th St. & Madison Avenue	200	40.0
E. E. S. 169	109th St. & Amsterdam Ave.	280	30.0
E. E. S. 186	145th St. & Amsterdam Avenue	291	33.0
Jane Addams	Union & Tinton Ave.	215	60.0
E. E. S. 52	Kelly St. & Avenue St. John	309	68.0
E. E. S. 148	Ellery St. & Tompkins Ave.	475	75.0

NOTE: Puerto Ricans in evening schools are not segregated, as children are in day schools despite the fact that children learn languages faster.

NOTE: Jane Addams H.S. in the daytime has 115 Puerto Rican students, or 9.8 percent, BUT at the evening high school Puerto Ricans represent 60% or 215 students.

TOTAL FOR NEW YORK CITY: Puerto Ricans representing 50% and over - 10 schools
 Puerto Ricans representing 11-49% - 58 schools
 Puerto Ricans representing 10% or less - 41 schools

109 schools

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

The attitude of the bourgeoisie does not differ in its approach to the question of political representation from their attitude on other issues involving the Puerto Rican minority. It is essentially one of discrimination and chauvinism.

With reference to the question of political representation the ruling class has not only used the gimmick of the "language barrier" as a rationale for the disfranchisement of the Puerto Rican minority, but in addition, it has dressed this gimmick with the vestment of legality.

This legal contraption, used to disfranchise the Puerto Ricans in New York, is the so-called literacy test, which in essence is a "language test". More than that, it is a test of "ability to read and write English."

In order to grasp the political meaning of the literacy test we must first recall that this gimmick was introduced into the City Electoral Charter in 1922. It is not at all accidental that the period in which the City adopted the so-called literacy test corresponds exactly with the period of the first great influx of Puerto Rican workers into New York City.

We must see how this weapon is used against a growing national minority. It is admitted in an article which appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES on March 9, 1953, that "there are now 100,000 to 150,000 potential voters of Puerto Rican background in the City of New York."

Can anyone think that the ruling class is ready to passively permit the removal of obstacles on the voting rights of such a large part of the Puerto Rican population? It would mean at least one-third of the minority exercising its right to vote! It would mean utilizing the strength of the vote to further the struggle for their full political rights.

Lait and Mortimer quoted previously, claim that the Lower Harlem area votes en masse, with no possibilities for the authorities to check the legality of the vote, But the facts refute these lies.

Of the above mentioned potential only 37,000 registered to vote in 1952. In 1953, the registration of Puerto Ricans was even lower.

Another factor in the disfranchisement of the Puerto Rican minority is the ability of the ruling class to prevent the creation of a big block of Puerto Rican voters.

Next to the literacy test as a factor in denying the voting rights to the Puerto Ricans, we have to assess the effects of gerrymandering, especially carried out in the Harlem area. Thus by this device, the most compact Puerto Rican community is broken up into different assembly districts further preventing any possibilities for political representation.

There can be no question that should there be an electoral district embracing the area where the 60,000 Puerto Ricans live, such a community could never be denied its rights to political representation, despite any and all obstacles placed in their way.

As on all other issues, on this one too, the Puerto Ricans are conducting tenacious struggles. As mentioned previously, Lower Harlem as the oldest Puerto Rican community has been the center of these struggles. As the minority has expanded, the fight for political representation has spread to other communities.

There have been some victories on this phase of the life of the minority and it has grown into the kind of struggle wherein all sectors of the Puerto Rican population are involved very militantly in the fight for the right to vote and for political representation.

The very first victory obtained was in 1937 with the election of Oscar Garcia Rivera to the State Assembly from the 14th Assembly District. This was the period when the Party was the real leader of the working masses of Lower Harlem in the struggle for jobs, for relief, against evictions, a struggle of solidarity with Spain and Latin America.

This period was followed by the constant struggle spearheaded by the American Labor Party in the 14th Assembly District, later followed in the 5th Assembly District in the Bronx, and steadily spreading to other communities. While the struggle for Puerto Rican representation in the 14th is a correct one, nevertheless, it has been marked by a negative feature, that of the policy of pitting Puerto Rican candidates against Negro candidates without a correct approach to the need for unity of the Puerto Rican and Negro population of the district.

Another weakness in the program of the American Labor Party in the struggle for Puerto Rican representation has been its failure to project city-wide Puerto Rican candidates for office.

To properly gauge the mood of the Puerto Rican people on the question of their political rights, we must assess the meaning of the stubborn fight, not fully successful yet, to elect a Puerto Rican as District Leader of the Democratic Party in the 14th Assembly District, East. This fight started in 1950 and is still going on, and precisely because this kind of struggle has the support of the community the possibility of victory is at hand!

Four Puerto Rican women have been appointed co-Leaders of Assembly Districts. One Democrat and one Republican in the 14th, and one Democrat and one Republican in the 7th.

In the 1952 election campaign, eleven Spanish speaking candidates participated in the election for legislative posts in the State of New York - three of the four political parties had Spanish speaking candidates.

"El Diario" on November 3rd, 1952 reported the following:

"Eleven Spanish speaking candidates will participate tomorrow in the elections for legislative posts in the State of New York. The parties which have nominated them are the Republican, Liberal and American Labor Party, this last one, has the largest number of candidates.

"The Republican candidate is Miguel a Rivera, supported by the Liberal Party for Assembly from the 13th Assembly District.

"The Liberal Party has three candidates, Manuel Velazquez for State Senate, 25th Senatorial District, Blanda de Jesus for Assembly, 5th Assembly District in the Bronx, and Manuel A. Cordova for Assembly, 3rd Assembly District in Brooklyn.

The American Labor Party candidates are Manuel Medina, also supported by the Civil Rights Party for Assembly, 14th Assembly District, Jesus Colon for State Senate, 8th Senatorial District in Brooklyn, Jose Giboyeaux for Assembly, 10th Assembly District in Brooklyn, Jose Davila

Semprit, for State Senate, 25th Senatorial District in the Bronx,
Consuelo Marcial for Assembly, 5th Assembly District in the Bronx,
Marion Gonzalez, for Assembly, 4th Assembly District in the Bronx
and Luis Hernandez, for Assembly, 14th Assembly District in Brooklyn."

A significant victory in 1953 was the election of Felipe N. Torres to the State Assembly from the 5th Assembly District in the Bronx. One important feature of his election was the fact that for the first time the Democratic Party nominated a Puerto Rican. The Puerto Rican community in the 5th displayed such unity around this candidate that neither the Republican nor the Liberal Parties could find a single Puerto Rican candidate to run against Torres. It is a very sad commentary, that the only Puerto Rican opponent against Mr. Torres was the candidate of the American Labor Party. We must note here that the coalition policy of our Party was fully proved in the election of Mr. Torres and in the whole experience of the struggles for political representation in the Puerto Rican field in 1953.

The election of Hulan E. Jack to the Borough Presidency has created a vacancy in the 14th Assembly District. The demand that has been raised is that a Puerto Rican Assemblyman be elected to replace Mr. Jack. Special elections should take place in February. The election of a Puerto Rican in the 14th will depend not only on the unity and support from the Puerto Rican voters, but also from that of the Negro community, as well as from labor.

No one can claim that the Negro people are fully represented. Nevertheless, with the victory in relation to the Borough Presidency, the approach must be that there is absolutely no Puerto Rican representative in any capacity - city or state - from the Borough of Manhattan. And further, that the commitments made by the leadership of the Democratic Party prior to the elections must be lived up to.

The struggle can by no means be left to the Puerto Ricans alone, or more concretely, only to Lower Harlem. To the degree that progressives can promote full support from the Negro community and from labor, to that degree can we consider any possibility of victory in this struggle.

The issue of political representation presents new features which must be examined if a correct approach and perspective are to be developed for 1954 elections. First consideration must be given to the orientation of the fight on the issues affecting most of the minority, namely, the literacy test and gerrymandering.

A correct estimate must be made of the relation of forces involved in the struggle and the specific role played by each sector. Together with this we must establish a perspective that departs from the continued practice of fighting for Puerto Rican rights ONLY in Lower Harlem.

As of now, the efforts of the Party are directed towards giving leadership on the question of unity. This feature has three aspects - first, the unity of the Puerto Rican people, second, the unity and support of the Negro and Puerto Rican people to each other's struggles, and third, the role of labor in support of the fight for the political rights of the Puerto Rican minority.

On the unity of the Puerto Ricans some very fine work has been done in the last few months. While no spectacular achievements have been scored yet, it must be pointed out that it already has been proved a correct approach. Its progress although slow, is solid. During the election campaign, the small beginning made along these lines did bear fruit once the leadership of the Democratic Party was faced with the united demand of all Puerto Rican sectors.

On August 23rd, of this year, EL DIARIO, reported the following:

"Carmine DeSapio, Democratic leader of Manhattan County and Commissioner of the Board of Elections of New York agreed formally yesterday to recognize the right to adequate representation of the Spanish speaking people in the government sphere, and to work for a reform to the method of registration so that the voters of the Spanish speaking communities should not be subjected to discrimination because of lack of knowledge of the English language.

"Mr. Wagner, candidate for Mayor, received a delegation representing the Committee for Spanish Unity."

On December 7, 1953, EL DIARIO, stated the following:

"Ramon Matos and Gregorio Domenech of the Republican Party were present at the meeting (of the Spanish Unity Committee) and pledged to exert their efforts within the Republican Party to the effect that should the Democratic Party nominate a Spanish speaking candidate, there should be no Republican candidate in opposition, thereby guaranteeing the election of the Spanish speaking Democratic candidate.

"The Comite de Unidad Hispana which has led this movement has informed us through its leader, Mr. Gerena Valentin, that a Committee has been appointed to work on this campaign, among them are, Jose Gonzalez, Luis A. Delgado, Ramon Rodriguez, Antonio Camacho and Ramon Matos."

This proves conclusively the kind of victories that can be won if correct work is done to secure unity along the lines stated above. In the 1954 elections we can anticipate that the fast growing Puerto Rican communities will continue to fight for their electoral rights. We have to bear in mind two important questions - one is, winning the support of all sectors of the population for the special demands of the Puerto Rican minority, and two, that of providing the correct leadership in order to win the Puerto Rican fighting masses to our views and program.

* * * * *

THE YOUTH QUESTION

According to the 1950 Census, the average Puerto Rican in New York City is 24.5 years old. This means that the average Puerto Rican faces the problems of youth in addition to those of an oppressed minority.

The same census reported that the Puerto Ricans in New York City "with an income," 82% averaged less than \$48 a week (before taxes), 64% averaged less than \$38 a week, 42% averaged less than \$28 a week, 24% averaged less than \$18 a week, and 9% averaged less than \$8 a week in 1950. And this is the best possible picture that the Census Bureau could present since it is obvious that even these shocking statistics are also doctored. Ignored from the census report are the unemployed, and the other members of the working class that government reports leave out of the "labor force."

Coupled with the low wages is the low seniority status of Puerto Rican youth, the police attacks and the lack of sufficient recreational centers, with those that do exist over-taxed, under-staffed or moving out of Puerto Rican communities if not closing down altogether. Thus the conditions are created for the drafting of a larger proportion of Puerto Rican youth than the average. What Puerto Rican youth can get a job deferment based on essentially needed skill? How many Puerto Ricans

can get a college deferment? How many Puerto Rican youth can get a marriage deferment considering all the obstacles placed in the way for early marriages such as housing segregation, low wages and unemployment?

Within the Puerto Rican minority is a small but growing group of Puerto Ricans born in the U.S. or brought here when very young, whose main experiences are those of the U.S. This group, which comprises the second source of growth of the Puerto Rican minority is the Puerto Rican-American. The existence of the Puerto Rican-American is not only an example of the changes taking place within the Puerto Rican minority in relation to language, etc., but also underlines the fact that the Puerto Rican minority is here to stay and is no mere passing, temporary phenomena in the American scene. This group numbers over 100,000 in New York City.

Puerto Rican Americans exposed very early to American culture are quick to pick up English as the main language, as is true of other American youth. The Puerto Rican-American is also exposed to Puerto Rican culture at home, expressed in their customs and traditions. They are also subjected to the attacks faced by the Puerto Rican minority. Thus the Puerto Rican-American who might very well speak English as fluently as any other New Yorker is still faced with problems that stem from the oppressed status of the Puerto Rican minority. The problems encountered by Puerto Rican-Americans refutes the myth that the source of all problems faced by Puerto Ricans lies with their so-called inability to speak English.

The ruling class in their open assault on all youth, single out those sectors from which it financially gains the most - the Negro and Puerto Rican youth in New York City. To facilitate the attacks, to justify it and "explain" the exploitation, the ruling class levels a barrage of chauvinist slanders designed to isolate these oppressed youth and to guarantee that the other youth don't see this as an attack on all youth and rally in support of the struggles of Negro and Puerto Rican youth.

Thus LIFE magazine in its attacks on teen-agers in relation to narcotics devoted an entire article of its June 11, 1951 issue to slandering Puerto Rican and Negro youth, making it appear that mainly Puerto Rican and Negro youth were "dope fiends" and that they were responsible for peddling narcotics among white-English speaking youth.

After the ruling class had gotten away with attacking teen-agers by singling out Negro and Puerto Rican youth, it feels safe now to spread its attacks to all other sectors of teen-agers with the slander that there is today "a teen-age manace."

The struggles of Puerto Rican youth have already been mentioned in other sections of this report on police brutality, education and labor, and it would serve no purpose to repeat them here.

In the press, magazines, and novels Puerto Rican youth are depicted as "criminals," "prostitutes," and "hoodlums." One pocket-size book pictured the Puerto Rican heroine as a reformed prostitute and the Puerto Rican hero as a police stool pigeon.

At the height of the press-created "crime wave" in which Puerto Rican and Negro youths were slandered and framed by the police, Dr. Muzzicato ran for the State Senate in 1952 in the senatorial district which incorporates Spanish Harlem with the following program as reported in the October 27, 1952 issue of EL DIARIO:

- "1. Eliminate the wave of sex crimes and drug addiction.
- "2. Eliminate juvenile delinquency....
- "3. Improve the police protection by means of patrols in all the streets..."

Thus a candidate runs for public office in a Puerto Rican community with a program that incorporates the slanders against them and incorporates the "solution" proposed by the ruling class - "more police patrols."

The ruling class, acutely aware of the militancy of Puerto Rican youth, and anxious to divert their struggles has set-up the Spanish-American Youth Bureau which periodically holds conventions. The lawyer for the organization - Harris L. Present - presides over these conventions. In the 5th Annual Convention held February 25, 1953, he exposed the "basic" causes for the problems facing the Puerto Rican minority:

"Perhaps in some respects the greatest void in the Puerto Rican situation in New York is the absence of a sufficient responsible civic leadership to cope with and lead the large population which is now residing here." (Page 3 - Some Highlights of the Spanish-American Youth Bureau, Inc. and the Puerto Rican Situation in New York.)

Thus we hear again the old refrain that the problems facing the Puerto Rican people stem from innate "inferiority" - in this case, irresponsibility. This theory that Puerto Rican people lack leadership must be the reason why it is always Present who presides over conventions and not the organization's President - Ruperto Ruiz. This is another instance where the ruling class doesn't trust even the most devoted stooges among the Puerto Rican people, not even such loyal servants as Ruiz, who always stays in the background while Present gives "leadership" to the Puerto Rican minority.

But the Puerto Rican minority suffers other "weakness" too, according to Present:

"It is unfortunate that as yet the Spanish-American population has been unable to find private financial sponsors of means to take up the cudgels in behalf of the very needy Puerto Ricans. Settlement Houses like the 110 Street Community Center, were forced to close down, due to lack of financial support, although the 110 Street Community Center was operating in one of the neediest areas of the city."

Thus the Puerto Ricans have no rich Puerto Rican to provide the youth with recreational centers. The burden is put again on the Puerto Rican people for their problems, and the city administration pursuing its war program is excused of all responsibility. The finger of blame is pointed at the Puerto Rican minority while Present, with Ruiz's consent, covers up for the ruling class.

But Present does have a "positive" program, he does see a ray of "hope" for the Puerto Rican youth as he proposes the following:

"The Bureau has been urging scholarships for those of Hispanic origin in schools of social work and other institutions that would prepare them for service to their people. The Bureau has encouraged young people of promise to undertake studies in those fields that would be of benefit to their brethren. It is the youth that the Spanish-American Youth Bureau, Inc., looks for the future leaders who will eventually help the Puerto Ricans to take their proper place in the American scene." (p.4)

This is Present's program of "leadership training" for the Puerto Rican youth. This is how Present's masters propose to make up for the "lack" of Puerto Rican leaders. Fearful of the many leaders that have arisen from the ranks of the Puerto Rican minority through the numerous struggles around the needs of defense of the Puerto Rican people, the ruling class now proposes to train misleaders of the Puerto Rican people, to better condition the minority to accommodate to the heavy blows leveled against them - in short, to help keep the Puerto Ricans "in their proper place."

This is how the ruling class proposes to impose on the Puerto Rican workers the leadership of the Puerto Rican middle class. This is how the ruling class proposes to lead the Puerto Rican minority away from active participation in the class struggle as such stooges as Cabranes have been trying to do for many years. Cabranes burps every time the ruling class has stomach gases. One such attempt was his speech as recorded in EL DIARIO of May 7, 1951:

"The biggest barrier that prevents Puerto Ricans from adapting themselves to the community and the American way of life is language."

When the ruling class says "language barrier" is the cause of the problems facing Puerto Ricans, then Cabranes just has to echo the "language barrier" myth.

But Cabranes continues:

"Such a problem was faced primarily by the preceding generation. The present generation does not face this problem thanks to the efforts of the public schools and the system employed to promote the interests and good will of the children to learn English."

Notice how shamelessly Cabranes has declared English-speaking Puerto Ricans free of all problems! Notice how completely he ignores the fact that the segregated Puerto Rican children in the Corridor classes are hampered from learning English! It's this type of "leader" that the ruling class wants to train.

During the 1952 elections the whole bourgeois press concocted a "crime wave" in its headlines which covered up the increased brutality leveled against Puerto Rican as well as Negro youth. Even the reformist Negro press was forced to denounce many aspects of this slander, and a half-page ad was printed in the Amsterdam News of October 4th, 1952:

"Is there a crime wave? We categorically reject such a thing as untrue. Are there sex criminals? Yes. Police statistics, however, show there is actually a decrease in the crime rate....However, we are disturbed greatly by what we feel to be a pattern of singling out of the Negro and Puerto Rican people and stigmatizing them as criminals..... We ask our Mayor, who rightly did not remain silent in the face of slanders against Italian-Americans, to issue a public statement decrying the incitations against our Negro and Puerto Rican citizens."

But EL DIARIO took this occasion to go along with the attacks and slanders as seen in its September 19th, 1952 issue, where it reported that four Puerto Rican youth were "caught in the campaign against the wave of sex crime." After attacking the youth of its own nationality, EL DIARIO proceeded to attack and slander the Negro youth in this same article in exactly the same manner as did the English-speaking press.

Perhaps the most brazen example of pitting Puerto Ricans against Negroes was the way EL DIARIO reported the wanton murder of Jose R. Ramirez by a cop in

the Bronx in October of 1951. No one can deny that the cop was guilty of murdering the Puerto Rican youth. But since the cop was Negro the stooge newspaper saw its chance to do its masters a service under the guise of defending Puerto Rican youth. Thus it headlined its editorial of October 30, 1951 -- "Vicious Crime," and identifies the race of the cop and calls for an immediate investigation.

In its November 4th, 1951 issue, EL DIARIO reports that a grand jury was looking into the case and starts out its articles in this chauvinist fashion:

"The case of the colored cop, who according to eyewitnesses, abusively killed the Puerto Rican youth Jose R. Ramirez...."

But then notice how it changes its tune about police brutality when just ten days after the above article appeared, EL DIARIO front pages another police killing of two other Puerto Rican youths in Harlem:

"Police Kills Two Latins While Committing Assault." The front page continues: "Surprised by the police while committing an assault which netted them \$2.50, the Latins, Roberto Carrasquillo, 22 years, and Antonio Jose Soria, 26 years, were shot to death by the police."

But since the cops were white Americans no fuss was made, no charges of police brutality were raised, no call for a grand jury investigation.

Finally, the Government of Puerto Rico, as part of its attempt to cover up Wall Street's continued control over Puerto Ricans and to appear as "independent" but "voluntarily associated" to the U.S., has undertaken another responsibility. It has now assumed the "leadership" of the Puerto Rican minority in New York and has bestowed on them the "citizenship" of the "Commonwealth of Puerto Rico." And to "protect" its "citizens" an organization was set up in Puerto Rico and New York as reported in EL DIARIO of December 7, 1953:

"Accion Social Puertorriquena....the object of this organization is to offer direct aid in all fields to the citizens of the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico residing in the city of New York...."

The Puerto Rican government now assumes the responsibility for all the problems of its "subjects" "residing" abroad...This sounds suspiciously like the next step in Wall Street's drive to disfranchise the Puerto Rican Minority, since Puerto Ricans couldn't very well vote in U.S. elections if they are "citizens" of another country. In this traitorous fashion does the comprador class betray the interests of the Puerto Rican minority in the U.S. as it betrays the interests of the Puerto Rican nation.

In this ideological struggle, the role of the Labor Youth League is clear, as the only national working class youth organization giving leadership in uniting youth of all classes behind the working class struggles and rallying the working class behind the needs and defense of youth rights. Thus the L.Y.L. which educates youth in the spirit of socialism needs the experience and leadership of all working class youth and must include Puerto Rican youth in the L.Y.L. by recruiting, organizing and developing on all levels of leadership Puerto Rican cadres.

The Party has the major responsibility in advancing youth work and in aiding its development among Puerto Rican youth. The struggle for the needs of Puerto Rican youth cannot become the sole responsibility of the Labor Youth League but of the Party as a whole. Thus the combatting of the vicious chauvinist slander hurled daily against Puerto Rican youth must not be relegated to the

youth comrades only. Neither should the fight against the segregation classes be the sole property of the L.Y.L.

Finally, it's the Party's task to help build the youth movement in those communities, shops and schools where there's a heavy concentration of Puerto Rican youth. Many L.Y.L. clubs exist in or near Puerto Rican communities which have not a single Puerto Rican member. As a matter of fact, League clubs with a large percentage of Puerto Rican members that used to exist among Food workers and Lower East Side Youth, now no longer exist. And struggles for Puerto Rican youth rights very seldom involve those clubs outside the Puerto Rican communities. Thus the struggles for Puerto Rican youth rights is funnelled to clubs in Puerto Rican communities or to Puerto Rican youth.

There's a tendency to relegate Puerto Rican cadre to mass work, and mass work among Puerto Rican youth only. In the few occasions when Puerto Rican youth were advanced into leadership it was usually for one type of position only - educational director. Therefore Puerto Rican youth comrades should be advanced into leadership of all types of responsibility and on all levels.

* * * * *

THE PUERTO RICAN WOMEN

The Puerto Rican women are the most oppressed sector of the Puerto Rican minority. They are oppressed as women, as members of an exploited class, and as members of an oppressed people.

The status of women in Puerto Rico is a colonial one, they live still under semi-feudal conditions. This colonial oppression follows the Puerto Rican woman who migrates to the United States. Her new domicile, the metropolis, does not alleviate in any form her triple oppression, on the contrary, it intensifies it. As a member of an oppressed national minority, under the impact of the most brutal national chauvinism, her economic, political and social status is determined by the policies of the ruling class towards the minority as a whole.

Is there a special ideological approach on the part of the American imperialist bourgeoisie toward the Puerto Rican women? Yes, there is. What is its purpose? To "educate" the American people, especially the workers and the youth as to the "nature and character" of the Puerto Rican and other Spanish speaking women.

Volumes of filth are printed against the Puerto Rican and other Spanish speaking women by the spokesmen of the ruling class, namely, the journalists, fiction writers, novelists, etc. We must give some examples, since this aspect of the villification of the minority is even less known than others.

Iait and Mortimer, authors of NEW YORK CONFIDENTIAL, in referring to Lower Harlem, say the following:

"In Little Spain, sex is cheap, selling it is precarious, and competition is not only voluminous, but perilous, for the girls will fight with knives over a prospect."

The same authors in the book CHICAGO CONFIDENTIAL, in dealing with the Mexicans, say as follows:

"Young Mexican girls, because of their Indian blood, bloom extremely beautiful....Many are professional prostitutes. The non-professionals

don't play hard to get either."

William Arnold in his novel, *HARLEM WOMAN*, discusses the Puerto Rican women in this fashion:

"....a child of Harlem, born in Puerto Rico....Harlem, City within a city, took its denizens to its teeming bosom....There were ...other women too, Maria knew them well....These were the putas (his italics), the prostitutes, for whom the day was just beginning."

Another trashy compilation called a book on Mexicans by Thurston Scott is promoted and advertised in this fashion: "She Loved Men, Money and Marijuana."

The "respectable" *NEW YORK TIMES*, in its book review section deals with this filth in this way:

"Highly satisfactory. It's sharply, vigorously told, It has all the currently requisite sex and violence."

The *AMERICAN MERCURY* of September, 1951, had an article titled "SEX IN PUERTO RICO" with a subtitle, *THE STORY OF THE PUTA*. It said, among other things:

"Where the American girl can aim as high as her talent, looks and cunning will take her, the Puerto Rican female of the species has no such luck....She has joined the ancient profession as an escape from the squalor of slums like El Fanguito."

FOCUS of February, 1952, had an article entitled *THE GAMBLERS AND PUTAS OF PUERTO RICO*. It said:

"Puerto Rico is also the place of the puta, its contribution to prostitution."

The sources we are quoting here are popular novels and magazines with a recorded circulation of 400,000 copies per month. The American people, the workers, the youth, are reading this trash. So far, this kind of literary garbage has gone unchallenged by progressives. On the other hand, the effects of this "education" are felt in all their intensity by the Puerto Rican women in their daily lives.

To the thousands upon thousands of pages of such vicious vilification directed against the Puerto Rican woman must be added the "original sin" which the fascist apologists for American imperialism impute to her - that of being responsible for "overpopulation" in Puerto Rico because of her "primitive fertility."

Let us now examine some aspects of the economic and social conditions of the Puerto Rican women in New York. First, we must deal with her status as a worker. In the main, the Puerto Rican women are industrial workers. They are found in large numbers in the needle trades, and allied industries, in laundry, in novelty jewelry and distributive trades. Puerto Rican women in all industries are invariably in the lowest category of employment with the worst working conditions and the lowest wages. Their exploitation is a brutal one. *THE NEW YORK TIMES* published a series of articles in February of 1953 with references to the Puerto Rican minority. Referring to labor they said the following:

"Of the 4,422 minimum wage and overtime violations in 1951 and 1952, a total of 2,106 involved wages in companies employing personnel with Spanish names, mainly Puerto Ricans, in the needle trades, jewelry and novelty industries."

EL DIARIO published the following on June 5, 1952:

"The President of the Jaeton Novelty Company at 38 West 39th St., pleaded guilty to charges of paying his employees, the majority Puerto Ricans, wages below those determined by Federal Law. The firm owes 26 of its employees, all Puerto Ricans, \$3,622.00. Some of the women were receiving 32¢ per hour."

We know of just a few cases like these mentioned. There are thousands more that we do not even know of.

Many important aspects of the problems faced by Puerto Rican women in industry are dealt with in relation to labor so we shall not repeat them under this point. For the same reason we shall also refrain from repeating important points made in relation to housing, schools and political representation.

On some other questions, however, we have to deal with the special conditions faced by the whole minority which affect Puerto Rican women in a special way.

In hospitals and clinics for instance, it is mainly the women who have to deal with the authorities and the staffs. Let us recall just one case. Mrs. Carmen Rodriguez was given the wrong child at Bellevue...no one deemed it important enough to ask her for identification...the name was Rodriguez...then she had to face charges of kidnapping. Let us not underestimate the suffering of the other family who was missing their new born infant, but after all, the child is an Hernandez, so the little girl needed no identification either.

And then, when two Puerto Rican families are victims of the chauvinism of the Welfare Department and the Hospital Administration, when one mother is persecuted by the Justice Department, EL DIARIO, "the defender of the Puerto Rican minority," comes out with this gem:

"To the Government of Puerto Rico we say - no matter the innocence of the victim (Mrs. Rodriguez) these cases constitute an obstacle for the adequate adjustment in the life of the City, of the families who are in a position to contribute efficiently to the economic, social and industrial development of New York."

Very often the slanderous charge is made that Puerto Ricans get on relief rolls because they are lazy. Let's listen to these two Puerto Rican mothers:

"I am the only provider for my children, and for several days I have been almost desperate, thinking that the Day Care centers are going to be closed. Until recently, I was able to work...Now I must remain at home taking care of my children....Many Spanish speaking mothers are in the same situation."

"I am one of thousands of mothers who work and leave their children in Child Care Centers. If these Centers are closed I will have no other alternative but to apply for relief, since I am the only support for my child."

These two letters appeared in EL DIARIO in April of 1953.

Here we see very clearly how in the Puerto Rican community, where the economic pressures are the hardest, the discriminatory policies of the City Administration is also the most cynical in relation to both Puerto Rican mothers and their children.

Now we will deal with the treatment of the Puerto Rican women by the Police Department. Very briefly, we will recall two incidents to illustrate. In Lincoln Square, two summers ago, a number of Puerto Rican women found it impossible to remain indoors because of the intense heat and sat on their stoops. The police came and took them to the station house on a charge of "prostitution." In Lower Harlem in 1950 when one of the women comrades was arrested during the course of an open-air meeting, some cops at the police station asked, "Where was this one picked up?" The sergeant very rapidly answered, "No, no, stop - she's a Communist."

Examples are too numerous to be listed here. In the same way that the role of the ruling class is to exploit and to divide through chauvinism, the role of the compradors is to blunt the struggle and to apologize for the oppression of the Puerto Rican women. We will just give one example, an editorial which appeared in EL DIARIO and which was a reprint from an editorial which appeared in EL MUNDO of San Juan:

"Because of the exploitation suffered by young women who come to New York as domestic workers, EL MUNDO, of San Juan, published an editorial which we reprint: 'The case posed....one of the old aspects is the inability to master the English language...to permit the migrant better communications with the employer, better to know his duties and better to defend his rights....As far as the allegations of slavery or semi-slavery, we attribute it to the ignorance and lack of knowledge of English of the worker.'"

According to this editorial, which apparently is defending the young woman, whatever problems have beset her are not the result of brutal exploitation, but caused by her "ignorance and stupidity."

For us in New York City, a discussion in relation to Puerto Rican women means that we are duty bound to develop an approach in our work which should be two-fold.

- 1) The struggle of the American people, especially the American workers for the rights of the Puerto Rican women.
- 2) Winning the Puerto Rican women to the progressive movement.

On the question of defense of their rights there must be an understanding of the meaning of support and solidarity and a persistent fight against the humanitarian approaches that too often crop up in relation to struggle. The Puerto Rican women are not to be pitied, it is not a question of tears and sighs, it is one of struggle for their rights.

Besides rejecting the erroneous humanitarian approach there must be a serious political assessment of the role of the Puerto Rican women in the home. There have been cases in which the Puerto Rican home has been characterized as one where the wife capitulates to the male supremacy of the Puerto Rican husband. There is lack of clarity on the fact that women are oppressed by the capitalist system and not by men. We are not denying male supremacist tendencies prevalent among the Puerto Rican men, but the fight for the emancipation of the Puerto Rican women cannot start with a struggle against their husbands, it must start with a program of struggle to eliminate the economic, political and social conditions that keeps them oppressed. Nor can we see the Puerto Rican woman's oppression isolated from that of the whole minority.

Special note then should be taken of her special demands as part of the Puerto Rican minority here in New York City.

- 1) The fight for equal pay.
- 2) The fight for up-grading
- 3) Organize the unorganized
- 4) Need for child care centers
- 5) Need of Spanish speaking personnel in all City and State agencies.

As for the winning of the Puerto Rican women to the progressive camp, the history of their struggles right here in New York speaks for itself and says that once we are orientated along correct political lines, we should be successful. A few examples of their struggles show the following:

- 1) Hundreds of Puerto Rican women participated in the huge picket line in front of the WORLD TELEGRAM in 1948.
- 2) Mothers from Lower Harlem led big delegations to City Hall demanding free milk for their children.
- 3) The high percentage of Puerto Rican women who registered and voted American Labor Party.
- 4) The participation of the Nationalist and Independentistas women in the struggle for the national liberation of Puerto Rico.
- 5) The leadership of Puerto Rican women in all Boroughs in the Democratic Party.
- 6) The militant participation of Puerto Rican women in the tenants' struggles.
- 7) Mrs. Viruet's defense of her home and family against the landlord, the Police Department, the Welfare Department and Bellevue Hospital.
- 8) The participation of the Puerto Rican women for many years in the ranks of the Communist Party.
- 9) The role played by Puerto Rican women in the shops and in the unions (despite the limitations imposed upon them).
- 10) The role of the Puerto Rican women in the fight for peace.
- 11) The role of the Puerto Rican women in the international solidarity movement.

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HOUSING PROBLEMS OF PUERTO RICANS

The housing problems faced by the Puerto Rican minority must be viewed within the context of the general housing crisis of the United States and New York City. These problems are brutally intensified by the ruling class' oppression of the Puerto Rican minority.

According to the NEW YORK POST issue of July 27, 1953, the City Housing Authority estimated that the city is short 900,000 apartments, but only 8,500 may be completed this year and only 6,500 are planned for next year. This results in the situation where even Clarence Senior is forced to admit that Harlem "now

contains four or five times the number of inhabitants its houses were built to accommodate." (STRANGERS AND NEIGHBORS, Pg.12)

This appalling condition was described by a church minister in East Harlem, Rev. George W. Webber, who stated that "4,000 persons were found living in one block and twenty-seven in four coal bins." This situation is not restricted to Lower Harlem as can be seen by the NEW YORK TIMES which mentions Chelsea in its October 15, 1952 issue.

"The Hernandez have five sons. They share a single room at West 23rd Street with two other Puerto Rican families."

The real estate interests reap a fantastic profit by exploiting the housing shortage, which they are fighting to maintain, in their attack against public housing. Puerto Ricans are victimized by landlords who force them to pay for the "right" to move into an apartment. This feature of the housing problem is unique among Puerto Ricans.

EL DIARIO reported on January 30, 1952 that 106 Puerto Rican Spanish-speaking tenants paid a landlord a total of \$53,686 or \$506 each, and the NEW YORK TIMES reported on July 1st, 1952, that 99 Puerto Rican tenants paid a total of \$60,952 or \$544. each.

Other landlords victimize Puerto Ricans by "selling" the same apartment to many people as was the case when 167 Puerto Ricans paid a total of \$40,000 for the building on 642-10th Avenue. (NEW YORK TIMES, August 30, 1952).

Rent gouging is the next form used by landlords to multiply their profits at the expense of Puerto Rican tenants. Thus, the WORLD-TELEGRAM of October 23, 1953, was able to report that one Harlem landlord made \$12,300 in rentals in the first year after paying \$10,000 for the building, which represented a "net profit of \$8,000 to \$9,000.....annually."

But the exploitation does not end in the robbing of the hard earned money through exorbitantly high rents and the apartment selling racket. The vermin-ridden, rat-infested apartments that Puerto Ricans are forced to live in are also fire-traps which have claimed many lives, such as the Bedford Avenue fire last June 18th where seven perished, and burned many families out of their homes, destroying all their possessions. So numerous are the fires that in one month alone - June, 1952 - our files, which are far from complete, show that there were five fires involving Puerto Ricans, resulting in one death, six burnt and poisoned by smoke, 19 buildings burnt down and over 180 Puerto Rican families left homeless.

Scores of other Puerto Rican families have also been left homeless by collapsing buildings such as the tragedy that occurred about three years ago on Amsterdam Avenue in Washington Heights, and the building on 106th Street and Madison Avenue in Lower Harlem that collapsed last August. Others are seriously injured or killed by the pieces of masonry that break off from buildings that are collapsing piece-meal. This is why 11 year old Angel Luis Ortiz died when a piece of roof tile fell and killed him in the Bronx last year.

Housing violations have resulted in many deaths. Among others, 2 year old Matilda Guitard died from gas that leaked from a faulty heater on West 64th Street in October of 1952. The extent of the housing violations in Puerto Rican communities can be seen in a survey conducted in August of last year when 1,000 questionnaires were filled revealing the following horrible conditions in Lower Harlem:

102 families shared toilet facilities
 895 families live in rat-infested apartments
 788 families lack adequate heating
 728 families have defective wiring
 654 families have not had apartment painted in the past 2 or 3 years.
 571 families have one or more broken windows
 898 families complain of walls in apartments that are completely
 deteriorated.
 788 families complain that hallways are rarely cleaned.
 626 families complain of defective plumbing, and,
 725 families had previously filed complaints with the Housing
 Authorities in vain.

The bourgeois press occasionally "reveals" the fact that Puerto Ricans face housing problems and then attribute this to "unscrupulous landlords" and "ignorant Puerto Rican tenants" who don't know that there is a Housing Authority to "protect them." But Puerto Ricans are well aware of the existence of a Housing Authority and they are also well aware that they do nothing about the complaints brought to that agency as the 725 families mentioned above know all too well.

The bourgeois press wants to create the illusion that government agencies are the "neutrals," the "umpires" in the conflicts between landlords and tenants. Yet, the bitter experience of Puerto Rican tenants proves that government agencies are arms of the ruling class established and maintained to protect their profits, property and power. Not only does the Housing Authority ignore complaints, but worse still, they are liable to punish the tenants and their neighbors by evicting them en masse under the pretext that the building is "unsafe."

EL DIARIO of February 17, 1952, reported that:

"The Department of Housing ordered the eviction of 44 families most of them Puerto Ricans from 4 West 104th Street, but the Department of Welfare found housing for only 18 families."

And the DAILY WORKER of November 2, 1952 reported:

"When Puerto Ricans complained of rent gouging and violations, the Department of Housing ordered their evictions en masse."

And landlords evict tenants when they complain to the Housing Authority as reported in EL DIARIO, May 31, 1952:

"A Puerto Rican family of 11 was evicted from 180 Moore Street, Brooklyn - Mercedes Lopez, 6 children and 4 other relatives. Mrs. Lopez' mother died soon after the eviction. The landlord evicted them after they complained to the rent authorities on rent gouging."

And last October 4, 1951, EL DIARIO stated that:

"Juan and Josefina Rodriguez, Dominicans, 519 West 152nd Street, Manhattan, were brutally evicted from their apartment with their two blind children, because they complained to the Rent Authorities of housing violations. A cop pushed the couple around and when Juan objected to the ill-treatment his wife was receiving, the cop pulled out his gun and threatened him by saying 'Want me to break your head?'"

In two of the cases mentioned above, other government agencies - the Police and Welfare Departments - cooperated in suppressing the struggle of Puerto

Rican tenants. This was also the case when 39 Puerto Ricans including "several expectant mothers and a number of children wandered shelterless 15 hours" reported the DAILY NEWS of January 2, 1953, while "the Welfare Department blamed a series of misunderstandings, including "language difficulties", for the "mixup", after a Brooklyn tenement fire left them homeless.

The widespread practice of these evictions and rent gouging was indicated by an item in the DAILY WORKER of January 2, 1952:

"State Rent Commission eviction approvals are nearing the 1,000 per month level and nearly 600,000 rent rises have been granted since 1950 averaging \$5.85 a month."

Even such a venal rag-sheet as the WORLD-TELEGRAM has to admit the criminal exploitation of Puerto Rican tenants. On October 25, 1953, the TELEGRAM stated:

"A little-known provision of the State Rent Law encourages the spread of slums renting at sky's-the-limit rates....This is Section 9, paragraph 4....Puerto Ricans are the victims of most of this type of housing...."

The same patterns of suppression of minority rights by government agencies is extended from the field of civil rights to the housing question. Just as the Police Department is guilty of violating the civil rights of Puerto Ricans which they are supposed to protect, so also the Housing Authorities are guilty of violating the housing rights of Puerto Ricans which they are supposed to protect.

HOUSING STRUGGLES OF THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE

The bourgeois press, while forced to admit the existence of housing problems faced by the Puerto Rican minority, is very careful to hide the tremendous struggles of Puerto Rican tenants, in the main militantly led by the Puerto Rican women. It is these very same struggles that force the capitalist press to admit the housing problems of the Puerto Rican minority.

Here are a number of struggles that the ruling class is trying to hide from the non-Puerto Rican sector of the working class, struggles that the real estate interests wished never took place because of the lesson they provide for other tenant struggles.

STRUGGLES AGAINST EVICTIONS

Two years ago, on September 4th, the police evicted 50 year old Mrs. Marina Gomez from her apartment at 804 Forest Avenue in the Bronx. 700 people demonstrated against the eviction, scaring the hell out of the cops and the landlord.

Last September 23rd, a group of thirty people returned the furniture of the Lugo family who were evicted illegally from their apartment at 2146 Amsterdam Avenue in the Heights.

STRUGGLE AGAINST RENT GOUGING

The tenants of 224 East 112th Street in Lower Harlem won a 25% reduction in rent for inadequate services last July 20th.

A picket line of Puerto Rican tenants in front of 214 East 11th Street protested the payment of 700% higher rent than the ceiling, last February 8th.

STRUGGLE AGAINST HOUSING VIOLATIONS

The tenants of 146 West 64th Street succeeded last July 9th in sending their landlord to jail for eight days on 38 housing violations. Puerto Rican women, such as Aida Rodriguez and Frances Sanchez led the struggle.

The tenants of 332 East 101 Street and 320 East 102 Street on October 30, 1952 won their struggle against their landlords, who were fined \$500. and \$1,000 respectively, for refusing to get rid of rats.

In the struggle of Puerto Rican tenants they were not alone. Other nationalities joined in the struggle in common cause.

These lessons of unity drive the real estate interests to desperate action in their frantic efforts to keep the other sectors of the working class from benefiting from these experiences of united struggle.

This accounts for the near total press black-out of all news on these united struggles. On rare occasions when the silence is broken, it is done in an off-hand fashion and nationalities are certainly not identified as they did in the so-called "crime wave" that they manufactured on the front pages of the bourgeois press last year.

Here are some examples of unity and solidarity. On June 5, 1952, an Italian family cared for one of the children of Mr. and Mrs. Callejo who were burnt out of their apartment at 222 East 119th Street in East Harlem, reported EL DIARIO.

The DAILY NEWS on January 2, 1953, reported a Brooklyn tenement fire where a Puerto Rican mother and child died and declared that the toll would have been greater... "except that Frank Ancona, a dock foreman, saved a dozen children and shouting instructions in English, Italian and Spanish, helped quiet the panicky tenants."

Thirty persons who fought the eviction of the Lugo family in the Heights, and returned their furniture were composed of Negroes and Puerto Ricans.

Only in the DAILY WORKER do you get the true picture of united struggles. Thus we learn of the struggle of nine Negro and Puerto Rican families who carried on a two-month rent strike against housing violations of 32 West 118 St., and we learn of the sit-down demonstration of three Puerto Ricans and one Negro family in the offices of the Housing Authority demanding decent housing at 132 Suffolk Street.

THE BOURGEOIS TREATMENT OF THE HOUSING PROBLEM OF THE PUERTO RICAN MINORITY

The role of the bourgeois press and other stooges of the ruling class has been to justify the exploitation of Puerto Rican tenants and to create the atmosphere of fear, hatred and contempt for Puerto Ricans on the part of non-Puerto-Ricans. This is how they "explain" the housing segregation of Puerto Ricans. Blake Clark in his article in the January, 1953, READERS DIGEST places the blame on the Puerto Rican people themselves.

"Many find shelter in the crowded, crumbling tenements of the city's Spanish Harlem where their poverty and inadequate English imprisons them."

Once more the "language barrier" gimmick is used to cover up the true cause of the segregation. It is not the landlord and the banks that imprison Puerto Ricans in the slums they say, but the "Spanish language," spoken by the Puerto

Rican minority. They imply that English-speaking Puerto Ricans face no housing segregation.

Clarence Senior, in his pamphlet STRANGER AND NEIGHBOR "explains" the segregation as if it were a natural law caused by some hidden instinct of the Puerto Rican people.

"The newcomers gravitate to neighborhoods where deterioration has set in."

Thus, the Jim Crow process is hidden. It is not that the Puerto Ricans are forced into these ghettos by the banks and real estate interests by restrictive covenants, but that they are "lured" into these ghettos by some mystical "fascination" for the slums that makes them "gravitate" there.

This stupid explanation of Senior's is mild compared to the racist slander he invents calculated to pit the Negroes against the Puerto Ricans. In the same pamphlet mentioned above he says:

"If a Puerto Rican has too dark a skin, too kinky hair or broad features, he is almost sure to be typed and discriminated against in exactly the same way as any average American Negro....fear of prejudice and exclusion may influence him to retain his own language and customs in order to differentiate himself. At the same time, he may try to remain inside the boundaries of a Puerto Rican neighborhood in order to escape discriminatory racial patterns....."

There we have it! Blake Clarke says that Puerto Ricans are segregated because they speak Spanish, and Clarence Senior says that Puerto Ricans speak Spanish in order to segregate themselves. In this "debate" the spotlight is taken off the landlords.

Senior's argument is exploded by the following facts. Puerto Rican Negroes do not "escape" discrimination by staying in Puerto Rican communities since these are Jim Crow communities also. Puerto Rican Negroes are Jim-Crowed whether they speak English or Spanish. If Puerto Rican Negroes spoke Spanish to avoid Jim-Crow, then why do they speak Spanish in the mixed Negro-Puerto Rican communities?

The fact is that Puerto Rican Negroes are mainly Jim-Crowed in housing because of color. This is seen by the fact that Puerto Rican whites can move into white neighborhoods, not so Puerto Rican Negroes.

Another argument of the capitalist press and agencies is that Puerto Rican tenants allow themselves to be exploited. Thus the NEW YORK TIMES of June 23, 1953, reported that the Housing Authority explained rent gouging as follows:

".....often Puerto Ricans not familiar with the English language and with their own rights were passive victims of unlawful practices by landlords."

The chauvinists of the press and government also claim that the Puerto Ricans themselves create the slum they live in, or at least are equally guilty with the landlords for their housing problems. Thus, the NEW YORK TIMES of April 17, 1953, reports:

"....Dr. John F. Mahoney, Commissioner of Health, said that enforcing of the city's codes under the block-by-block plan was a logical but staggering task. 'You need an army here,' he said, 'not just to inspect but to show people how to live.'"

This statement was made as he left 30 West 128th Street in Harlem. And in Lower Harlem at 1786 Lexington Avenue, Chief Magistrate Murtagh said:

"As he examined the community kitchen....'This is becoming a City of slums.'"

Then the NEW YORK POST of July 27, 1953, reports that:

"The Welfare and Health Council reported that housing problems have been intensified by a small minority of profiteering landlords and irresponsible tenants...."

Continuing in their campaign to shift the blame for slum conditions on the Puerto Ricans, the NEW YORK TIMES of May 2, 1953, declared:

"It's only the occasional shameless neighborhood, notably East Harlem....that dumps garbage on the sidewalks and roads to give the City an unhappy reputation....having worked all over Manhattan since 1921, Mr. Orland (Sanitation Department foreman) termed East Harlem the filthiest area - regrettably worsened since the increased influx of Puerto Ricans."

The bourgeoisie doesn't waste time in poisoning the minds of the working class against the Puerto Ricans. Even the children are told that Puerto Ricans are "dirty" and responsible for slum conditions. This is how a novel written for 12 year olds by Eleanor Hull describes on the very first page of her new book, entitled "Papi," the Puerto Rican Community of Harlem:

"Other people leaned out of windows to shout to their friends or, perhaps to drop garbage into the overflowing trash cans below...."

What "solution" does the ruling class advance to resolve the housing problems of the Puerto Rican minority?

Borrowing from the Malthusian arguments that the trouble with Puerto Ricans is that there are "too many Puerto Ricans," they apply it to New York and say that the trouble with New York is that there are "too many Puerto Ricans." Thus the "solution" is simple. They say, "move the Puerto Ricans from New York." Here are some samples:

The Welfare Council Report on THE PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK states on p.31:

"It is not merely difficult to find apartments for newcomers: it is impossible. It is of prime importance therefore to the residents of New York including the Puerto Ricans, that the flow of migrants to New York be directed elsewhere in the United States."

Blake Clarke's "solution" to the Puerto Rican problem in New York City is stated in his READER'S DIGEST article as follows: "The best course for incoming Puerto Ricans would be to skip the overcrowded metropolis and head for the hinterland. If some more would push west, most of their problems and some of New York's would disappear."

Finally, Eleanor Hull proposes a childish "solution" in her book for 9 year olds. She has a white English-speaking minister advise a group of Puerto Ricans, tenants, on page 53 as follows:

"If you would all sign a protest together - a petition - then the

landlord might take notice. Of course, you might threaten to leave. It would not be funny to lose the rent from an entire building. He would have to fix the staircase to prevent that."

Every Puerto Rican child knows that if the tenants did that, the landlord would have new tenants in 24 hours at a higher rental too, and at \$500.00 per empty apartment.

THE PUERTO RICAN APOLOGISTS:

TREATMENT OF THE PUERTO RICAN MINORITY HOUSING PROBLEMS

The role of the Puerto Rican apologists is to rationalize the attacks of the ruling class and to hinder, misdirect and demobilize the struggle of the Puerto Rican. Following is a series of statements from EL DIARIO and the other stooges in New York City.

When the ceiling fell on William Rosa, in May of 1951 at 27 West 11th Street, who escaped injury, all EL DIARIO could say was to praise the "miracle" that the child wasn't killed. But not a word condemning housing conditions or the landlord. And when the Lopez family was evicted in June of 1952, EL DIARIO explained that it happened because the landlord became "annoyed." Again, no mention was made of the landlord's profit motive. Thus, Puerto Ricans are advised to accept conditions and be thankful that they are not worse.

Then Ernesto Ramos Antonini, Speaker of the House of the Puerto Rican Legislature, lectures the Puerto Ricans in New York last May 13, 1952 in this manner:

"The objective of the Puerto Ricans in New York should not be to segregate themselves as a group."

And Manuel Cabranes, Executive Secretary of the Mayor's Committee on Puerto Rican Affairs, explained segregation of Puerto Ricans as a by-product of Puerto Rican culture. In a speech on May 7, 1951, he stated:

"The housing situation of the Puerto Ricans is deplorable. While it is true that there is a shortage of low income housing, the conglomeration in apartments is due to the close family ties of the Puerto Ricans, and to their hospitality, where they share their home with anyone who has no home."

It's not hard to see why the ruling class loves these stooges. Listen now to another lackey as he covers up for his masters. Jose Monserrat, Director of the Office of Puerto Rico in New York hands out a pamphlet addressed to the Puerto Ricans. It is entitled "The Rights and Duties of Tenants and Landlords." In this pamphlet we find the following:

"That a building is in a good condition is not an accident, a building like that is the result of the care and effort of the landlord, the superintendent and the tenants."

So you see the tenant shares responsibility with the landlord for the condition of the buildings. Thus, the buildings that collapsed were also the fault of the Puerto Rican tenants. But Monserrat has more to say:

"The tenant should dispose of garbage, ashes and papers according to the directives of the landlord."

After assigning to the tenants the obligations of the landlords, he details to the "uneducated" Puerto Ricans in another pamphlet entitled "New York and You, A Guide For Puerto Ricans," how to keep the slums clear by:

"Placing all garbage in covered receptables, being careful that you always leave an empty space of four inches in the top of the receptacle...."

Unfortunately, the tenants could not carry out this wonderful advice since Monserrat failed to hand out the rulers needed to measure the "four inches."

This is how the stooges "educate" the "lower class" Puerto Ricans. But Monserrat is not through yet, he still has more "advice" to give:

"The landlord has the right to dispossess you if you do not pay your rent. If your landlord threatens to dispossess you for any other reason, you have a right to bring your complaint to the New York Rent Commission and they will 'investigate.' A tenant should never complain to the authorities unless the landlord does not make the necessary repairs."

This is how he places false hopes on the Housing Authorities. And if the landlord evicts you for complaining to the authorities, what then? And if the Housing Authorities ignore you or evict you for complaining, what then? The militant, spontaneous and organized struggles of Puerto Rican tenants provides the answer. But it is not forthcoming from the Puerto Rican "Uncle Toms."

When the Puerto Rican masses are in motion EL DIARIO tries its best to hold it back and to distort its significance, particularly, when these struggles are carried out in unity with other nationalities. EL DIARIO grasps every opportunity to pit Puerto Ricans against Negroes.

Thus in the Bedford Avenue fire, that killed 7 Puerto Ricans, Leroy Fredericks, a young Negro, rescued the Colon family just when they were about to drop their children out of the window. But no mention was made by EL DIARIO that Fredericks was a Negro. But when the public accused Irving Greene, another Negro, of starting the fire, then EL DIARIO, in the worst tradition of Hearst, referred to his nationality and printed his photograph.

THE PARTY AND TENANTS STRUGGLES

These militant tenant struggles provide valuable lessons for the Party. The Puerto Rican minority reacts the strongest and in greatest numbers to their housing problems, which are in the main spontaneous and not part of the organized tenants' movement. And yet no serious attention has been given by our Party to these struggles. In tenants work we have but scratched the potentialities of this powerful current.

* * * * *

THE PARTY

The state conference's org. report of November, 1952 points to the existent crisis in Puerto Rican work, and notes the alarming decrease of Puerto Rican members in our Party. The report stated that our present Puerto Rican membership represented a drop of 80% in the past few years. The loss of Puerto Rican members in the period between 1948 and 1953 in New York County corresponds exactly to the state figures.

We must also note that these losses occurred in all community and industrial regions with Puerto Rican members on their rolls.

The rate of decrease of membership in New York County, in general, is serious enough. According to the Harlem region report, the loss of Negro members registered amounted to 50%. In Lower Harlem the record shows the catastrophic drop of 90% of the 1948 Puerto Rican membership.

It is important for us to examine the reasons why there has been such a tremendous drop in our Puerto Rican membership. Many factors have contributed to condition these losses. How should we approach this problem? What method should be used to help us discover the basic causes?

The first thing that must be done is to ascertain how the Puerto Ricans in New York are affected by the present political situation. The general political situation has sharpened since 1948 and the atmosphere of terror and persecution has affected the Puerto Rican minority as well as the rest of the people in the United States.

We cannot dismiss this objective factor altogether, and assume the romantic attitude or naive belief that the general worsening of the political situation has left the Puerto Ricans unaffected. The question is, to what extent has the worsening political situation contributed to our loss of Puerto Rican membership?

We have seen that the increased attacks against the Puerto Rican minority have been met by struggles and decided resistance on the part of the Puerto Rican masses in New York. Also, despite the general political situation and increased attacks against them, the Puerto Rican masses accept and welcome our Party.

The fact that over 50% of those who signed the Charney petitions were Puerto Ricans is the best proof of this fact. On the basis of these facts, the logical conclusion that we can reach is that while the general political situation has undoubtedly been a factor in our loss of Puerto Rican membership, it cannot be accepted as the main factor operating and acting as the cause of the drop of Puerto Rican members.

Another factor which has contributed to the high rate of losses of Puerto Rican members has been our Party's lack of participation in the every day struggles of the Puerto Rican masses in the last few years. This factor has affected our Puerto Rican membership in three ways:

1. Lack of participation by our Party in the mass struggles of the Puerto Rican minority has resulted, first of all, in our isolation from these masses. It has also immobilized and inactivizd our Puerto Rican Party members especially. This is so because the bulk of the Puerto Rican members are active in Puerto Rican mass work in the Puerto Rican communities.
2. The recruiting of Puerto Rican workers has come to a standstill. This is so because normally most of the Puerto Rican recruits come from direct struggle.
3. This lack of participation by our Party in the struggles of the Puerto Rican minority has brought about negative ideological reactions among the Puerto Rican Party members.

Another factor has been our inability to adjust our Puerto Rican members to

Party life and activities, especially outside of Lower Harlem. A number of questions are involved in this point: ideology, the language problem, cadre policy, etc.

Lastly, and most important, wrong methods of work prevalent in our Party in relation to the Puerto Rican question.

Noting the factors that have contributed to our state of crisis in our Puerto Rican work is not enough. We must know not only what factors affect this work, but also why the factors are present. If we do not approach the problem in this manner, we will just make a record of failures, but the idea should be to change the existing situation in our Puerto Rican work. In the past, on many occasions, we have registered and recorded different stages of the downward spiral of our Puerto Rican membership, without making any serious attempt to find out why it was happening. As a result, the negative trend continued unabated. With such a method, the search for a corrective is futile and hopeless.

We should study the problem, establish the facts no matter how unpleasant, and proceed to apply the corrective. From what has been said, it becomes obvious that the external factors are not the decisive ones in determining the cause of our loss of Puerto Rican membership and that, on the contrary, it is in the internal factors that we find the main roots of the problem.

We should examine our Party's policy and our methods of work on the Puerto Rican question in order to point out in a concrete way the main reasons for the Party's crisis in Puerto Rican work. The general line of the Party on the basic facet of the Puerto Rican question is as just as it is correct.

Based on the fundamental Marxist principle of internationalism, our Party concretely applies to the relations of the oppressor United States nation and the oppressed Puerto Rican nation the Leninist principle of unconditional support to the national liberation struggles of the Puerto Rican nation.

Lenin's thesis on this aspect of the question is contained in the following quotations from Vol.19 of his Collected Works:

"In contrast to the Proudhonists, who repudiated the national problem in the name of the social revolution, Marx, having in mind mainly the interest of the proletarian class struggle in the advanced countries, put into the forefront the fundamental principle of internationalism and socialism, that is, that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations."

And further:

"We must....demand the liberation of the oppressed nations, not only in general nebulous phrases, not in empty declamations, not only in postponing the question until socialism is established but in a clearly and precisely formulated program which shall particularly take into account the hypocrisy and cowardice of the socialists in the oppressor nations."

The leader of our Party, Comrade Foster, in his "Open Letter" addressed to Truman, formulates these tasks in relation to the Puerto Rican nation as follows:

"First, there must be unqualified national independence granted to the Puerto Ricans, who are a nation of over two million people. Second, we should at once withdraw our military forces from the island, leaving

the defense of the Panama Canal to the United Nations. And third, we should make all necessary financial grants to enable the Puerto Rican people to build up an industrial system and a diversified agriculture in the island that will provide them with a developing prosperity. On the third point, let me say that it would be a constructive thing if Congress were to take the \$450 million now being squandered on building up the big Puerto Rican military base and give these funds to the Puerto Rican people as a first installment on the cost of the reconstruction of their economic system; but then, I'm very well aware, Mr. President, that neither you nor the reactionary Congress will do voluntarily any of these things. To get them done will be the task of the Puerto Rican people and of the growing labor and progressive movement in the United States. The Communist Party will continue to give its full support to these struggles."

The slogan of immediate independence for Puerto Rico with economic guarantees is the slogan that embodies the basic policy of unconditional support by the Communist Party of the oppressor United States nation to the oppressed Puerto Rican nation. The slogan is directed to the American people in general, and the American working class in particular. All of that is clear and correct, but what happens to this correct line when it is applied? In the application of this line, it is funneled toward the Puerto Rican minority.

Now, the Puerto Rican minority has a special role to play in the movements of support to the struggles of national liberation in Puerto Rico but when this slogan is transformed into a rallying slogan exclusively for the Puerto Rican minority, then we say that it is a wrong application of our correct line.

Some examples: For instance, when Queens County refused to participate in an activity around the question of Puerto Rican independence, with the argument that there were "no Puerto Ricans" in Queens county.

Another case: Headlines in the Daily Worker, January 29, 1953 - -
"Puerto Ricans Here Angered by Biased Korea Trials."

Also in the Daily Worker - (October 27, 1953) - "Puerto Ricans Picket U. N. Today."

According to these headlines, only the Puerto Ricans are, or could, or should be angry. According to these headlines, only the Puerto Ricans have an interest in picketing the U.N. to protest against American imperialist oppression of the Puerto Rican nation.

And another case: There has not been in the past years any committee or organization specifically working for the independence of Puerto Rico among the American people and under our Party leadership. There was a committee for Puerto Rican independence organized by the Social Democrats, with A. Phillip Randolph as Chairman. This committee was dissolved two years ago.

There is at the present time only one committee which represents an organized body calling for Puerto Rican independence among the American people. This committee is known as the "Committee for Organization of Americans for Puerto Rican Independence." It is under Trotskyite leadership.

Another example: All actions around the question of Puerto Rican independence have been limited to Lower Harlem and a few other Puerto Rican communities. Is this not an incorrect application of our correct Party line on this question? Does our line of support for the national liberation struggles of the Puerto Rican

nation apply only to the Puerto Rican minority? Is our slogan for immediate independence for Puerto Rico a rallying call for the Puerto Rican minority exclusively, or for the whole of the American people?

And the final example: In this one is where we have displayed the most glaring instance of our inability to apply our general line on the basic facet of the Puerto Rican question correctly. We refer to the case of Oscar Collazo, the Puerto Rican nationalist, who was condemned to death for the attempt on President Truman's life. Immediately after the Washington incident occurred, in November of 1950, we proceeded to condemn the Nationalists for their terrorist tactics and washed our hands of the whole issue.

We don't have to agree with petty bourgeois terrorist tactics, or putschist actions that do not resolve anything. However, one thing is rejecting petty bourgeois terrorism as a tactic, and another thing is to condone the crimes committed by American imperialism in Puerto Rico and to refuse to render aid to fighters for Puerto Rican national liberation because we disagree, not matter how correctly, with their tactics.

Even when the whole of the Latin American progressives were moving in the defense of Collazo, we did not lift a finger to get support in the United States for the commutation of his death sentence. In the Collazo case, we discarded the principle of internationalism and actually reneged on our own policy of "full support for the national liberation struggles of the Puerto Rican nation."

No matter how wrong the tactics of the Puerto Rican Nationalists, the real assassin was and still remains - American imperialism.

On the national minority facet of the Puerto Rican question, our Party bases itself on Stalin's thesis on the special approach to the national minority. Our Party's policy on this facet of the Puerto Rican question is embodied in the slogan: "Equal Rights for the Puerto Rican Minority." But again we see that the correct general line has been applied incorrectly.

Our main, we could say, our only slogan with which we have approached the Puerto Rican minority has been the slogan of immediate independence for Puerto Rico. We have no quarrel with the slogan of Puerto Rican independence. What we object to is the way it has been used. This independence slogan has been raised as a substitute for struggle based on the immediate problems facing the Puerto Rican minority.

One example has been the experience with our progressive Spanish language press. During the years when Liberacion was being published there was hardly any issue which dealt with the specific problems of the Puerto Rican minority. Its whole content dealt almost exclusively with the problems of the Puerto Rican nation.

In the first and only edition of El Yunque, all the articles dealt with the issues and problems of Puerto Rico itself. Not one sentence, not one word about the immediate problems of the Puerto Rican minority.

Another example: The New York County program on Puerto Rican work approved at the 1948 convention:

1. That the problems of Liberacion be discussed by the incoming County Committee and that concrete recommendations for its support and distribution be given to all the regions and industrial organizations.
2. That a comrade be assigned by the County Party organization to coordinate and assist in Puerto Rican work, in the various regions and

trade unions.

3. That a special conference for trade union leaders, to discuss Puerto Rican work in the trade unions, be called.
4. That this convention should go on record supporting the unanimous decision of the New York County Committee to issue a solidarity assessment to aid our brother C.P. of Puerto Rico.

The program on Puerto Rican work in New York County in 1948 should have been along the line of the program on Negro work, presented at the same convention. This program on Negro work listed the following:

1. A systematic campaign to break down lily-white shops and offices, and for upgrading Negro workers in industry.
2. To break down the Jim Crow ghetto, for public housing without discrimination, and an end to restrictive covenants.
3. To put an end to police brutality, Northern counterpart to lynch terror, as a vital part of our struggle for civil rights and against imperialist war hysteria.

This program on Negro work correctly reflects the need to struggle for the equal rights of the Negro national minority; the one on Puerto Rican work incorrectly omits the need to struggle for equal rights for the Puerto Rican minority.

For years we have been approaching the Puerto Rican minority with the abstract slogan of Puerto Rican independence. What we have actually done is to wave the flag at the Puerto Rican minority. And what about police brutality, housing, better wages, upgrading of Puerto Rican workers, political representation, equal pay for Puerto Rican women workers in industry, etc.? Very little of that, almost nothing. Where is the struggle for equal rights?

It is clear that there is an obvious discrepancy between the general line of the Party and its concrete application in relation to both facets of the Puerto Rican question.

The question now arises, have we always showed these same errors in our work on the Puerto Rican question? No, we have not. When and why did we begin to move away from the correct application of our general line?

A brief sketch of the salient facts in the history of our Party's work on the Puerto Rican question will show that:

One of the areas where our Party was most influential in the '30's was Lower Harlem.

Tens of organizations directly or indirectly influenced by our Party.

Many movements fought out militantly on different issues - unemployment, housing, political representation, support to Spain, support to the Cuban people, support to the Mexican revolution, support to the Puerto Rican people's struggle for national liberation, etc.

Our Party led in all those movements.

Our Party was loved and respected by the Puerto Rican masses.

No wonder Hearst referred to Lower Harlem as "The little corner of Moscow."

It is obvious that we do not have anything that resembles even remotely that old influence today. Of course, we are living in a different historical period, and in a vastly different political situation. But neither the different historical period nor the changed political situation can satisfactorily explain our loss of influence, and least of all can it explain our incorrect tactics on Puerto Rican work. What could explain it then? When and why did the break in contact with the masses occur? What was the original cause of the loss of mass influence?

The basic cause was the concrete effect and impact of Browderist policies on the Puerto Rican movement in general, and our Puerto Rican work in particular. Browder's policies in regard to the Puerto Rican question were as follows:

1. Elimination of the vanguard of the working class of the Puerto Rican nation, depriving thereby not only the Puerto Rican working class but the liberation movement as well from the only possible effective leadership.
2. Projection of the abstract slogan of independence. This independence to be obtained through agreement of the Puerto Rican petty bourgeoisie and the "enlightened bourgeoisie of the United States."
3. Elimination of the slogan of equal rights for the Puerto Rican minority. Projecting the abstract slogan of Puerto Rican independence as the only Party slogan for the Puerto Rican minority.
4. Implementation of this general policy by an attempt to eliminate the working class ideology and leadership in the Puerto Rican movement including the Party. J. A. Corretjer, petty bourgeois Puerto Rican nationalist, imposed as the ideologist, theoretician, and Party leader among the Puerto Ricans.

This political line and policy on Party work among the Puerto Ricans had the following effects:

1. Suspension of the struggles of immediate character. The limited immediate struggles which were conducted were based on the premise that "agreement with the question of independence for Puerto Rico" was to be the prerequisite for participation in any form of activity. In other words, united front work was limited to a given level of consciousness in the struggle. Any Puerto Rican who did not understand the issue of independence or who rejected it as a solution to the Puerto Rican question, was considered ipso facto "useless" and sometimes "enemy." Loss of mass contact and influence was the inevitable result.

This petty bourgeois line of Browder's had the logical effect of alienating us from the Puerto Rican workers. That is why recruiting of Puerto Ricans was then noted by its predominantly petty bourgeois composition.

As can be clearly seen, our incorrect methods of work among the Puerto Rican masses are not accidental but rather have a specific history of development. We must eradicate every lingering vestige of our past incorrect methods of work.

The fact that we have posed the problem of our Puerto Rican work with such sharpness must not be interpreted as lack of faith in our Party's ability to tackle and solve the problem. On the contrary, it is precisely because our Party has both

the ability and the will to overcome whatever obstacles are in the way of its solution that we place the question stripped of all trimmings.

The fact is that in New York County a very bold beginning has been made and we hope that this is true of other counties as well. In Lower Harlem important and auspicious changes have taken place. A year ago, this region was in a state of near-collapse. Clubs which met were a rarity. Hardly any activities were conducted and the membership was almost totally inactive. The registration of 1951-52 showed a continued trend toward a steady loss of Puerto Rican membership. It took some sharp display of Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism by the comrades in Lower Harlem to find their way out of the rut.

The last registration found Lower Harlem with a plus 100% average. In the last year the region has developed and led movements in several fields; housing, political representation, the Rosenberg campaign, police brutality, and also participated in getting the most signatures in the Puerto Rican districts for Comrade George Blake Charney. It should be registered also that Lower Harlem conducted a full-swing campaign for Comrade Blake, with open air meetings and other activities.

What is the secret by which Lower Harlem has reestablished contact and relationships with the masses in Lower Harlem? By reacting to the numberless problems that they face daily. By participating and infusing our Party's leadership to those struggles. By living close to those masses. By abandoning the old approach to the united front in our Puerto Rican work, which in substance limited the struggle to the "elite," who did agree with the slogan of independence. By proving to the Party members in the region that the Puerto Rican masses still love and respect the Party and welcome its leadership.

There still remain a host of unresolved problems in Lower Harlem. Nobody, least of all the Puerto Rican comrades in Lower Harlem, deny this fact. But the fundamental hurdle, involving the method of work among the Puerto Rican masses, has been overcome and that is the important thing.

We also want to acknowledge the high calibre of leadership displayed by the comrades of the New York County leadership in dealing with this problem. Armed with this experience, we must proceed to apply these lessons to all other regions in the county.

The problem of integrating Puerto Rican members into the life and activities of the Party is a very tough problem indeed. There has always been a high turnover of Puerto Rican members in the Party. The reason for this high turnover has been primarily our inability to adjust them to our organizational and political life.

The integration of the Puerto Rican members in our Party calls for a SPECIAL approach, with capital letters. Heretofore, the approach to the integration of Puerto Rican members has been far from special, and, we might say, even below the general and routine.

What does a special approach on this question entail? It entails understanding and reacting to the language problem as it exists in reality and to the concrete tasks that stem from it in our Party. It entails understanding and reacting to the specific ideological problems which are preventing the fullest participation of the Puerto Rican Party members in the life of the Party.

We have said that a special approach is needed in order to cope with the language problem. Right from scratch we have to separate objective truth from fiction in relation to the language question.

In regions where work among the Puerto Ricans is rare, the legend still prevails that a "language barrier" exists. We have shown the class roots of this concept as well as its reactionary character. We repeat, no such barrier exists. What exists as a so-called language barrier is just a stereotype and bugaboo, based on a relatively temporary language problem. Day by day, and despite everything the bourgeoisie does, this problem - the real one - is constantly receding. The myth that Puerto Ricans have some innate quality which prevents them from learning English is so much chauvinistic hogwash.

The majority of Puerto Ricans living in New York do speak English. It is true that the average Puerto Rican adult does not have Jose Ferrer's English diction but, with accent or without it, the average Puerto Rican adult here communicates in English many times daily.

We are referring now to the adults born and bred in Puerto Rico. But how about the over 86,000 Puerto Ricans born in New York, and those who came here as children? Frequent suggestions to teach English to the Puerto Ricans in progressive organizations flow from that "language barrier" concept. Let's not worry too much about the Puerto Ricans learning English. Nobody within the proper age limits can help but absorb the language which is generally spoken. Not even the most oppressed and discriminated.

We do not mean to infer that any comrade who emits the concept of the "language barrier" is reactionary. The fact that he or she is a Party member proves the opposite. The only thing that we want to point out is that the best of us absorb a certain amount of enemy class ideology and express it in one way or another. On this question of language, the concept of "language barrier" emitted by one of us is nothing else than an "echo" of a chauvinistic stereotype.

What happens when this concept, even in the form of a statement, is not challenged within the Party? Could there be any effective work done among the Puerto Ricans with this kind of thinking? No, we cannot, we cannot even start to contact the Puerto Rican masses. It paralyzes us right from the beginning.

But look at the organizational forms it develops into. Experience shows that in most regions you will find all the Puerto Rican comrades in a language club. Is that correct? No, it is not. Why does that happen? Because the language problem has been magnified and distorted so that it has precisely those same results that the ruling class sets out to get. Isolation and segregation of the Puerto Ricans, and thereby the weakening of the unity of the working class.

Is it wrong to have language clubs then? No, it is not wrong. As a matter of fact, the language club among the Puerto Ricans is indispensable if we are to be realistic and acknowledge the existence of a language question. But when the language club is transformed into "the Puerto Rican club" it begins to smell of Jim Crow. Where this happens, we have in fact a partial or total isolation of the Puerto Rican members from the rest of the Party.

The net result is, on the one hand, to reinforce national and white chauvinist ideology among the white English-speaking comrades, and, on the other hand, it conditions and precipitates the separatist petty bourgeois nationalist ideology among the Puerto Rican comrades.

What should be done about this problem? We must keep the language clubs as an organizational form which corresponds to the real problem presented by the language question. In those clubs there should be only those Puerto Rican comrades who are unable to adjust themselves to an English-speaking club because of the language problem. Those Puerto Rican comrades who do speak English should

be assigned to different English-speaking clubs.

Sometimes we are told that the reason Puerto Rican comrades are assigned to language clubs even when they understand English is because they are "happier" there. So does the bourgeois apologist for imperialism say that Puerto Ricans are happier and feel more secure in their ghetto. If this happiness is the result of capitulation to national chauvinism, or an expression of separatist bourgeois nationalism, as it must be, then it should not be permitted.

However, when the leadership tolerates this state of affairs, regardless of how the Puerto Rican comrades feel about it, it is, objectively, an expression of chauvinist nationalism.

In this connection, we would like to recall a very enlightening experience which occurred in an industrial section some years back.

We want to present this experience in its chronological sequence, so that we can grasp its logical development.

1. All Puerto Rican comrades were placed in a language club.
2. The proposal was made to establish a broad Puerto Rican workers organization in Lower Harlem.
3. The proposal was made to transfer the Puerto Rican language club to the Lower Harlem Party organization.

The political lesson is as clear as daylight.

ON RECRUITING

We have stated that recruiting Puerto Rican workers in the main takes place when they are involved in struggle. The truth of this statement is proved by the history of our Party organization in Lower Harlem and also by the experience of the Lower East Side, Lincoln Square, and Chelsea, among the community regions and by the maritime and food Party organizations.

Whenever our Party moved into struggle among the Puerto Rican workers, either in community or industry, many of these workers were recruited into our Party. The Lower East Side and Lincoln Square regions, especially, carried out many struggles among the Puerto Ricans on housing, police brutality, etc. That is why many Puerto Rican workers joined the Party in those regions three or four years ago.

At present, struggles in the Puerto Rican communities in these regions are almost non-existent. That is the reason why we observe the rapid decline of the Puerto Ricans in the membership rolls of those regions. The same goes for maritime, food and other industrial regions, where at least a minimum effort was made to work among the Puerto Ricans.

But in the majority of the regions the scant recruitment of Puerto Rican workers reflects the lack of attention to Puerto Rican concentration work.

Many years ago, when a community or industrial Party organization failed to recruit Puerto Ricans, the excuse was given that "there are no Puerto Ricans in our area". Or, "there are no Puerto Ricans in our industry."

Today, it is impossible to raise those arguments. We have shown that in

every community region area, there are Puerto Ricans in large numbers. As for the industrial regions, all you have to do is just compare the ratio of Puerto Rican workers in a given industry to the total in the same industry, or the ratio of Puerto Rican members in a trade union to the total membership of the same union and then find out the ratio of Puerto Rican Party members in a given industry or trade union, as compared to the total Party membership in the same industry or trade union.

In some instances, we found the peculiar situation as in one community region where actually masses of Puerto Ricans were moved into struggle. Especially in the excellent mass work that was developed in that area, yet hardly any Puerto Ricans came into the Party in that region as a result of those struggles. What could be the reason for the failure to recruit Puerto Rican workers in these struggles? Could it be that the Puerto Ricans in that region are different from those of the East Side or Lincoln Square? No, they are the very same.

Failure to recruit Puerto Ricans in those struggles was due to the right opportunist tendency displayed by some of our comrades in this type of united front work. It was also due to a crass underestimation of the role that Puerto Rican workers can play. We are glad to report that these same comrades involved in mass work in the region have a different outlook today, and we should look forward to some Puerto Rican recruits from that area in the near future.

The recruitment of Puerto Rican workers should be one of our immediate goals in New York City. This recruitment could and should be done in every single county, especially in industry. This will be done by moving into struggle on tenants, schools, police brutalities, political representation, etc. It will be done through a consistent fight for better jobs, upgrading, equal pay for women, and against all forms of discrimination in industry and in the labor movement.

CADRE POLICY

If we observe the composition of the regional, sectional and club leadership in New York City, the first thing that strikes you is the absence of Puerto Rican cadre in the leadership. As this is so, not only where "there are no Puerto Rican members on the rolls" but actually in every region, community or industrial.

Cadre policy, and especially promotion to leadership, is the clearest sign of maturity by any Party committee in respect to our Puerto Rican work. It is the best gauge to measure political ability and leadership in the field of Puerto Rican work.

A bold policy of promotion of Puerto Rican members into leadership, disregarding the practice of fixed standards and requirements is needed. This bold policy presupposes constant concern and guidance by the leadership. The worst thing that could happen is to effect this bold policy of promotions, and then leave this cadre to shift for themselves and to sink or swim. Unfortunately, this is what has happened in the very rare instances where this bold approach to promotion of Puerto Rican cadre has taken place.

An important point on the development of Puerto Rican cadre is the need to develop and promote into leadership Puerto Rican women cadre. In New York county we have a peculiar situation on this question, for while we find some excellent Puerto Rican women cadre in Regional leadership, we have nothing of the kind in the lower echelons of Party leadership.

One of the most important features of cadre policy is, of course, the training of our members. A very serious defect in our cadre policy concerning our

Puerto Rican members is precisely the lack of attention which is given to their training. Whenever we think about training for our Puerto Rican cadre, it is always in relation to composition. There is no planned, systematic utilization of our Party training schools to help develop our Puerto Rican cadre.

On the question of cadre training, as in everything else, we must keep in mind at all times that the decisive sector within the Puerto Rican minority is the working class sector. We must pay much more attention than we have heretofore, to the task of training and promoting our Puerto Rican comrades, and especially our Puerto Rican working class and women comrades.

THE ISSUE OF INDEPENDENCE

New York County is no exception in regard to the general weakness on the issue of Puerto Rican independence. Here, too, we have acted as though the task of supporting the Puerto Rican national liberation struggle was the exclusive responsibility of the Puerto Rican minority. Here, too, we have failed to involve any other than Puerto Rican comrades in the scanty activities we have conducted on this issue during the past year.

Yet a number of actions of international significance on the issue of Puerto Rican independence took place within the last year.

One was the so-called trial of the rebellious Puerto Rican soldiers of the 65th Regiment in October of last year. On that question we started to move and then inertia overcame us. It is true that we were the first to seize hold of the issue and we stimulated quite a number of actions. But the fact remains that while Brooklyn developed many activities around that issue, limited to the Puerto Ricans it's true, nevertheless they were far more consistent than we were in New York County.

Another action took place in the United Nations with practically several weeks of discussion around the question of the Political Status of Puerto Rico.

We sat this one out, but completely. The 16 votes which represented the main opposition and the 18 abstaining votes, which were also a positive factor in exposing the maneuver of the American imperialists and their Puerto Rican comprador stooges, most certainly did not result from any pressure put up by our county organization.

Another thing that should be stressed is that there is lots of room for the Puerto Rican comrades in New York county to display some self-criticism in relation to their special responsibility in advancing the struggle for Puerto Rican independence. During the past period the leading Puerto Rican comrades in New York have made a full swing from a left-sectarian position to its opposite. While correctly trying to eliminate the left-sectarian approach to the united front among the Puerto Rican masses, they have shown no initiative, nor have they displayed any real leadership on the struggle for Puerto Rican independence.

Our correct and effective work on the Puerto Rican question requires that we be clear and consistent on the two basic tasks that we must carry out and that the two slogans - for full independence of the Puerto Rican nation, and equal rights for the minority - are not to be substituted for each other.

We have two basic tasks, and not just one at a time.

One thing that worries the imperialists quite a lot is what they term "the Stalinist solution" to the problems of the oppressed peoples.

As we have stated, Sir Gladwyn Jebb is fearful of such possible solutions to the problems affecting the colonial nations. Apologists for American imperialism wail and bemoan the tendency in Guatemala, for instance, of solving the agrarian question in "the Yenan way."

Prof. Dodson warns the Puerto Rican minority against the possibility of the Puerto Ricans in New York seeking to solve their problems by listening to or following the "dictators" and Communists.

Of course, Professor Dodson is consciously raising the so-called Communist issue as a bugaboo, but there is an element of reality in his fears. This "good friend" and "benefactor" hired by the ruling class to "help" the "poor Puerto Ricans," knows that only the Communists have the answer and real solutions to their problems. Nor is Prof. Dodson unaware that the masses of Puerto Rican people in New York have shown in the past a ready ear for our advice and a willingness to accept the correct and courageous leadership of our Party.

The Communist Party armed with scientific knowledge and revolutionary will, can lead the way towards the solution of these problems.

The leader of our Party, Comrade Foster, has advanced the main theoretical and political principles to guide us in this task. In the previously quoted statement by Comrade Foster and in similar ones made from time to time, he has propounded what represents the basic Party postulates on the Puerto Rican question. The fact is that for years Comrade Foster has made tremendous contributions in regard to the Latin American Peoples' struggles against American imperialism. One of these contributions was his great book OUTLINE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS.

Have we, in the Communist Party of the United States of America, availed ourselves and utilized sufficiently Comrade Foster's guidance and leadership on this question?

Unfortunately we have not!

Guided by Comrade Foster's presentation of the question, we should proceed to hammer out a concrete program on the Puerto Rican question. Without such a program it will be impossible for our Party to discharge its responsibility as the vanguard of the American working class in regards to the Puerto Rican question.

In the present political serious situation, with American imperialism desperately trying to create favorable conditions for the outbreak of a third world war and internally striving to establish fascism, our line of struggle rings clear and true in Comrade Steven's report.

Guided with these correct policies and tactical approaches our Party is aiming to eliminate its isolation from the masses of the American people and to move them in opposition to the war policies and fascist tendencies of American imperialism.

All popular sectors within the United States and also those of the colonial peoples oppressed by American imperialism must be joined in this historical struggle. This includes the Puerto Rican people, both in the oppressed Puerto Rican nation and in the Puerto Rican national minority. But we do not as yet grasp the political fact that the Puerto Rican nation's struggle for national liberation constitutes the link that pulls the whole chain of anti-imperialist struggles in Latin America. We do not as yet gauge correctly the actual or

potential role that the Puerto Rican minority could play in New York.

Our work among the Puerto Ricans must be guided by the correct tactical line projected by the National Committee's Resolution and the Stevens report.

The application of our Party's coalition policy to the concrete conditions of the struggles of the Puerto Rican minority must be our immediate aim.

The Stevens report states on p. 73:

"How must the tactical line of the Party be implemented?

1. By the widest development of a united front struggle on all key policy questions within the trade unions, the main organizations of the Negro people, the mass organizations of the farmers, and the main national group organizations. Only to the degree that these key organizations of the labor movement and its allies are won for correct policies in the fight for peace, the struggle against the approaching crises, can we assure a correct content to the independent political activity of labor and its allies.
2. By helping mobilize these main organizations of the people in struggle around specific issues flowing from the program of the democratic coalition which we aim to help build. These non-electoral mass struggles on issues are the pre-condition for effective political action and electoral activity."

This includes the organizations within the Puerto Rican minority - political, social, civic and religious - and not only in Lower Harlem, but throughout the different Puerto Rican communities.

In order to effectively carry out this task, we have to move boldly in the direction of the right-led organizations amongst the Puerto Ricans. A characteristic feature of our work among the Puerto Ricans has been the assignment of our Puerto Rican comrades exclusively to left-led organizations and movements.

This is understandable when we consider the tremendous influence and impact that our own Party and the American Labor Party have had in the past among the Puerto Ricans. However, there has been a tendency in the Party to exaggerate the radicalization of the Puerto Rican masses and to confuse militant fight back against oppression with class consciousness.

A sober estimate of present political trends among the Puerto Ricans as pointed out elsewhere shows that the Puerto Ricans are swinging back in the direction of the Democratic Party and seeking to carry the electoral struggles for their rights, mainly through that Party.

At the same time we witness the decided moving of Puerto Rican right-led organizations such as churches and others into the struggle for the rights of the Puerto Rican citizen.

The only alternative for us if we fail to move in the direction of the right-led organizations and movements among the Puerto Ricans is continued isolation.

We should also bear in mind that the end of the "good old days" of the hegemony of the left among the Puerto Ricans comes along at the same time that

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We should also bear in mind that the end of the "good old days" of the hegemony of the left among the Puerto Ricans comes along at the same time that

the middle class within the Puerto Rican minority emerges as an important social force. This new relation of forces demands new approaches and new tactics. Tactics which are consistent with the real situation. A situation which could be characterized as fluid and where there is not any definite hegemony at the moment of either the working class or the middle class of the right or the left.

This does not mean that the left organizations and movements among the Puerto Ricans are henceforth to be considered unimportant. Such a conclusion would be erroneous and unrealistic. The tremendous influence of the left among the Puerto Ricans will not disappear overnight. The left movements have a very important role to play especially among the Puerto Ricans if sectarian attitudes are eliminated.

The main field of struggle in our Puerto Rican work must be in industry and the very center of that field must be the trade union movement. It is there that the solution to the problems of the Puerto Rican workers which we have presented must be found.

How? For instance, by applying concretely Point "B" of the People's Program in the Stevens report which reads:

"(b) Wage increases must be geared to the objective of raising the wage level of the vast mass of workers who are in the unskilled and lowest paid categories. The policy of wage settlements which widen the differential between skilled and unskilled is a policy which results in weakening the unity of workers in the wage fight. It is deliberately encouraged by the labor bureaucracy in order to buy off a narrow stratum of workers as the social support of labor reformism. In fighting this policy we are not the partisans of a false equalitarianism which refuses to recognize the validity of wage differentials based on skill. Nor must we allow our fight against this practice to be interpreted as pitting the unskilled against the skilled."

That point applied to the Puerto Rican workers in all industries where they are employed.

And again on p. 65 of the Stevens report it states:

"(f) Inclusion of the model anti-discrimination clause in all union contracts to bar discrimination against Negro workers in hiring, upgrading and seniority."

That too applies to the Puerto Rican workers in industry.

Work among the Puerto Ricans in industry and the trade union movement is a most fundamental task of our Party. And this should not be seen as a humanitarian attempt to defend the Puerto Rican workers from exploitation and injustice, but as a task primarily directed towards the strengthening of the working class movement.

To the extent that our Party succeeds in the struggle for the rights of the Puerto Rican workers in industry, and to the extent that they are integrated in the trade union movement, to that extent will the unity of the working class be reinforced. Also, a strong segment of Puerto Rican workers in industry and in the trade union movement will mean a strengthening of the ties between labor and its ally, the Puerto Rican minority.

P R O G R A M

TRADE UNION

1. A job training program for Puerto Rican workers
2. Upgrading of Puerto Rican workers
3. Fight for the \$.75 legal minimum per hour
4. Equal pay for equal work for women
5. For Day Care Centers in the Puerto Rican communities
6. Organization of the unorganized
7. Integration of Puerto Rican leadership in the trade unions

HOUSING

1. Intensify the struggle against rent gouging with special emphasis on furnished rooms and remodeled buildings.
2. For low-cost housing projects and against Title I
3. Organization of Puerto Rican tenants

POLICE BRUTALITY

1. End the murders of Puerto Ricans by the police -
Prosecute the murderers!
2. End police frame-ups of Puerto Ricans

EDUCATION

1. End to "corridor classes"
2. Employment of Puerto Rican teachers to teach in all schools, all classes and all subjects.
3. End to retardation of Puerto Rican students

HEALTH

1. Public hospitals and clinics in the Puerto Rican areas
2. After-hour clinics for Puerto Rican working mothers
3. Spanish speaking personnel in public hospitals and clinics

YOUTH

1. City administered recreation centers
2. High schools in Puerto Rican communities

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

1. Literacy test in Spanish
2. Demand for elected Puerto Rican officials, city and state
3. Demand for appointed Puerto Ricans to city and state offices
4. End the gerrymandering of Puerto Rican districts

PUERTO RICAN - NEGRO UNITY

PARTY

1. Ideological struggle against national chauvinism, bourgeois nationalism
2. Recruiting
3. Popular ideological material to combat barrage of chauvinist propaganda

UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT OF THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE'S STRUGGLES FOR INDEPENDENCE

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR THE PUERTO RICAN NATIONAL MINORITY IN NEW YORK

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