

JOINT RESPONSE BY EL COMITE-MINP AND OCTOBER LEAGUE TO STATEMENTS OF P.S.P.

The following statements were issued jointly by El Comité - M.I.N.P. and the October League a Marxist Leninist organization in the U.S. The statements originally published in The Call organ of the O.L., respond to the editorial published in the March 16, 1975 issue of Claridad (bilingual) organ of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (P.S.P.). In the aforementioned editorial Florencio Merced, member of P.S.P.'s political commission, utilizes a complete page to slander, omit and lie about the positions presented by our two organizations during the conference of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee held in Newark, New Jersey on March 1 and 2 of this year.

The position taken by Merced in Claridad's editorial do not take us by surprise as the arrogance and sectarianism characterizing the P.S.P. leadership is well known, particularly in Puerto Rico. Using such comments as "small group", ultra leftists, and "unknown leaders" etc. to describe other organizations, the P.S.P. leadership attempts to cover its ideological confusion, in so far as our organization is concerned we have never been bothered by such descriptions since it is a reflection of a petty bourgeoisie determined to hide its political ambivalence and inconsistency inclusive of the membership of its own organization. As an organization we have never renounced our principles by responding to this form of "ideological struggle" but in this occasion the leadership of the P.S.P. uses the names of other organizations in Puerto Rico implying opportunism in our part. In this respect it is our duty to these organizations to clarify exactly what were the positions taken by our organization during the course of the conference; in essence, our position was that the P.S.P. strategic conception of struggle is the result of its own organization analysis. The P.S.P. is one organization within the Puerto Rican revolutionary movement, therefore we stated that it is not the duty of a solidarity committee to assume this organizations position, nor is it the right of P.S.P. to impose it.

Before proceeding with our statements allow us a clarification. El Comité - M.I.N.P. and the October League held similar views in some questions during the conference, there were differences in others but these political differences existing among our organizations have always been discussed based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

STATEMENT OF EL COMITE-MINP--

Once again, we encountered the politics of accusing your opponent of some absurdity and then proceeding to destroy them based upon criticism of that very same absurdity. It is the politics which are often used by "revolutionary" organizations whose ideological foundations are rooted in the inconsistency of the petit-bourgeoisie. In the case of Florencio Merced's editorial a new twist is added; lies and

slanders are coupled with "unconscious omissions" in order to justify an attack against those who "dare" to question the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee Political Statement.

The nature of this joint statement demands that we immediately comment on Florencio's editorial. According to Florencio, El Comité's main argument in opposing the term "classical colony" was "that there is no consensus among different Puerto Rican forces that are struggling for independence, on the issue of classical colony." (English version) He then proceeds to arrogantly describe the "smallness" and the minimal political influence "of the leader" of one of those forces. In order to counter this absurdity we will refer to page 12 of the PRSC Political Statement, which reads: "We support the independence of Puerto Rico, not any one particular group, organization, or force." (According to Florencio this is to be interpreted as PSP or PIP, and no one else.)

It was precisely this principle of unity, that in our opinion was being violated in accepting PSP's definition of Puerto Rico as a "classical colony." Moreover, Florencio omits the major part of our arguments which we presented both in the conference workshops and in its plenary session. We stated that it was not the responsibility or task of the Solidarity Committee to decide or define the strategy for the Puerto Rican revolution. This responsibility lies solely on the Puerto Rican people and its revolutionary and/or patriotic organizations. Furthermore, we continued in our presentation by stating that the definition of a "classical colony" is a strategic conception of a sector of the independence movement; we emphasized at that point, as we do now, that we did not question the size of that sector at this moment in the development of the national liberation struggle. We did say that it was a sector, not the total.

At this point we raised that within the independence movement others disagreed with the definition of Puerto Rico as a "classical colony." We mentioned not only PSR and MSP, as stated by Florencio, but we also included La Liga Socialista of Puerto Rico (M-L) and the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico. Again by "omission" Florencio does not include these other two organizations.

These were some aspects brought forth during our presentation at the plenary, but more important, and as recognized by Florencio, we had our own "criteria" for not accepting PSP's definition of Puerto Rico as a "classical colony." This "criteria" is based on scientific analysis and on materialism, not on eye-catching phrases.

As stated by representatives of El Comité-MINP in a workshop and plenary session, a strategy for a social revolution is based on scientific analysis of, among other factors, the correlation of the class forces existing in a nation at a determined moment of the struggle. This demands a correct analysis of who are the enemies of the working class and who are its allies; it demands a program (strategy) necessary to carry the class to victory in that particular phase of the revolution. To define Puerto Rico as a "classical colony" without taking into consideration the mode of production which characterized all capitalist societies is to negate these systems of defined classes and in particular the working class.

On the other hand, such analysis leads to the inevitable which PSP has historically attempted to avoid: Puerto Rico is a colony, that is true; it is an industrialized colony with a defined working class. As such, in order to carry out the social revolution this class must have its own independent political party, which as history has shown, is a communist party. Once again, another "ommission."

Having discussed the absurdities, slanders and omissions, we are left with the lies. Unlike Florencio, we refer to his statements, not to opinions or vague interpretations. He states: "we were silent at the Constituent Assembly when this position, which we considered and still consider thoroughly incorrect, was aired by El Comité-MINP. But political responsibility demands that we discuss it here and now." If we may, we can add that political responsibility demands that we be honest when criticizing our comrades. We would like to remind Florencio that about eight speakers followed our presentation on the question. These included a representative from the West Coast, one from Boston, a sister from FUSP, Jose Che Velasquez and Alfredo Lopez. All members of your organization. Florencio's remarks in his statement can only lead us to assume that the "we remained silent" refers to Florencio Merced who has personalized PSP.

As far as El Comité-MINP reaching agreement with the October League on various points discussed at the conference, the explanation to us is obvious. It is the same reason that explains our organization reaching agreement with other organizations in Puerto Rico; the application of the universal laws of materialism to the concrete conditions of the situation.

THE OCTOBER LEAGUE STATEMENT---

1. The October League never violated the "principles of unity" (English version) or the "spirit that governs" the Solidarity Committee (Spanish version). In the context of discussing the political document, the O.L. representative presented our political views on this document.

2. The political view of the O.L. on the question of democratic rights was as follows:

"The independence struggle is linked to the struggle of the Puerto Rican people in the U.S. The basis for the special oppression of Puerto Rican people here is laid by the colonial domination of Puerto Rico by the U.S. imperialists. The struggle for their democratic rights is a revolutionary struggle which is aimed at U.S. imperialism... The Committee should take up the struggle of the Puerto Rican people in the U.S. for democratic rights, against national discrimination, and link these struggles to the fight against imperialism and to the demand of Independence for Puerto Rico!"

Does this say that the Solidarity Committee should make the struggle for democratic rights the "priority" (English version) of the Solidarity Committee? Of course not! Our position was and is that the struggles are linked, in that no aspect of the struggle of Puerto Rican people is unrelated to the question of Puerto Rican independence, and in fact it is the duty of every person who struggles around the question of Puerto Rican independence to link that to the struggle of Puerto Rican people in the U.S. And if it is everybody's duty, the allegation that the October League is "imposing its line" and trying to "facilitate its entry into this aspect of our struggle" (English version), is quite false. For everyone who claims to take up the struggle for independence, in anything but a liberal

manner, must also view struggles of Puerto Rican people in the U.S. as tied to the demands for independence, and to the building of a genuinely anti-imperialist movement within the U.S.

3. The October League has never made a secret of our views on the so-called "socialist camp." We stated clearly, in our founding Unity Statement in 1972, that "along with the U.S. imperialists, the Soviet ruling clique, the social-imperialists, have placed themselves in opposition to the aspirations and needs of the world's peoples... The present situation shows us that war is a class question. As long as imperialism exists, it must strive for super-profits and world conquest, making war inevitable. Peace can only be won through the defeat of imperialism."

Increasing numbers of peoples and countries around the world are recognizing that the existence of more than one superpower poses a danger to the independence and liberation of oppressed countries and nations. The President of the Council of Revolution of the People's Republic of Algeria, Houari Boumedienne, summed it up this way: "The interests of the big powers, unfortunately, can not be identified with those of other countries; world peace and the advent of a democratic international society will not result from 'agreements between the big superpowers...'"

4. The October League has never hidden its independent analysis of the so-called World Peace Council. While it is a fact that there are representative organizations within the World Peace Council that do not hold to the same line as the Soviet Union, the domination of the World Peace Council by the Soviet Union can be seen in all the recent documents produced by this body. This line that the Soviet social-imperialists promote, is that war can be ended even while imperialism exists. They preach reliance upon the negotiations between themselves and the U.S., rather than reliance upon the struggle of the oppressed peoples themselves. The O.L. was aware that many people in the PRSC did not share its views on the character of the Soviet Union, the World Peace Council, or the Havana Conference. For this reason we did not try to make these views a point of contention within the Solidarity Committees, until it was forced upon us by those like the Puerto Rican Socialist Party who like to laud to the skies, the "fraternal aid" of the Soviet social-imperialists and who pushed through, without prior discussion in local committees, the Havana Conference, as the main area of work for the PRSC. We also feel that the view expressed by the World Peace Council, which is reflected in the Havana Conference, that "detente" is the main trend in the world, runs counter to the views of the PRSC (that the national liberation forces are the main trend). The opinions of El Comité were made clear on this question, though they were not heard or understood well by the author of the Claridad column. While not opposing attendance at the Havana Conference, the delegate from El Comité expressed clearly the danger of "relying on conferences" rather than building the mass struggle. In addition the delegate from El Comité expressed the need for the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee delegation to put forward an independent line challenging the question of "detente" as something that must be exposed as a betrayal of the national liberation struggles and in opposition to the statement of the PRSC. The question which El Comité began to raise as to the true nature of the Puerto Rican Peace Council, were crudely cut off.