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Socialist Medicine

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Every Saturday, the YOUNG LORDS PARTY goes door to door in El Barrio and the South Bronx, testing for tuberculosis. Even though t.b. has been eliminated among the rich, the middle classes, and white people in general, it is alive and spreading in the Puerto Rican and Black colonies of amerikkka, the “richest” country in the world.

Tuberculosis is known as a disease of oppression, just like lead poisoning, anemia, malnutrition, etc. It comes from being so oppressed by the man that we cannot get jobs that pay enough, houses that shelter us right, or hospitals to care for us; it comes from not being able as a nation, as Borinquenos, to control all these things; it comes from being poor, oppressed, and powerless.

During the last 3 months, in El Barrio, and the last month in the South Bronx, we have given over 800 tests for tuberculosis. One out of every three people tested has had a positive reaction. Why aren't the hospitals doing anything to prevent t.b. in our communities? Because the hospitals do not serve the needs of our people. They exist only to make a profit. Hospitals are only interested in hospitalization (which costs in the hundreds per day), lab tests and medicines. All of which they can charge a lot for. But, as the YOUNG LORDS PARTY has shown, all that is necessary for t.b. testing is a few hours work and dedication.

We live in a country that makes proper health care a luxury only rich people can afford. Heart transplants and brain surgery are done on rich people; t.b. preventive medicine is not done on Puerto Ricans and Blacks because this capitalistic system wants to make the rulers live longer and let the spics and niggers die off as quickly and quietly as possible.

The racism of the health empire must be exposed. It is in every area of medical service. Puerto Ricans have had “drug problems” for many years, but it wasn't until a few white kids in the suburbs started getting strung out, that the health empire “discovered”

drugs, and a big stink was made in the press. This is like Columbus “discovering” Puerto Rico. The 70,000 Taino Indians had always been there, but just like the drug problem, until the man feels it directly, in his pocket or in his home, it doesn’t exist and he doesn’t give a damn.

Point 5 of the YOUNG LORDS PARTY 13-Point Program and Platform states “We want community control of our institutions and land,” and Point 13 says “We want a socialist society.” In a socialist society, the institutions like the hospitals are controlled by the hospital workers and the patients. Also under socialism they extend their services out to the people visiting them in their homes and setting up Free Health Clinics in every block. This type of service which keeps people from getting sick in the first place is called preventive medicine. Although doctors admit it is needed, preventive medicine will never be done in amerikkka, as it is today because it is a capitalist society. Capitalists run hospitals and make money out of Puerto Ricans being sick and if there’s no money, they’re out of business. Socialists are concerned with keeping people healthy, not with making money.

As long as we don’t control institutions like the hospitals we will continue to die of disease like t.b. and receive poor or no health services in general. We must begin to fight together as a people to take over all the institutions that control our lives, by taking the central power that protects the capitalist hospitals, the state. Pig administrators who run hospitals and profit from other people’s suffering must be put up against the wall. As long as pigs like these are in our communities, they will continue to use (exploit) us.

The YOUNG LORDS PARTY will continue to serve our people through our Preventive Medicine Programs, and we will at the same time continue to expose the way in which the institutions in our communities exploit us. The YLP will fight until hospitals, police, schools, etc. are run by the people, especially those who work in and are affected by these institutions.

FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL!
LIBERATE PUERTO RICO NOW!

Carl Pastor
Ministry of Health
YOUNG LORDS PARTY