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Armense para Defendense

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In January 1969, the Young Lords Organization began to organize the Puerto Ricans of Chicago to fight against the rats, the roaches, the police, the conditions we live in—to fight for the freedom of our people. On July 26, 1969, the YOUNG LORDS were organized in New York and followed the example of Cha Cha Jimenez, now underground, in fighting for the liberation of Puerto Rico and our people in this country.

On April 4, 1969, Young Lord Manuel Ramos was shot down in the streets of Chicago by a pig. That murderer was never tried, and he still walks the streets. And last week, October 16, 1970, Young Lord Julio Roldan, 34 years old, was killed, hanged in the Tombs, the rathole prison of New York City, by Correction guards.

The murder or “suicide” of a Puerto Rican or black in the prisons of amerikkka and Puerto Rico is not unusual. For years our people have been dying mysteriously in those detention camps. For years revolutionaries, servants of the poor, fighters for freedom, have been killed in the streets, houses, mountains. For years our people have been killed by the yanqui. We die from pneumonia in unheated apartments; we die from sterilization and unsafe abortions; we die from police bullets; we die from overdoses; we die as a nation from the destruction of our culture, language, history; we die from garbage, anemia, hunger, in a thousand and one different ways. We die because we are poor, because we have no power, because the rich politicians and businessmen see nothing but money, profit, killing for themselves.

For almost two years the YOUNG LORDS PARTY has been fighting all the institutions that oppress us—garbage conditions, hospital care, police brutality, the churches not serving the poor. And every time we marched, every time we seized a building, every time we sat in, nothing changed. Anthony Imperiale still runs Newark with a fascist fist. Philadelphia Police Commissioner Bozo Rizzo attacks the Puerto Rican and Black community at will. Lincoln Hospital continues to butcher our people with indecent health care. The garbage remains in our Brownsvilles, Lower East Sides, Kannecot Copper Company is preparing to steal more of our land and resources through its copper mining in Utuado. Ramey Air Force Base with its nuclear weapons and B-52’s is destroying our town of Aguadilla. Culebra and Vieques are disappearing under a Navy bombing. We fight, we protest, we demonstrate. Nothing changes.

Our nation is a colony. Whether in Bridgeport or Fajardo, we are controlled by the yanqui. We are his tool, his slave. That is why on October 18, when 2,000 people from El Barrio marched in Julio Roldan's funeral, we seized the People's Church for the second time. This time, though, we took the church with arms, with shotguns, rifles, everything we could find, and prepared to defend it.

We said, two LORDS are dead. We are not going to wait for the third, the tenth, the twentieth. Thousands of Puerto Ricans have died, murdered by amerikkka. We can't stand by anymore. This government, instead of protecting us, kills us. We have no choice at this time, but to pick up those guns and say to all of our nation—ARM YOURSELVES TO DEFEND YOURSELVES.

We were not born violent. We do not enjoy killing. We just want peace and freedom. But our daily lives are violent. This country is violent. The enemy leaves us no choice. Either we sit by, saying "ay bendito" as our nation dies, or we stand up, organize, prepare for the revolution we know is coming.

We are at the stage of armed self-defense. The YOUNG LORDS PARTY is not going to begin shooting down police in the streets or bombing places. We are just going to defend ourselves from murder. And our people will do the same.

Point 12 of our 13 Point Program says, "We believe in armed self-defense and armed struggle as the only means to liberation."

We are beginning to put that point into practice. We are preparing for the day when the whole Puerto Rican nation will rise up to get the yanqui off our backs. The YOUNG LORDS PARTY will organize our people, educate them, prepare them. And in the future, a People's Army will arise, like CAL, like MIRA, to lead that armed fight. All we are doing is educating. Education is the first step in revolution. And armed self-defense is the first step of education for armed revolution.

The People's Church will be remembered as the third time in our history that Puerto Ricans resorted to guns to get justice. First was El Grito de Lares and Betances. Second was Don Pedro and the Nationalist Party. Third is the YOUNG LORDS PARTY.

The first two failed, but they were examples for us, made us proud to be Puerto Ricans. Our march to the United Nations on October 30 is in commemoration of Jayuya and that fight of Don Pedro. We are the sons and daughters of Don Pedro, Elio Torresola, Blanca Canales, and Oscar Collazo.

The future is ahead. We have no more illusions. The people are forging unity. The enemy is paralyzed. The Puerto Rican nation is awake. The road is long and hard. We are young but we are determined. Love for our people guides us. Hatred of oppression drives us. We will not turn back.

VICTORY OR DEATH!

Juan Gonzalez

Minister of Defense

YOUNG LORDS PARTY