
Julio Roldan People's Defense Center Opens in the People's Church

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Hundreds of people rushed through the doors of the People's Church on Sunday night, October 18. Over a thousand others stood outside waving Puerto Rican flags, chanting their support, and promising that the murder of Julio Roldan would be avenged. Ten months before, the YOUNG LORDS PARTY and the people of El Barrio had taken over the church on 111th Street and Lexington Avenue, but this time was different. This time we weren't leaving. This time our demands would be met. This time we were armed.

Everyone is dissatisfied with the official reports given by the Department of Corrections on the number of Puerto Ricans found dead in their cells in recent years. But every attempt to investigate the prison system has been turned down. Our people are arrested on phoney charges, held on high bails (which only the rich can pay), and are beaten and murdered in their cells. In taking the church, we checked out this situation; and we made these two demands:

1) That the Methodist Church and other churches give a \$150,000 grant to YOUNG LORDS PARTY so that we can set up a legal defense center for the community in the People's Church.

2) That the city immediately allow the clergy to investigate the conditions of the prison system, especially the murders of Julio Roldan, Jose Perez, and three of the negotiators at the Queens House of Detention uprising on October 1.

Reverend Velasquez, pastor of the People's Church, recognizes the problems of our community and has said that he opens the church to the community and endorses our demands. Lawyers, law students, community people and members of the PARTY have already set up the Julio Roldan People's Defense Center.

We ask that the families of people in prisons or detention centers come in and give us information about the condition of their relatives in prison so that we can document their cases in order to bring pressure against the prison system and get information from the outside to them. We also want to document the cases of all brothers and sisters who have been in prison and have experienced police brutality.

The Julio Roldan People's Defense Center will also be offering draft counseling to those brothers who don't want to go into the army. In Puerto Rico, brothers do not have to serve in the army because a strong case has been made in the courts and a strong anti-draft movement has developed. We are trying to do the same thing here. We will also be giving out information about Puerto Ricans who have been jailed here in amerikkka for fighting in the liberation struggle: Carlos Feliciano, George Robles, Oscar Collazo, Martin Sostre, Lolita Lebron, and we will be setting up a committee of people from the community to educate people about these cases and to raise money for their defense.

Finally, we will be setting up a community bail fund, because we know that most of our people cannot afford to bail their relatives out of jail.

We have liberated the People's Church again, and this time we are armed. We know that our demands are righteous, because they come out of the needs of our people. Puerto Ricans and Blacks must have some revolutionary structure to help them battle this corrupt and racist prison system. We are armed because we have seen that the government won't hesitate to kill Puerto Ricans fighting for their rights. We are armed because we

must defend ourselves, and we advise all Puerto Ricans and Third World people to begin preparing for their defense. The u.s. government is killing us, and now we must defend ourselves or die as a nation.

LIBERATE PUERTO RICO NOW!

THE PARTY GUIDES THE GUN!

LONG LIVE JULIO ROLDAN!

Richie Perez

Information Captain

YOUNG LORDS PARTY