The Young Lords

A Reader

Edited by Darrel Enck-Wanzer

Foreword by Iris Morales and Denise Oliver-Velez

New York University Press
New York and London
2

The Ideology of the Young Lords Party

This chapter reproduces part of a booklet, by the same title, that the Young Lords circulated among themselves, “friends of the Lords,” and community members. The essays contained in this chapter lay out key theoretical and practical commitments of the Young Lords. While they are not reproduced in this volume, it is important to note that the booklet contained eight different images across forty-one pages of text. The booklet was first written in February 1971 and first printed in February 1972. The reader will find many (though not all) of the essays in the original booklet reproduced here.

Introduction

(From the pamphlet Ideology of the Young Lords Party, written February 1971, first printing February 1972)

This is the beginning of the ideology of the Young Lords Party. What is ideology? It is a system of ideas, of principles, that a person or group uses to explain to them[elves] how things operate in the world. Our ideology was developed out of the experiences of almost two years of struggling everyday with our people against their oppression.

The systematic ideas and principles in this pamphlet are guiding us as to the best way to lead the liberation struggle of the Puerto Rican nation. These are not fixed, rigid ideas, but constantly developed as we constantly work to serve and protect the people.

There are certain principles that are fixed and unchangeable to us, though. First, is collective leadership, not individual leadership. One individual can never see the whole of a problem. Only collectives of people, working together, can solve problems correctly. Second, we can understand nothing unless we understand history. One of the problems of the Puerto Rican and amerikkkan revolutionary movements is that they have not done systematic, scientific study of their history and so do not yet understand the countries that they wish to liberate. Third, a revolutionary must be one with the people, serving, protecting, and respecting the people at all times.

“Wherever a Puerto Rican is, the duty of a Puerto Rican is to make the revolution.”

Gloria Gonzalez
Field Marshal
Definition of Terms

(From the pamphlet Ideology of the Young Lords Party, written February 1971, first printing February 1972)

When we begin to read and study things on revolution, on how other people's [sic] have liberated themselves and how we can develop our revolution, we come across a lot of new words we have never heard or seen before. We should learn what the words mean and then learn how to explain those ideas to our brothers and sisters in ways they can understand.

**NATION:** A people who have had the same history, culture, language, and usually have lived in the same territory for a long period of time.

**COLONY:** A nation which is controlled economically, culturally, militarily by another country and whose government is run by that other country.

**CAPITALISM:** A way of running the economy of a nation, where a few of the people in the nation own the factories, trains, business, commerce, and the majority of the people work for those owners. The few capitalists make large amounts of money by selling what the rest of the people make—the products, like dresses, cars, copper, oil. This is called profit.

**VENDEPATRIA:** A sell-out. One who has sold out his or her people for money or power.

**CONTRADICTION:** When two things are opposed to each other, for instance, right and wrong, up and down, good and bad. When you have a contradiction you have a problem that has to be solved. If someone says that the way to get to a place is by turning right, and someone else says it's by turning left you can't get to that place until the contradiction is solved—it's either right or left.

**JIBARO:** The mixture of mostly spanish and Taino, but also some Blacks, who developed in the mountains and campos of Puerto Rico mostly as small farmers and as peasants. The language is spanish, the culture Spanish and Indian.

**AFRO-BORICUA:** The mixture of mostly Spanish and African who developed in the sugar cane plantations and coasts of Puerto Rico doing fishing, and whose ancestors were slaves. Most Black Puerto Ricans try to call themselves mulattos when the language is Spanish, but the culture and customs are still mostly African, and when the racist societies of Spain and Amerikka still treat them as though they are inferior.

**CLASS:** The group of persons that an individual belongs to all of whom make their living the same way. For instance, lumpen make their living by surviving—stealing, prostitution, dope, etc. The workers make their living by working for someone. The petty-bourgeois make their living by working for themselves, the peasants make their living working on the land for themselves or someone else. The bourgeois make their money off the labor of everyone else. They don't work at all.

**SELF-DETERMINATION:** It means every individual, every nationality has the right to determine their own lives, their future, as long as they don't mess over other people. A nation should be free from control by another nation.
INDEPENDENCE: When a nation has a government made up of people from that country, but it is still controlled economically and culturally by another country.

NATIONAL LIBERATION: When a country is completely free from control by another nation. When the people are in control of the government, economy and army.

LOMBRIZ: A parasitic worm that produces intestinal disease, found in tropical countries. We use this word for all the Puerto Rican traitors, for the parasites they are.

"The price of imperialism is lives."

JUAN GONZALEZ

---

Protracted War in Puerto Rico

(From the pamphlet Ideology of the Young Lords Party, written February 1971, first printing February 1972)

The concept of Protracted War best describes the history of the Puerto Rican people. For many centuries our people have been invaded by one nation or another. Two oppressors were successful, the Spaniards in 1493, and the Yankees in 1898.

When a country is invaded by another, it becomes a colony, slave, of the occupier, and that control stops the normal development of the people.

In Boriquen, the Taino nation had its own economic, social, and political structure, and was developing in its own way. When these people came they used the riches of the island to aid Spain’s development and destroy the Taínos.

The Taínos rose up against the enemy. The war did not last long, because the Spaniards, with their plunder of the rest of Latin America, had more power and arms. Many Taínos died, some because of diseases the Spaniards had brought, others through the war, and the rest fled to the mountains to avoid slavery.

Then the Spaniards had the problem of who would be their slaves. Beginning in the 1500s, they showed how barbaric and criminal they were. They began to ravage the African lands, kidnapping our Yoruba brothers and sisters to serve as slaves. By the 1600s there had been four slave revolts. We were once again defeated, but they did not destroy us, as is shown through the influences of African culture in Puerto Rico.

Out of these temporary defeats, our people became stronger, and by the 1800s, the Puerto Rican nation, as we know it today, was formed, of the mixture of Taínos, Yorubans, and Spanish, of the most exploited by those in power of men and women more determined than ever to be free. Among the many freedom fighters were Ramón Emeterio Betances, María Bracetti, and Segundo Ruiz Belvis. These were the ones who toward 1868 raised the cry for liberation on September 23, in Lares. Eventhough [sic] we were defeated again, Betances knew what a protracted war was and he said, "Men and women pass, but principles continue on and eventually triumph." And so our struggle for liberation continued.

In 1898, the Spaniards had war declared on them by the United States and were quickly defeated. As a result, Puerto Rico passed from one slavery into another. Now the invaders were Yankees, and on July 25, 1898, 18,000 amerikkkan troops landed at Guantana.
This new invader would be the most criminal and vicious that has touched our land, and with the new invasion began the new war of liberation.

The principles established by the Taino nation, by the African people, and then by the revolution of Lares were advanced by the Nationalist Party, which in the 1930s proved to the Yankees that our people suffered from unbelievable hunger and misery—that was the "democracy" the Yankees brought to us.

The Nationalist Party, under the leadership of Don Pedro Albizu Campos, became the defenders of the people. In 1936, the amerikkans arrested Don Pedro and the rest of the leadership of the party; because they were considered a threat to their plans. It was during this period that occurred what we have to come to know as the Ponce Massacre. On March 21, 1937, the Nationalist Party organized a demonstration in Ponce. The day was the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the era of the Spaniards. The demonstration was to let the Yankees know that our people would not tolerate either political prisoners or continued occupation.

Throughout this period the amerikkans had one of their own as governor. At the time the criminal was called Blanton Winship, and he, along with the Mombacho, Casado, gave the order to assassinate the nationalists; 200 persons were wounded and 22 killed. With this act the United States declared war on the Puerto Rican nation. The enemies of our people continued their brutal attacks, arrested 2,000 persons, and sentenced many to 400 years of prison after the revolt of Jayuya in 1950. All if this had one sole aim—to end the operation of all the just struggle for liberty because we were receiving international support.

In addition to all of this, the Yankees began operation "co-option." That is, they looked for sellout traitors, and during this period they began to heavily support the electoral parties, especially the Popular Party led by traitor Munoz Marin.

The combination of the repression of the Nationalist Party and the lies of the Popular Party created a lot of confusion among the people. Another important factor was

"If our people fight one tribe at a time, all will be killed.
They can cut off our fingers one by one, but if we join together
we'll make a powerful fist."

LITTLE TURTLE, MASTER GENERAL OF THE MIAMI INDIAN, 1791

that the Yankees tried to weaken us by dividing the people through "Operation Bootstrap," and they moved 1/3 of the Puerto Ricans to the United States, but our struggle continued.

It's true that they weakened us when they took away our revolutionary leadership, but what they did not understand was that it is impossible to stop a liberation struggle.

Once again, in the United States, we rose up in the belly of the monster. In 1965, we rebelled, together with Black people in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and in New Jersey; wherever there were boricuas, the cry of liberty was heard.

Out of those rebellions, developed the Young Lords Organization in Chicago, in 1969. With the example of the Afro-American people, who throughout their prolonged war inside the United States, raised consciousness among Puerto Ricans, and the principles
and examples of Don Pedro, Lolita Lebron, Dona Blanca Canales, the YLO began to organize the Puerto Ricans in Chicago. Meanwhile, in New York arose a group, Society of Albizu Campos, young students and lumpen (lumpen are the class in our nation which for years and years have not been able to find jobs, and are forced to be drug addicts, prostitutes, etc.), all of whom had the same sole objective, the liberation of Puerto Rico on the island and inside the United States.

The Young Lords of Chicago united with the Society of Albizu Campos to create the national organization. With a 13 point Program the organization began to serve and protect the people, with free breakfast programs, free health and clothing programs, and with the taking of the People's Church, where the organization was recognized as a group with support from the community.

Each day the organization won more support, but it found itself with many problems. Because of its oppression, the Chicago group did not understand the necessity for discipline and political education, which is needed to achieve our liberation, and was not able to further the struggle. In New York was the Eastern region with a much more disciplined and developed leadership, which was anxious to advance the struggle. We split with Chicago and formed the Young Lords Party. With three bases in El Barrio, another in New Jersey, and another in the South Bronx, the Party began to analyze Puerto Rican society, and we soon realized that 2/3 of our people, almost wholly unknown to us, lived on the island.

The analysis of Puerto Rican society made it clear that our nation is composed of distinct classes and social groups and with this understanding we began to formalize ideas to bring the Party to all sectors of our people. Always remembering that we are a revolutionary party whose goal is complete national liberation, and about the job of uniting the nation.

In August, 1970, two leaders of the Party, Juan Gonzalez and Juan Fa Ortiz, made the first official Party visit to the island. From that trip, we analyzed a number of things. For example, we saw that the struggle in the United States was much more advanced since the conditions in the U.S.—the racism, the oppression was much clearer; hunger and oppression expose quickly the lies of the Amerikkkan dream.

Although it's true that there were other established independence groups, the Movement for Puerto Rican Independence, founded in 1959, and the Puerto Rican Independence Party, founded in 1947, the origin of these groups was either from the petty or upper bourgeoisie (the middle and upper classes). Also, they were either social movements or electoral parties. As the years have passed, these organizations have raised the consciousness of the people, especially MPI, but for our revolution to succeed it's clear that we need more revolutionary leadership. With this in mind, we began the preparations for the move to the island, this being the best way to unite the 1/3 of our people on the island and the 2/3 in the U.S.

The Yankees have divided and weakened us in many ways—the analysis of Puerto Rican society helps us to understand the divisions. First, we have to unite the two most oppressed classes, the lumpens and the workers, and also the two social groups in which our people are divided, the most oppressed Afro-Puerto Ricans and the jibaros. This is not to say that we won't also unite the petty-bourgeoisie and the students. As we have seen, with a little education, they will come in large numbers to follow the lead of the people and will take part in the revolution.
Taking into account our region in the U.S., we began to analyze the 2/3 in Puerto Rico.

In the northeast of the island, are the towns of Loiza Aldea, Fajardo, Rio Grande, Canovanas: it was to these towns that the Spaniards brought the African slaves, and to this day these towns, with one third of the island’s population, are Afro-Puerto Ricans, victims not only of exploitation, but of racism.

Carolina is one of the most industrialized towns where the Yankees have built many factories, and the people are all workers.

In this area are the big arrabales (slums), like El Caño, in Santurce, Barrio Obrero, Matrín Peña, Cataño, and the housing projects like Lloren Torres where 26,000 people live, and communities with large lumpen populations, like La Perla, in San Juan.

With this, we have briefly described the north of the island. The second area of major importance is the center—Lares, Adjuntas, Jayuya, and the south, Ponce, Cabo Rojo, Salinas, and Guanica. The social group of the center is what by the 18th century received the name Jibaro. The jibaro of that period was humble and illiterate because of their exploitation, very superstitious, and always ready to defend their honor.

It was rare when the jibaro or jibara visited the town. Their calendar was the many hurricanes that passed over the land. The jibaro of today continues to be illiterate, not so superstitious, and not only visits [sic] but lives in the big towns, now that Yankees have forced them to leave their lands, turning them into tomato pickers in New Jersey or dishwashers in New York. The jibara, who once had her herd of pigs, her house in the mountains, now is a worker in a factory making a miserable amount, while producing brassieres. It’s obvious why this group, a large part of our population, will give strength to the revolutionary movement. Our job is immense. We have called it the Chains Off Offensive (Ofensiva Rompecadenas). To reunite our nation, we began with a demonstration on the 21st of March, the 4th anniversary of the Ponce Massacre. Together with our revolutionary example, the Nationalist Party, we raised once again the cry of liberty in Puerto Rico.

There are many reasons why we chose Ponce. Ponce is the second largest city on the island, next to San Juan. The place where Don Pedro was born, it is also where the Yankees have established chemical plants, although the unemployment is immense. We have all sectors of our society living there—the lumpens and workers and also the different social groups Afro-Puerto Ricans and jibaros. Only unified can we break the chains of slavery!

For the Puerto Rican nation this is another stage in our protracted war for liberation. To achieve our liberation we need a revolutionary Party, representative of all the people with one sole objective, national liberation.

In that way we will give our largest contribution to the other oppressed people[sic] of the world, as the people of Vietnam have done for us.

Liberate Puerto Rico now!
Venceremos!

NOTES
1. This paragraph is crossed out with a hand-drawn "X" in all known copies of the booklet.
Colonized Mentality and Non-Conscious Ideology

(From the pamphlet Ideology of the Young Lords Party, written February 1971, first printing February 1972)

We are all fighting against an enemy, the Yankee and the Puerto Rican lornerces. The one major thing that holds us back in our fight to liberate Puerto Ricans and all oppressed people is a lack of unity. If we are not united, like a fist, we are weaker in our battle. In unity there is strength, and a nation divided is a weak nation. We have been divided geographically, with one third of the nation on the mainland and two thirds on the island. To be stronger we must unite. But even this unification will not be enough if we still fight against each other. One of the problems that we face is the fact that we have been taught to fight against each other. Capitalism is a system that forces us to climb over our brothers and sisters' backs to get to the top. It is like a race, in which the prize is survival, with 500 people in it, and only one person is the winner—the one who gets to the finish line first, the losers all starve to death. The prize money which is equal to life: We fight against each other to live, and we are divided into groups that fight against each other. These groups are formed out of artificial divisions of race and sex, and social groupings. The struggle between men and women, the struggle between lumpens and workers are all contradictions among the people. Contradictions among the people must be erased in order to form a solid fist, a fighting force to destroy the enemy.

Many of these divisions that exist are a result of colonization. Puerto Ricans are a colonized people. As a result of the oppression suffered for generations and generations, first under Spain and then under the amerikkans we all develop a "colonized mentality." The colonizers divide us up, teach us to think we are inferior, and teach us to fight against each other, because as long as we fight against each other we won't deal with our real problems—slavery, hunger, and misery. We are [so] brainwashed by the newspapers we read, the books they write for us, the television, the radio, the schools, and the church, that we don't know what our real thoughts are anymore. We are afraid to be leaders, because we are taught to be followers. We have been told that we are docile [for] so long, that we have forgotten that we have always been fighters. We are afraid to speak in public because we have been taught not to speak out. We are told that we cannot exist without amerikkans in Puerto Rico, and we believe it, even though we know that our nation existed for hundreds of years without them. All of this brainwashing, this "colonized mentality" holds us back from our liberation. If you take 10 rats and lock them up in a cage which is only big enough for 5 rats, some of them will kill each other and some of them will go insane, just as we kill each other in the streets for five dollars, or in a stupid argument, and just as we go insane and turn to drugs to cover up the ugly reality of our lives.

"We can only unchain our minds from this colonized mentality if we learn our true history, understand our culture, and work towards unity.

This colonization is responsible for the racism that exists in our nation. We do not see it all the time, and most Puerto Ricans believe that we don't have any racism. Most people will tell you "we are all Puerto Ricans, we are all different colors, none of us are black or white, we are just Puerto Ricans." But that doesn't mean that racism doesn't exist. It is so deep that we just don't see it anymore. The darker members of every Puerto Rican family
have felt it all their lives. We have been so brainwashed that it has become unconscious. The Young Lords Party calls this "non-conscious ideology." We believe that Black is bad and ugly and dirty, that kinky hair is "pe-lo-malo," [bad hair] we call Black Puerto Ricans names like prieto, moulleto, and coco-lo [dark-skinned, mulatto, and Black, respectively]. We are not proud that our ancestors were slaves, so many of us say we are "spanish" or "castillians." Our birth certificate says white even if the reality when we look in the mirror is very dark. The Spanish treated the slaves as if they were animals, and none of us want to believe that our ancestors were animals, so we "non-consciously" reject the Blackness we are all a part of. All Puerto Ricans have a Black heritage, in our culture, in the way Spanish is spoken, in the blood which flows through our veins. Having slaves for ancestors is not something to be ashamed of; one should be proud to know that one's ancestors were strong enough to live through the horrors of slavery, strong because of the rich and beautiful history of Africa. We are taught that Africans were savages, and this makes us non-consciously ashamed of our past. We must study true African history, of the civilization of Mali and Songhay, for this history is part of our history. The Young Lords Party is a Party of Afro-Americans and Puerto Ricans. Both have the same roots in the past, similar culture and the same types of "colonized mentality." Because of the Black Power and Black Pride movement inside of the united states, American Blacks are now able to hold their heads up high.

"The Chains that have been taken off slaves' bodies are put back on their minds."

DAVID PEREZ

and be proud of their past. It is necessary that we understand and study Puerto Rican history, much of which is African history so that we can move on ridding ourselves of the barriers that exist between Afro-Boricua and jibaro.

We should not be afraid to criticize ourselves about racism. We are all racists, not because we want to be, but because we are taught to be that way, to keep us divided, because it benefits the capitalist system. And this applies to racism towards Asians, other Brown people, and towards white people. White people are not the oppressor—capitalists are. We will never have socialism until we are free of these chains on our mind.

The other way in which "non-conscious ideology" divides our people is through machismo, or male chauvinism. We have said for a long time that sisters and brothers should be equal in the struggle, that men and women should work together and that Puerto Rican men should not oppress their wives, mothers, and daughters anymore. When we said that machismo is fascism, we were saying something that was true, but we couldn't understand the reasons why men became uptight when they were accused of machismo. Brothers could not understand why some of the ways that they treat sisters are wrong. Brothers did not know how to act differently than their fathers and grandfathers have always acted toward women. Is it all right to rap to a sister? Should I give a woman a compliment? Is it machismo if I want to protect a woman? Because we did not understand why there is this division we could not explain well enough, all we could say was machismo was bad, male chauvinism is wrong, you are oppressing your sisters.
On the other hand, we criticize sisters for being passive and docile. We want women to become leaders, to speak out in public, to stop being shy and timid, to learn to be strong. We tell sisters to change, the way our mothers have taught us to be, the way our mothers’ mothers have always been. And again, we did not completely understand why our sisters had difficulty in understanding what passivity is, and how to change. Sisters still volunteered to cook and sew, to take care of children. Sisters still felt more comfortable letting the men be the leaders. Sisters don’t like other women to be leaders either. We did not understand why women constantly get into arguments with each other. When a woman is strong and a leader she is considered to be a “bitch.” When a man is strong he is a “good leader.” But why?

We have realized that the division of the sexes between male and female have existed for such a long time, that all societies have accepted the “fact” that there is a difference between men and women. We know that the only differences are biological—women have a womb and ovaries and they make eggs, and men manufacture sperm.

All societies developed around the first oppression; man used woman as a worker, to reproduce, to make babies, while men were free to do other things. This ideology of a division of the sexes is called “sexism,” just like the ideology of the division of the races is called “racism.” Both are “non-conscious ideologies.” From the simple fact that women produce babies and men didn’t, developed all sorts of ideas that women were a certain type of human and men another type of human.

What is a man? What is a woman? “Non-consciously” we believe a man is strong, aggressive, hairy, bad, decisive, hard, cold, firm, intelligent. “Non-consciously” a woman is weak, timid, smooth, soft-spoken, scatter-brained, soft, warm, dumb, and loving. Both of these sets of descriptions are a result of the way we have been trained “non-consciously.” From the time a baby is born it is taught by its parents and by society to be a “man” or a “woman.” If it grew up alone, with no outside influences what would its personality be like? Just because it has a womb, would it be weak? If it had a penis, would it be aggressive and strong? No. These traits of personality are part of the way we are taught to be.

A little boy wears blue. A little girl wears pink. A little boy is given trains, trucks, toy soldiers and baseball bats to play with. Little girls get dolls and susie homemaker sets. Little boys wear dungarees and can play rough and get dirty. Little girls wear dresses and stay at home near their mothers to play and watch them cook. When a little boy talks about what he wants to be when he grows up he dreams of being a fireman, a doctor, a lawyer, a cabdriver, a revolutionary. A little girl can dream, but everyone knows what she will be—a mother, a housewife. Anything else is strange and temporary. Any other job she has must be something for her to do part-time until she can quit and stay home. If she has to work she then has two jobs—the main one is the home. Women cannot exist in this society without a “man to protect them.” Women who have no men are forced to make it in a world that doesn’t accept them. Welfare mothers are women with no men. Women compete against each other to “get a man.” So we don’t just have division between men and women, sexism divides women against each other.

By the time a baby is six months old it has already been treated differently if it is a boy than if it is a girl, and acts and responds differently. Baby boys are more active. Baby girls cry more.
Because Puerto Rican society is structured in a sexist way, it is very difficult to fight against things that we are not aware of. If we want to change this society and develop a new one that no longer oppresses anyone we must try to eliminate the sexism that we "non-consciously" retain in our minds. We must become instead of men and women—new humans, revolutionary people.

Men should learn to cook, to care for children, to be open to cry and show emotions because these are all good things—needed to build a new society. Women must learn to be leaders, to speak out, to use tools and weapons, because our army must be made up of brothers and sisters. One of the ways that brothers can figure out if they are oppressing sisters is to ask themselves if they would treat another brother the same way. If you lived with another brother, would he always cook the meals and do the housework. If you lived with another brother and friends came over would you do all the talking? Sisters can judge their passivity the same way. How would you repair machines if there were no men around? Who would protect you if you were attacked? We must think about all the ways we have been brainwashed un-consciously and fight against it. It is a hard struggle, because everything around us is sexist—the books we read, the t.v. shows we watch, the institutions of our society. We will never be free until we have broken all the chains of our "non-conscious ideology" and our colonized mentalities.

The Party and the Individual
(From the pamphlet Ideology of the Young Lords Party, written February 1971, first printing February 1972)

The ideology of the Party is the framework from which we move. Everything we do relates to the principles on this paper. Ideology doesn't only talk about what the Party believes but also where the Party sees itself going. On the basis of those principles and ideas we do our work among the people. We call this practice.

As the Party grows and develops, we are going to be developing a bigger, more defined ideology and we will be faced with a continuous problem; how do we keep building that Party of our people that will put the ideas into practice? It is no good to have an ideology if all you can do is talk and not practice. In order to be involved in good practice, two things must be dealt with; first on the level of organization, and then on the level of the individual.

On the level of the Party, we ask ourselves, how do we develop the type of organization that can lead our people in a liberation movement? How do we structure it? How do we run the Party? We must remember that the structure is not for any one part of our people, it must suit the needs of all our people—lumpen, worker, student. Also, it must help develop people into good revolutionaries.

The Party is divided into levels of leadership and ministries. The levels of leadership are the branch, the leadership of the branch, and the leaders and coordinators of the Party in general. The ministries, Defense, Staff, Field, Information, Economics, and Education are specific fields of responsibility assigned to party members. The level of leadership is the army that does the organizing of the people, and the ministry is the function that aides [sic] the Party.
We have learned the hard way, through trial and error some of the problems involved. It is very important for parts of the Party to communicate with the whole. If this is not done, there will be no unified Party. Communication is done in many ways, regular reports, telephone, mail, personal visits. One of the most important things besides communicating is education. Without a structured educational system in the Party it is very hard for the Party to organize all sectors of the people. It is also hard for any individual to develop without political education.

Two of the cores of the Party are the general membership meeting, where democratic discussion and decision-making are done, and criticism—self-criticism, the key to Party democracy. The structure is still changing, but we should never be afraid of changing to progress.

On the level of the individual the question comes up, how do we train cadre? What is cadre? How do we develop individuals from different sectors of the society at the same time? In this field the Party went through many changes. We were organizing high school students, lumpens, college students, workers, and other sectors at the same time and we had to fight the bad traits that each group brings with it, like the impatience of high school students, the individualism of lumpen, the conservatism of workers, and the intellectualism of college students.

What is cadre? A cadre is a person in the Party who has gone through a change in himself or herself from just another Puerto Rican to leader of the people, a revolutionary. This change does not take place right away. First, a person becomes political, then they join the Party, then, after a period of time, they become a leader of the people. But it isn't as simple as that. There is a big change in the whole life of the individual. This change can be broken into two parts. First, losing the bad traits from the class they originated from, like individualism, machismo, sexism, racism, intellectualism, superiorities and inferiorities. This is called “de-classizing.” Once you become a cadre of the Young Lords Party, you are no longer a student, or a lumpen street-person, or a worker. You have that background, but what you are is able to organize best that class that you came from because you understand it best, have dealt with a lot of the negative parts of it, and have recognized the good parts.

Second, is the big change that the individual has in getting rid of the scars that capitalism has left in the person's mind, like liberalism (not doing something you know is right), pessimism, and the biggest of all, colonized mentality. Colonized mentality is the effects of oppression. Because we are taught that a spic is a lower form of human, we end up believing it and acting as if it were true. We shy away from responsibility, we think negative, we don't think we can learn and then we take [it out] on ourselves, persecuting ourselves and fighting with others. We call this change, “de-colonizing.” This doesn't mean that before you become a Lord, you have completely succeeded in getting rid of bad traits—that takes years—but that you have made an effort and are succeeding. The change in the individual of de-classizing and de-colonizing goes on at the same time and both complement each other. The developing of the Party should be seen as preparing internally for the prolonged war demands constant development and change.
On Women in the Revolution

When the New York Young Lords organization was founded in the summer of 1969, it filled a need for progressive Puerto Rican activism that had been created when the first generation of militants was driven underground by McCarthyism in the 1950s. In the beginning, however, some of their goals vis-à-vis gender equality were not yet being enacted. Women in the Lords confronted their male leaders with a simple demand: start promoting women’s equal agency in the revolutionary struggle. The selections in this chapter explore the various ways in which the Young Lords publicly articulated their demand for equality and their critique of a dominating masculinity known as machismo.

Women’s Oppression: Cortejas

(From the newspaper Pelante, 22 May 1970, volume 2, number 3)

It is a well known fact that in our Puerto Rican culture married men are encouraged to have a woman on the side, or what we call “una corteja.” It is a fact of our society that we try to hide, yet it is there and is clearly oppressive to our women. The wife is there to be a home-maker, to have children and to maintain the family name and honor. Therefore she must be “pure” for the rest of her life, meaning no sexual pleasure. The wife must have children in order to enhance the man’s concept of virility and his position within the Puerto Rican society. La corteja becomes his sexual instrument. The man may set her up in another household, paying her bills. The man may have children with this women, but they are looked upon as by-products of a sexual relationship. Both women must be loyal to the man. Both women are exploited, neither being allowed to develop as total human beings and being forced into dependency on a man for status. Also both sets of children grow very confused and insecure and develop negative attitudes about the role and function of women as well as a messed up concept of what manhood is.

We know that under capitalism, manhood is defined according to the amount of money a male has. Puerto Ricans, since they are exploited by capitalists, have no money, and as a result no status or prestige. As Eldridge Cleaver puts it, our men are “debailed.” Since they can’t prove manhood economically, they try to do it sexually at the expense of their women.

We say that for our men to have a corteja is oppressive to women. The 10th point of the Young Lords Organization Platform states: “We want equality for women. Machismo must be revolutionary and not oppressive.” The exploitation of Puerto Rican women on the part of Puerto Rican men must stop; Puerto Rican men must realize that machismo is an extension of capitalism and must be gotten rid of. Puerto Rican women must realize that the main oppressor is U.S. capitalism. As Puerto Rican people, we must not allow this racist decadent system to rule over our lives because it destroys us. There-
fore, we must destroy it first. We have to control our own destinies and determine our lives in order to be free to create a new and equitable system for women and men. Our people must pick up the gun and say to the pig, Basta ya!

**FORWARD SISTERS IN THE STRUGGLE!**
**MACHISMO IS FASCISM!**
**SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL PUERTO RICANS!**

Connie Morales
Education Ministry
**YOUNG LORDS ORGANIZATION**
Bronx Branch

---

**Revolutionary Sister**

(From the newspaper *Palante*, 19 June 1970, volume 2, number 5)

On October 29, 1950, in the town of Jayuya, a group of Puerto Rican nationalists were meeting to discuss and decide on a plan of action. The Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico was undergoing a great deal of repression. They knew that orders had come down from Washington to arrest the members of the Nationalists Party and destroy, once and for all, the only source of opposition to Amerikkan colonization of Puerto Rico. The patriots of Jayuya arrived and as the meeting began, the room became filled with an air of tension and an uneasy silence was felt by everyone present.

A small, medium-build woman presided over the meeting, and all attention became focused upon her. A soft-spoken woman, Blanca Canales possessed those qualities of Puerto Rican womanhood at its highest level—courage, dedication, and moral strength. Though her physical appearance gave the impression of a delicate and fragile person, Blanca maintained the inner control to remain calm in the most crucial times and take command of the situation. She along with Carlos Irizarry, Elío Torresola, and Mario Irizarry, were the principal leaders of the revolutionary movement in Jayuya. Together, they determined the political direction and military tactics that would take place in the few remaining hours.

At 4:00 a.m., October 30, just before daybreak, Blanca Canales with 30 other patriots (from the ages of 15 to 25 years) rode down the mountain of Barrio Coabey into the town of Jayuya, opened fire and attacked the jailhouse. One policeman was shot and killed. As the patriots continued to shoot, return fire began. “Chevere,” a 14 year old nationalist, was shot in the head, fell to the ground dead, his brains exposed. Carlos Irizarry, commander of the nationalistic forces, climbed to the steps of the jailhouse, urging the rest of his men forward. From the sentry outpost, a policeman shot at Carlos, and the bullet entered down his shoulder through his hip. He stumbled and fell to the ground. His brother, Mario Irizarry, saw his brother collapse, but remained stationed at his post giving cover for the men going ahead. They rushed to the door and with more exchange of fire, the nationalists captured the jailhouse and raised the flag of Puerto Rico. Blanca Canales, armed with a pistol, proved herself a true revolutionary and fighter for the freedom of her people. Once inside the jailhouse, she took charge of the political leadership of the liberation forces. For two days, the nationalists occupied Jayuya while in the
nearby towns of Utuado and Pajuelas, similar uprisings against the imperialist united
states' control of Puerto Rico were happening.

For two days, the national guard sent planes to bombard the town of Jayuya. They came
with tanks and heavy arms equipment; and after constant gunfire, the remaining nation-
alis fled into the mountains. Blanca Canales was captured in Utuado and was tried for
conspiracy to overthrow the Amerikkkan government. It is absurd that anyone struggling
for freedom and liberation should be tried and sentenced by the very fascist government
that oppresses him. Blanca was sentenced to 18 years in federal prison, 10 years of which
she spent in Olderson, West Virginia and 8 years in Vega Alta, Puerto Rico.

All during her imprisonment, Blanca remained firm to her beliefs; she has never once
regretted her actions for the liberation of Puerto Rico. She was released in December,
1968, and is now in Puerto Rico, still very active in the Nationalist Party.

What must be remembered about Blanca Canales is that she lived the teachings of
Don Pedro Albizu Campos. For Blanca, nationalism (the pride of being Puerto Rican)
was as strong as her belief in the Bible. Her life was dedicated totally to the struggle for
the independence of Puerto Rico.

What must be learned from the revolutionary example of sisters like Blanca Canales,
Lolita Lebron, and Carmen Perez is that we, as Puerto Ricans, must never for a moment
forget that we are Borinqueninos, that there have been hundreds of men and women who
have died and been imprisoned fighting for the land which is ours. Point 12 of the young
Lords Party's 13-Point Program states: "We believe armed self-defense and armed
struggle are the only means to liberation." There is no country in the world that has
gained liberation without bloodshed. This is a historical fact—until Borinqueninos physi-
cally resist the colonization of Puerto Rico and the genocide of Puertorquingunos, we
will continue to live under the fascist government of merrikka. Borinquenos, awaken!
As Malcolm X once stated, "The price of freedom is blood; if blood frightens you, then
freedom frightens you."

DESPERTA BORICUA, DEFIEDE LO TUYO!
QUE VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!

Myrna Martinez
Ministry of Defense
Officer of the Day
YOUNG LORDS PARTY

Sterilized Puerto Ricans

(From the newspaper Palante, 28 August 1970, volume 2, number 10)

Genocide is being committed against the Puerto Rican women! In no other nation
has sterilization been so prevalent as a means of genocide against an oppressed people.
Why Puerto Ricans? First, the united states needs Puerto Rico as a military stronghold
to maintain "political stability" and control in the rest of Latin America. Second, Puerto
Rico is the fourth largest worldwide consumer of amerikkkan goods and yields massive
profits to amerikkkan capitalists. Also, Puerto Rico supplies fighting men and a cheap
labor pool, both necessary to U.S. capitalism. One way to control a nation of vital importance is to limit its population size. The U.S. is doing exactly this through sterilization.

The practice of sterilization in Puerto Rico goes back to the 1930’s when doctors pushed it as the only means of contraception. As a result, throughout the island, Puerto Rican women of childbearing age were sterilized. In 1947-1948, 7% of the women were sterilized; between 1953-1954, 4 out of every 25 Sisters were sterilized; and by 1965, the number increased to 1 out every 3 women. This system was practiced on Sisters of all ages. But, since 1965, the trend has been to sterilize women in their early 20’s when they have had fewer babies. This is especially true among lower class Sisters where future revolutionaries would come from. Committing sterilization on young Puerto Rican mothers with fewer children means that the U.S. is able to significantly reduce and limit the Puerto Rican population in a short period of time.

Genocide through sterilization is not only confined to the island of Puerto Rico. It is also carried out within the Puerto Rican colony in the U.S. In El Barrio, sterilization is still practiced as a form of contraception among women, especially young Sisters. One out of four sterilized women in El Barrio has the operation done when she’s between 20 and 30. But the system justifies the shit saying the Sisters go to Puerto Rico to get it done. Yet the evidence says that over half the Sisters get the operation done right here in New York City and are strongly encouraged by their doctors to do so. Again, sterilization in the early reproductive years of a woman’s life limits the Puerto Rican population substantially and permanently.

Sterilization is also a form of oppression against Puerto Rican women. We are oppressed by our own culture that limits us to the roles of homemaker, mother and bearer of many children which measures male virility. We have been made dependent on family and home for our very existence. We are used by U.S. corporations to test the safety of birth control pills before placing them on the market for sale. Our bodies are used by capitalists for experimentation to find new moneymaking and genocidal gadgets. We are prevented from getting adequate birth control information and legal abortions. As a result, one out of every four Sisters who try it die from self-induced abortions, giving Puerto Ricans the notoriety of having the highest death rate casualties from abortion than any other group. Sterilization is just another form of oppressing us.

Sterilization is irreversible and as such the U.S. can control the Puerto Rican population. Sterilization once done cannot be undone. We must stop sterilization because we must leave the option open to ourselves to control the Puerto Rican population. Our men die in Vietnam, our babies are killed through lead poisoning and malnutrition, and our women are sterilized. The Puerto Rican Nation must continue. We must open our eyes to the oppressor’s trickery and refuse to be killed anymore. We must, in the tradition of Puerto Rican women like Lolita Lebron, Blanca Canales, Carmen Perez, and Antonia Martinez, join with our Brothers and together, as a nation of warriors, fight the genocide that is threatening to make us the last generation of Puerto Ricans.

STOP THE GENOCIDE! OFF THE PIG!
NO MORE STERILIZATION OF SISTERS!
QUE VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!

Iris Morales
Ministry of Education
An Interview with Blanca Canales
(From the newspaper Palante, 25 September 1970, volume 2, number 12)

On August 15, two members of the Central Committee of the Young Lords Party (Juan Gonzalez and Juan "Pi" Ortíz) went to Puerto Rico, on the first official trip of the Party, with the purpose of establishing communications with other progressive groups on the island. One of the groups we visited was the Nationalist Party.

We had an interview with Blanca Canales, one of the leaders of the 1950 rebellion. Dona Blanca was a social worker then, which put her in touch with many of the social problems of the island, problems which were then, as well as they are now, symptoms of yanqui colonialism in Puerto Rico.

Dona Blanca became a disciple of Don Pedro Albizu Campos in the early 1930's. She met Don Pedro while she was attending the University. She soon found that she was spending every free minute in his class. Visitors would come from every part of the island to hear and learn about such subjects as government, economics, mathematics and languages. Dona Blanca remembers that Don Pedro always caused a great sensation among the people wherever he went. His passion and love for Puerto Rico, became the passion and love of all his followers. The men and women who followed Don Pedro into the Nationalist Part felt and experienced the same love for their people and their island, as the Young Lords Party does now. An all consuming love that would drive us to fight and to die, to see our people free and our island liberated.
Following below, are some questions we asked Dona Blanca Canales during our interview.

**Question**—Where were you born and how was life when you were younger?

I was born in Jayuya. My father was the Mayor of the town. I spent the first 15 years of my life at home, when I graduated from the eighth grade my parents sent me to high school in Ponce, from where I went to the University of Puerto Rico where I received my Bachelors. My parents taught me the history of my country—they always believed Puerto Rico should be free and independent.

The schools I went to only taught yanqui history. You know stuff like George "I never a told lie" Washington, Bunker Hill, Lincoln freed the slaves. The schools were run by yanquis and vendepatrías and they discouraged the teaching of Puerto Rican history. But I had a teacher once, Carmen María Torres, who used to smuggle into the schools books on Puerto Rican history and she would spend time telling us about Puerto Rican heroes like Betances, and the revolution in Lares on September 23, 1968—I felt re-born.

Coupled with the stories my mother used to tell me about my grandfather who was also a revolutionary involved in the uprising in 1868, you can understand how I developed such a fierce love for my country and a desire to see it free and independent.

**Question**—From your own point of view, what was the tactical purpose of taking the police station in Jayuya?

This is a question of... how do you say it now... of 50 thousand dollars. This is a long history in the sense that to talk about it one would have to explain how we gradually prepared and armed ourselves during the years and how we had thought of the type of revolution we would carry out and what things would be able to be done. Then when October 30 came of which I would like to speak more and not only answer the question.

Before the 30th, Don Pedro had informed us of the fact that they had been arresting Nationalists all over the island and that we had to commence the revolution. We knew that we would not be victorious but we had to hit our oppressor hard to show our determination to struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico, to the other countries of the world.

We realized we were already in the midst of a revolution when we heard that the headquarters in Arecibo had been attacked and that shooting had begun among the Nationalists and the police. We thought it best to take advantage of the time and liberate the town of Jayuya. At that time there were only four police at the headquarters. It was pretty easy; to hit them unexpectedly was best. The troops that we gathered on the farms were led by my cousin and compadre, Elío Torresolé and Carlos Irrizarry.

We sent these troops to attack the headquarters at noon and there and then the shootout began. We ran out of bullets and then seized the headquarters with molotov cocktails. One policeman died and the others escaped. In the meantime I was in the middle of the town, next to a hotel. I raised the flag of Puerto Rico and screamed "Viva Puerto Rico Libre" to establish the fact that we had proclaimed the Republic.

The town of Jayuya united, some applauded us, some cried and screamed and others stood around in admiration.

**Question**—You were in jail for many years. How did they treat you in jail as a political prisoner, especially in relation to the other prisoners?

I was in jail for 16 years and 10 months, almost 17 years. The empire does not give recognition to the political prisoner. I was treated like a common prisoner. During the
first eight months I was incommunicado. Perhaps I can say that because of my age—I was 44 years old when I was first incarcerated—I was able to relate well with the other prisoners.

First they took me to the united states. They kept me at the Augusta Reformatory for 5 1/2 years and then brought me back to Puerto Rico. The only well treated prisoner is the stool-pigeon, all others were treated badly. In fact we didn't even have the right to talk. Time and time again they tried to destroy my revolutionary spirit and to do away with the love I had for my country and the right to fight for her.

**Question**—Being in the southern part of the united states, were all the prisoners black?

There was racial separation in jail. In one section the white prisoners, in another section the Black prisoners; I was placed with the whites. After a few years they passed an integration law in the jail. The white prisoners refused to abide by that law. I and a group of white communist prisoners decided to struggle against this racism and show those people some decency and the reality that we are all the same. We were the first to integrate. From then on, united with my Black companeras, I enjoyed the best years I had to do in that prison.

**Question**—What is the role of the woman in the revolution?

The role of the woman is as important as of the man. The revolutionary woman must act accordingly with the demands of the revolution, be it to arm herself, educate her people or whatever is necessary.

**Question**—What do you think of the contemporary independence movements?

I believe that all of today's movements are important. What is needed is unity to achieve the independence of our nation. Some times posters, other times fires, strikes, votes, all that is necessary. My hopes lie with the youth, because you have the ability to carry the word onward.

---

**Young Lords Party Position Paper on Women**

*(From the newspaper *Palante*, 25 September 1970, volume 2, number 12)*

Puerto Rican, Black, and other Third World (colonized) women are becoming more aware of their oppression in the past and today. They are suffering three different types of oppression under capitalism. First, they are oppressed as Puerto Ricans or Blacks. Second, they are oppressed as women. Third, they are oppressed by their own men. The Third World woman becomes the most oppressed person in the world today.

Economically, Third World women have always been used as a cheap source of labor and as sexual objects. Puerto Rican and Black women are used to fill working class positions in factories, mass assembly lines, hospitals and all other institutions. Puerto Rican and black women are paid lower wages than whites and kept in the lowest positions within society. At the same time, giving Puerto Rican and Black women jobs means the Puerto Rican and Black man is kept from gaining economic independence, and the family unit is broken down. Capitalism defines manhood according to money and status; the Puerto Rican and Black man's manhood is taken away by making the Puerto Rican and Black woman the breadwinner. This situation keeps the Third World man divided from
his woman. The Puerto Rican and Black man either leaves the household or he stays and becomes economically dependent on the woman, undergoing psychological damage. He takes out all of his frustrations on his woman, beating her, repressing and limiting her freedom. Because this society produces these conditions, our major enemy is capitalism rather than our own oppressed men.

Third World Women have an integral role to play in the liberation of all oppressed people as well as in the struggle for the liberation of women. Puerto Rican and Black women make up over half of the revolutionary army, and in the struggle for national liberation they must press for the equality of women; the woman's struggle is the revolution within the revolution. Puerto Rican women will be neither behind nor in front of their brothers but always alongside them in mutual respect and love.

Historical

In the past women were oppressed by several institutions, one of which was marriage. When a woman married a man she became his property and lost her last name. A man could have several wives in order to show other men what wealth he had and enhance his position in society. In Eastern societies, men always had several wives and a number of women who were almost prostitutes, called concubines, purely sexual objects. Women had no right to own anything, not even their children; they were owned by her husband. This was true in places all over the world.

In many societies, women had no right to be divorced, and in India it was the custom of most of the people that when the husband died, all his wives became the property of his brother.

In Latin America and Puerto Rico, the man had a wife and another woman called la corteja. This condition still exists today. The wife was there to be a homemaker, to have children and to maintain the family name and honor. She had to be sure to be a virgin and remain pure for the rest of her life, meaning she could never experience sexual pleasure. The wife had to have children in order to enhance the man's concept of virility and his position within the Puerto Rican society. La corteja became his sexual instrument. The man could have set her up in another household, paid her rent, bought her food, and paid her bills. He could have children with this woman, but they are looked upon as by-products of a sexual relationship. Both women had to be loyal to the man. Both sets of children grew up very confused and insecure and developed negative attitudes about the role.

Women have always been expected to be wives and mothers only. They are respected by the rest of the community for being good cooks, good housewives, good mothers, but never for being intelligent, strong, educated, or militant. In the past, women were not educated, only the sons got an education, and mothers were respected for the number of sons they had, not daughters. Daughters were worthless and the only thing they could do was marry early to get away from home. At home the role of the daughter was to be a nursemaid for the other children and kitchen help for her mother.

The daughter was guarded like a hawk by her father, brothers, and uncles to keep her a virgin. In Latin America, the people used "duenas" or old lady watchdogs to guard the purity of the daughters. The husband must be sure that his new wife has never been touched by another man because that would ruin the "merchandise." When he marries her, her purpose is to have sons and keep his home but not to be a sexual partner.
Sex was a subject that was never discussed, and women were brainwashed into believing that the sex act was dirty and immoral, and its only function was for the making of children. In Africa, many tribes performed an operation on young girls to remove the clitoris so they would not get any pleasure out of sex and would become better workers.

The Double Standard, Machismo, and Sexual Fascism

Capitalism sets up standards that are applied differently to Puerto Rican and Black men from the way they are applied to Puerto Rican and Black women. These standards are also applied differently to Third World peoples than they are applied to whites. These standards must be understood since they are created to divide oppressed people in order to maintain an economic system that is racist and oppressive.

Puerto Rican and Black men are looked upon as rough, athletic and sexual, but not as intellectuals. Puerto Rican women are not expected to know anything except about the home, kitchen and bedroom. All that they are expected to do is look pretty and add a little humor. The Puerto Rican man sees himself as superior to his woman, and his superiority, he feels, gives him license to do many things—curse, drink, use drugs, beat women, and run around with many women. As a matter of fact these things are considered natural for a man to do, and he must do them to be considered a man. A woman who curses, drinks, and runs around with a lot of men is considered dirty scum, crazy, and a whore.

Today Puerto Rican men are involved in a political movement. Yet the majority of their women are home taking care of the children. The Puerto Rican sister that involves herself is considered aggressive, castrating, hard and unwomanly. She is viewed by the brothers as sexually accessible because what else is she doing outside the home. The Puerto Rican man tries to limit the woman’s role because they feel the double standard is threatened; they feel insecure without it as a crutch.

Machismo has always been a very basic part of Latin American and Puerto Rican culture. Machismo is male chauvinism and more. Machismo means “mucho macho” or a man who puts himself selfishly at the head of everything without considering the woman. He can do whatever he wants because his woman is an object with certain already defined roles—wife, mother, and good woman.

Machismo means physical abuse, punishment and torture. A Puerto Rican man will beat his woman to keep her in place and show her who’s boss. Most Puerto Rican men do not beat women publicly because in the eyes of other men that is a weak thing to do. So they usually wait until they’re home. All the anger and violence of centuries of oppression which should be directed against the oppressor is directed at the Puerto Rican woman. The aggression is also directed at daughters. The daughters hear their fathers saying “the only way a woman is going to do anything or listen is by hitting her.” The father applies this to the daughter, beating her so that she can learn “respeto.” The daughters grow up with messed up attitudes about their role as women and about manhood. They grow to expect that men will always beat them.

Sexual fascists are very sick people. Their illness is caused in part by this system which mouth’s puritanical attitudes and laws and yet exploits the human body for profit.

Sexual Fascism is tied closely to the double standard and machismo. It means that a man or woman thinks of the opposite sex solely as sexual objects to be used for sexual gratification and then discarded. A sexual fascist does not consider people’s feelings; all
they see everywhere is a pussy or a dick. They will use any rap, especially political, to get sex.

Prostitution

Under capitalism, Third World women are forced to compromise themselves because of their economic situation. The facts that her man cannot get a job and that the family is dependent on her support mean she hustles money by any means necessary. Black and Puerto Rican sisters are put into a situation where jobs are scarce or nonexistent and are forced to compromise body, mind, and soul; they are then called whores or prostitutes.

Puerto Rican and Black sisters are made to prostitute themselves in many other ways. The majority of these sisters on the street are also hard-core drug addicts, taking drugs as an escape from oppression. These sisters are subjected to sexual abuse from dirty old men who are mainly white racists who view them as the ultimate sexual objects. Also he has the attitude that he cannot really prove his manhood until he has slept with a Black or Puerto Rican woman. The sisters also suffer abuse from the pimps, really small time capitalists, who see the women as private property that must produce the largest possible profit.

Because this society controls and determines the economic situation of Puerto Rican and Black women, sisters are forced to take jobs at the lowest wages; at the same time take insults and other indignities in order to keep the job. In factories, our men are worked like animals and cannot complain because they will lose their jobs—their labor is considered abundant and cheap. In hospitals, our women comprise the majority of the nurse's aides, kitchen workers, and clerks. These jobs are unskilled, the pay is low, and there is no chance for advancement. In offices, our positions are usually as clerks, typists and no-promotion jobs. In all of these jobs, our sisters are subjected to racial slurs, jokes, and others indignities such as being leered at, manhandled, propositioned, and assaulted. Our sisters are expected to prostitute themselves and take abuse of any kind or lose these subsistence jobs.

Everywhere our sisters are turned into prostitutes. The most obvious example is the sisters hustling their bodies on the streets, but the other forms of prostitution are also types of further exploitation of the Third World women. The only way to eliminate prostitution is to eliminate this society which creates the need. Then we can establish a socialist society that meets the economic needs of all the people.

Birth Control, Abortion, Sterilization = Genocide

We have no control over our bodies, because capitalism finds it necessary to control the woman's body to control population size. The choice of motherhood is being taken out of the mother's hands. She is sterilized to prevent her from having children, or she has a child because she cannot get an abortion.

Third World sisters are caught up in a complex situation. On one hand, we feel that genocide is being committed against our people. We know that Puerto Ricans will not be around on the face of the earth very long if Puerto Rican women are sterilized at the rate they are being sterilized now. The practice of sterilization in Puerto Rico goes back to the 1930's when doctors pushed it as the only means of contraception. In 1947-48, 7% of the women were sterilized; between 1953-54, 4 out of every 35; and by 1965, the number had increased to about 1 out of every 3 women. In many cases our sisters are told that their tubes are going to be "tied," but are never told that the "tying" is really "cutting" and that the tubes can never be "untied."
Part of this genocide is also the use of birth control pills which were tested for 15 years on Puerto Rican sisters (guinea pigs) before being sold on the market in the U.S. Even now many doctors feel that these pills cause cancer and death from blood clotting.

 Abortions in hospitals that are butcher shops are little better than the illegal abortions our women used to get. The first abortion death in NYC under the new abortion law was Carmen Rodriguez, a Puerto Rican sister who died in Lincoln Hospital. Her abortion was legal, but the conditions in the hospital were deadly.

 On the other hand, we believe that abortions should be legal if they are community controlled, if they are safe, if our people are educated about the risks and if doctors do not sterilize our sisters while performing abortions. We realize that under capitalism our sisters and brothers cannot support large families and the more children we have the harder it is to support them. We say, change the system so that women can freely be allowed to have as many children as they want without suffering any consequences.

 Day Care Centers

 One of the main reasons why many sisters are tied to the home and cannot work or become revolutionaries is the shortage of day care centers for children. The centers that already exist are over-crowded, expensive, and are only super-baby-sitting centers. Day care centers should be free, should be open 24 hours a day, and should be centers where children are taught their revolutionary history and culture.

 Many sisters leave their children with a neighbor, or the oldest child is left to take care of the younger ones. Sometimes they are left alone, and all of us have read the tragic results in the newspapers of what happens to children left alone—they are burned to death in fires, or they swallow poison, or fall out of windows to their death.

 Revolutionary Women

 Throughout history, women have participated and been involved in liberation struggles. But the writers of history have never given full acknowledgement to the role of revolutionary women. At the point of armed struggle for national liberation, women have proved themselves as revolutionaries.

 Mariana Bracetti was a Puerto Rican woman who together with her husband fought in the struggle for independence in Laredo. She was called “el brazo de oro” (golden arm) because of her unlimited energy. For her role in the struggle, she was imprisoned. She sewed the first flag of El Grito de Laredo.

 Another nationalist woman was Lola Rodriguez de Tio, a poet who expressed the spirit of liberty and freedom in “La Borinquena.” Besides being a nationalist, she was a fighter for women’s rights. She refused to conform to the traditional customs concerning Puerto Rican women and at one point cut her hair very short.

 Only recently, a 19 year old coed, Antonia Martinez, was killed in Puerto Rico in a demonstration against the presence of amerikkkan military recruiting centers. She was murdered when she yelled “Viva Puerto Rico Libre!”

 Sojourner Truth was born a slave in New York around 1800. She traveled in the north speaking out against slavery, and for women’s right. She was one of the most famous black orators in history.
Kathleen Cleaver is a member of the Central Committee of the Black Panther Party. The Black Panthers are the vanguard of the Black liberation struggle in the United States. Another Panther sister, Erica Huggins, is imprisoned in Connecticut for supposedly being a member of a conspiracy. She was forced to have her child in prison, and was given no medical attention while she was pregnant. Her child was later taken away from her because of her political beliefs.

Angela Davis is a Black revolutionary sister who is being hunted by the FBI and is on their 10 most wanted list because she always defended her people's right to armed self-defense and because of her Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

In other parts of the world, women are fighting against imperialism and foreign invasion. Our sisters in Vietnam have struggled alongside their brothers for 25 years, first against the French colonizer, then against the Japanese invaders, and now against the American aggressors. Their military capability and efficiency has been demonstrated in so many instances that a women's brigade was formed in the National Liberation Front of the North Vietnamese Army.

Blanca Canales was one of the leaders of the revolution in Jayuya in 1950.

Lolita Lebron, together with three other patriots, opened fire on the House of Representative in an armed attack in 1954, bringing the attention of the world on the colonial status of Puerto Rico. She emptied a 45 automatic from the balcony of the Congress on to the colonial legislators. She then draped herself in the Puerto Rican flag and cried "Viva Puerto Rico Libre." The result was 5 legislators shot, and one critically wounded. She was imprisoned in a federal penitentiary and sentenced to 50 years. She is still in prison for this heroic act of nationalism.

La Thi Tham was born in a province which was constantly bombarded by U.S. planes. After her fiancé was killed in action, she sought and got a job with a time bomb detecting team. She scanned the sky with field glasses and when the enemy dropped bombs along the countryside, she would locate those which had not exploded and her teammates would go and open them and clear the road for traffic.

Kan Lich, another Vietnamese sister, fought under very harsh and dangerous conditions. She became a brilliant commander, decorated many times for her military ability. Her practice to "hit at close quarters, hit hard, withdraw quickly" proved to be valid.

The Central Committee of the Young Lords Party has issued this position paper to explain and to educate our brothers and sisters about the role of sisters in the past and how we see sisters in the struggle now and in the future. We criticize those brothers who are "machos" and who continue to treat our sisters as less than equals. We criticize sisters who remain passive, who do not join in the struggle against our oppression.

We are fighting every day within our party against male chauvinism because we want to make a revolution of brothers and sisters—together—in love and respect for each other.

Forward sisters in the struggle!
All power to the people!

Central Committee
Young Lords Party
World of Fantasy

(From the newspaper Palante, 29 January 1971, volume 3, number 2)

Television is used to brainwash and confuse our nation here and on the island. The programs shown provide false images and ideas that do not relate to the reality of oppression of Puerto Ricans, especially sisters.

These lies come in many forms. One way is through the novellas (soap operas) that are shown on t.v. These novellas are geared towards our sisters in the Puerto Rican Nation. They are supposed to be a source of "entertainment" and are used to make us sisters passive to our daily oppression. The stories revolve around upper middle class people, racism, sexism (male chauvinism—female passivity) and religion, all of which are products of the capitalist society and all designed to enslave us and our minds.

The racism scene usually involves a young couple, one of whom is Black. The problems develop when they want to get married—they know that their family will not accept the Black person. What happens to a sister who looks at a program like this? It will create racist attitudes and we begin to think that being Black is not good and that somehow the best thing to be is white.

Television, especially novellas, also condition us to the roles that we have to play as "man" and as "woman." This is what is called sexism. The model families sold to us in these novellas define for us how we're supposed to act and what we're supposed to do.

For example, you have the typical mother who cooks, cleans, washes, shops, takes care of the kids, etc. The typical father, who works, is out all day and the typical children want to be just like their mommies and daddies. The man is the "head of the house" and the bread winner. He comes home from work and expects to have his dinner ready and see the house spotless. The wife, of course, is loving, fragile, and if her husband has another woman on the side, she is patient and understanding, because after all, he is a "man." When our sisters watch these novellas, they make us passive to oppression as Third World People and to our oppression as women. We accept our brothers' male chauvinism because we are taught that that is what a man is.

Taking another example, let's say that on t.v. there's a story where one of the children becomes ill. The doctors can't find the cause of the illness. There's no medicine that can help. Then an elderly woman comes to visit and stays with the child for a while. Within a matter of days, the child miraculously recovers. The doctors, bewildered, want to know what the old woman did to cure the child. The woman pulls out a statue of the virgin mary or jesus christ and says that through her faith in god, the child was cured and that we should all serve very hard because someday a savior will come who will lead us to a new kingdom. Religion is another way that we are kept pacified.

The people that are shown to us in these novellas are upper-middle-class people. They are the ones who own their own houses and cars. The husband is a doctor or lawyer or he owns his own business. Their children go to private schools. The reason these people are shown to us is so we can think that our problems and their problems are the same. We become involved in these stories and we begin to sympathize with these people and we try to act like them, forgetting ourselves and most importantly, our people and the reality of our oppression.

But these novellas are not real. They don't show us the truth of our oppression and how we live. They don't show us how in a capitalist society, poor people work hard and
yet barely survive, while a few play in all the riches of our island and the world. T.V. is used as a tool to sell us lies and to try to make us believe those lies. It shows nothing of how our sisters die of abortions forced upon us because in the land of plenty, we can’t “afford” another human life. It shows nothing of how doctors tell us to take the pill, making us believe that it is safe, when in fact, they were using us as guinea pigs and all the time making us sterile. It doesn’t show how hard we work and yet how little paid. It doesn’t show the housing conditions we are forced to live in. It doesn’t show how we work all day in a factory only to return home at night to a husband who either is drunk, out all the time, or beats us constantly. Television is unreal but our oppression isn’t.

In a socialist society, television will be put to better use. It will be used to serve our people by having educational programs for example. Programs where our people can be taught to read and write. Programs that show us what is really happening in the world around us, not like the television now that shows us only what the rich capitalists want us to know.

In this society, being Third World and being a sister means that we are oppressed not only by the society but by our own brothers. This is what we call the Triple Oppression—because we are oppressed because we are Third World, because we are sisters, and because we are poor. This system, through television, tells us that that is the way that it is supposed to be. Sisters, they say, are supposed to be weak and inferior while brothers are strong and superior. This society has in the past succeeded in making us think that we’re all inferior. Brothers have directed their frustrations into themselves and have taken it out on sisters. Sisters have directed our frustrations into ourselves, developing self-hatred. We must stop competing with each other, trying to be like somebody on T.V. and we must look for ourselves as what we are, how we live, and where we stand.
For now, sisters and all oppressed people are moving. We know that in this society there is no freedom. The 5th Point of the Young Lords Party Program and Platform says that "We want equality for women. Down with machismo and male chauvinism." The Young Lords Party also is fighting for the "liberation of all Third World People" (as stated in our 3rd Point of the Program). We are going to fight for our liberation and the liberation of all oppressed people, and we know that there is power only in unity.

REVOLUTION WITHIN THE REVOLUTION!
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!
ALL POWER TO THE SISTERS!

Jenny Figueroa
Ministry of Information
YOUNG LORDS PARTY
Lower East Side Branch

----------------------------------------

Madame Dinh

(From the newspaper Palante, 15 February 1971, volume 3, number 3)

In Vietnam the people have shown the strength of a unified people's army in defeating first the French and now the U.S.A. One sister who has come to the forefront of this struggle is Madame Nguyen Thi Dinh who is presently the vice commander in chief of the Armed Forces of Liberation of South Vietnamese.

Nguyen Thi Dinh, the youngest of 11 children, was born to a poor peasant family in the province of Bentre. As young as age 14, she joined in the fight against rich peasants and the French colonizer in an insurrection that took place in 1930. Heavy repression came down on her family and one of her brothers was jailed. When he got out of jail he began teaching her more about political matters. Then at the age of 16 she became a messenger for the revolutionary movement fighting against the French.

Again in 1939, repression came down very hard on the revolutionary movement. All known cadres (revolutionaries) and even poor peasants who were not involved in revolutionary activity were arrested and tortured. Madame Dinh's husband was jailed that year, only two years after their marriage. He died in prison without her ever seeing him again. A year later, she was imprisoned and her 6 month old baby was taken away from her. She was brutally tortured trying to get her to confess to subversive activities against the government, but she wouldn't speak. At the time she was arrested, 1,000 prisoners including 100 women were also arrested, most of them not knowing why. Madame Dinh took it upon herself as a revolutionary to educate all the sisters and brothers, showing that a revolutionary organizes and educates the people wherever she or he is at.

In 1943, she suffered a severe heart ailment. The oppressor in political activity released her from prison. However, she was constantly watched and was unable to travel outside the village. Any friend she made contact with were arrested. Finally, she went to work with the Viet Minh in 1944, and in 1945 she took her part in a popular insurrection
against the French and the rich peasants. After the insurrection, the war of resistance began on Sept. 23 (the anniversary of our Grito de Lares when we began our struggle as Puerto Ricans against the Spanish colonizer).

In 1946, Madame Dinh was sent to Hanoi to report on the revolution in the south. There she saw Ho Chi Minh. After completing her mission, she was sent to publicize the revolution. She went from village to village bringing the revolution to the people. Then Nguyen Thi Dinh led the armed uprising in the province of Ben Tre and was in charge especially of the military aspects. This is important because many people although they recognize the need for sisters in revolutionary struggle doubt the military capabilities of women. She continued her political work in this province and became one of the leaders.

By 1960 in the struggle against the U.S.A. she became the first secretary of the revolutionary organization in her native province. By the end of 1961, she became vice president of the National Liberation Front. In 1964, she became a member of the central committee of the National Liberation Front as vice president of the military chief of staff of the National Liberation Front and president of the women’s committee.

It is important for us to know the history of third world women who fought and are fighting for the freedom of our peoples. We usually don’t know anything about them because even today people believe women have no role in revolution. Yet sisters all over the world and especially the Vietnamese have shown that revolution is the duty of both men and women.

FORWARD SISTERS IN THE STRUGGLE
PONCE MARCH 21ST ROMPE CADEHASI

Iris Morales
Young Lords Party
EL BARRIO Central Hqrs.

Abortion

(From the newspaper Palante, 19 March–2 April 1973, volume 3, number 5)

A sister we know went to a clinic where they perform D’nC (abortion that’s performed up to the 12th week of pregnancy by means of a suction machine that pulls the fetus from the womb).

“You’re 18 weeks pregnant. We can’t do it here. You’ll have to go to a hospital for a saline induction,” the doctor said. (A saline induction is an abortion performed after the 12th week of pregnancy where the woman is injected with a saline solution that induces labor as in normal birth.)

She went to a hospital where a Puerto Rican attendant directed her to the abortion ward adding, “That’s where they kill babies!” There another doctor estimated that she was 14 weeks pregnant and would have to return when she reached her fourth month salting out.

The sister returned and was sent to still another hospital where a long line of women waited with $400 in hand to pay in advance for their abortions. Since she had no money,
she was sent to another hospital, a city hospital, where a doctor examined the sister and said that she was 6 1/2 months pregnant and that it was “too late.” The sister returned home to her other children and her unemployed husband to do more hustling to allow her future child to survive when she gives birth. In a certain sense, she went home relieved because, being a Puerto Rican woman, she knew that for her entering an abortion clinic in a New York City hospital was either risking her life or the possibilities of ever being pregnant again. And she was scared!

The case of the sister is no different from that of other Third World (Puerto Rican, Black, Chicano, Asian, Native American) women who face the situation of choosing between the risk of an abortion from a racist hospital administration, or of inventing new ways of hustling to clothe, feed, and shelter an addition to her family.

In Puerto Rico, the amerikkkan government has been pushing sterilization as the only means of contraception since the 1930’s with the result that by 1965, one out of every three women were sterilized. The Puerto Rican woman was also used as a guinea pig for the contraceptive pills that were tested on the island for 15 years before being sold in the U.S. market, while even now these pills are believed to cause cancer and death from blood clotting. In a San Juan slum known as El Cano de Martin Pena, one out of every eleven children born dies before he or she is 1 day old. While one out of every four women in Puerto Rico dies from self-induced abortions.

If a Puerto Rico woman decides to have an abortion, the Church that charges her around $3 for a baptismal certificate but that won’t feed her children, tries to make her feel guilty. The man who gets drunk and beats her while she’s pregnant and tells her that he doesn’t want to be a “chancletero” [lowlife] makes her feel guilty. And the “welfare” department tells her that it’s going to be rough if she doesn’t have an abortion.

The government forces us to live like roaches, always in the garbage. When we can’t produce in the sweat shops to make them more money because of the high unemployment rates; when we can’t buy their junk because they won’t give us credit to legalize the rip-off; when we’re no longer of any use to them and become a threat of possible revolutionaries, they exterminate us like roaches.

So we have the Third World woman holding on to her pregnant body, watching her already born children nibble on lead paint in place of food, watching the rats that gather worrying about having her insides zipped up during an abortion.

Point Number 6 of the Young Lords Party 13 Point Platform and Program states “We want community control of our institutions and land.” This means that we want institutions, like hospitals where sisters go to have abortions, to be under the control of our people to be sure that they really serve our needs. Until we struggle together to change our present situation, women will not be allowed to have the children they can support without suffering any consequences.

QUE VIVA! PUERTO RICO LIBRE!

Gloria Colon
Ministry of Education
Central Headquarters
YOUNG LORDS PARTY
Position on Women's Liberation

(From the newspaper Relante, May 1971, volume 3, number 8)

Puerto Rican, Black, Asian, Native American and other Third World Women (women of color) are becoming more aware of how we have been especially oppressed. Women have historically been at the bottom of the ladder; under capitalism, this has been intensified so that we are oppressed three ways. First, we are oppressed as Puerto Ricans, Blacks, Chicanas, Native Americans or Asians (Third World People). Second, we are oppressed as women. Third, we are oppressed by our own men who have been brainwashed by this capitalist system into believing a whole set of false, empty standards of what manhood is supposed to be—machismo. The Third World Woman thus becomes the most oppressed person in the world today.

Whenever there is oppression a movement develops to end that oppression. Third World Women have been and are still being oppressed, and therefore, there is a movement of liberation. Third World Women have always struggled in many different ways. This struggle, however, should not be confused with the Women's Liberation Movement. There are many differences—differences in the background of the women involved and differences about how best to end the oppression of women.

The Women's Liberation Movement is made up of many different groups. But, the mass media has focused most of its attention on the counter-revolutionary parts of the Women's Movement. These women are middle class and upper class women whose efforts are directed against the freedom of all people, such as the National Liberation of Puerto Rico and self determination for Puerto Ricans in the u.s. They believe that the greatest contradiction (conflict) in the world lies between men and women. This counter culture-revolutionary part, or the right-wing of the women's movement, believes that even if there were socialist revolutions all over the world, women would still occupy a secondary (inferior) place in that new society. The right wing in the women's movement says all women are sisters and all men are enemies. Yet, this is only one part of the woman's movement.

In the Young Lords Party we disagree with the analysis made by the right wing. We feel that the greatest conflict in the world today lies between capitalism (and capitalism's invasion of other countries, imperialism) and socialism, and people's drives to bring socialism to their countries, to their lives. We believe that the new society we are talking about will not come about by women separating themselves from men, but through sisters and brothers struggling with one another, working together, to deal with the negative things inside all of us. For sisters, this feeling that we are supposed to be passive towards brothers, you know, let them run things; with brothers, this feeling that we are supposed to be superior or better than sisters, you know, acting out those macho roles. The Party knows that Puerto Rican, Black, and other Third World Women make up over half of the Revolutionary Army; in the struggle for the liberation of Puerto Ricans, sisters and brothers must press for the equality of women—the women's struggle is part of the Revolution within the Revolution.

What is a man? What is a woman? Non-consciously we believe a man is strong, aggressive, hairy, decisive, hard, cold, firm, and intelligent. Non-consciously a woman is weak, timid, smooth, soft-spoken, scatter-brained, soft, warm, dumb, and loving. Both of
these sets of descriptions are a result of the way we have been trained non-consciously. From the time that we are born, we are taught by our parents and by society to be a "man" or a "woman" and to live up to those false characteristics we are supposed to have. These personality traits are part of the way we are supposed to be.

See, originally in the Party—we didn't understand these concepts. We knew that brothers were messing over sisters and we said machismo and male chauvinism must be eliminated. We did not understand that brothers were acting out the roles that this society had assigned to them. Brothers have trouble understanding why some of the ways they related to sisters was wrong because they had been taught to be this way. We said "But that's the way a man is supposed to be."

On the other hand, we would criticize our sisters for being passive and allowing men to mess them over. We did not understand that everything in a woman's experience in this society conditions and prepares us to be shy and timid. Everything in a woman's experience conditions us to accept leadership from men and to accept our roles as someone who cooks, sews, and takes care of children.

The right wing in the women's movement says men are evil and can't be changed. Babies are not born oppressors. Therefore, our major enemy is capitalism rather than men.

But there ain't no doubt about it, there are a few rich men who control this planet. They are our enemies. Not because they are men, but because they are capitalists. Some of the rulers are women (and some of them are in the right-wing women's movement). They are also our enemy, not because they are women, but because they are capitalists.

There is a center position in the women's movement. These are liberals, reformers, who merely demand "more rights" for "women." There is a left-wing, and the best of these women are revolutionaries who understand who the real enemy is. But both the center and the left wing made no attempt at stopping the right, or exposing them for what they are—pigs, agents and supporters of the enemy. They must do so now.

The progressive, must see that most of the right wing in the women's movement are white, and their racism is being reinforced heavily against Third World People, brothers and sisters.

We reject those women's groups that turn their backs on socialism because they say it was created by men, or they reject the groups like the YLP who have discipline because they say discipline and structure is a man's thing. We support those groups that are anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and see the fight for women's liberation as part of the fight for socialism.

All oppressed people together will make the Revolution within the Revolution and end all kinds of oppression.

UNIDOS VENCEREMOSI
FORWARD SISTERS IN THE STRUGGLE!

Central Committee
YOUNG LORDS PARTY
Sexism

(From the newspaper Palante, June 1971, volume 3, number 11)

How painful it is to see our people in suffering and misery.

Seeing brothers and sisters shooting up because society doesn't give them any other alternative. Seeing brothers and sisters sweating blood in the factories of Carolina, New York, or in Fajardo, without getting paid enough to live decently. That the Jibaro or Jibara have to buy pineapple juice in cans because their hands are no longer used to grow food. It is also painful to see our sons leave home never to return because they have to go fight a war that they don't understand, that we didn't start.

This is the sad state that the Puerto Rican Nation is in. Those responsible—the yanquis. Our answer is to struggle, united, united in the struggle to get these pirates, thieves, criminals, out of our island.

But there are still things, problems, obstacles that don't let us unite in order to reach our goals. We are still divided and at times, we don't understand why. One of these divisions is the division between men and women. Let's see where this division came from.

The development of human beings has been a history of struggle to live and to survive. We need food, clothing, housing, and ample time to develop our minds. We learned to use our land to grow food, use trees to make houses, to kill animals to make clothing.

But there is still something that I didn't mention but that has great importance in this process of survival. This is reproduction. The man and the woman in their coming together reproduced—this being one of the great contributions of humanity to humanity. But as we grew, we needed more of the basic necessities.

From this came the first division of labor. We were divided into men and women. The men did one thing and the women another. The man would hunt, fish, discover new worlds; while the woman would stay home and take care of the children and take care of the agriculture.

Since the man would come and go and see new means of production (clothing, food, etc.), less importance was paid to reproduction. Production became the important thing. The woman, who did not participate in the majority of production, became a secondary human being. The man began to see himself as strong and intelligent. The woman began to see herself as stupid, weak, and began to feel inferior. Throughout the ages, this problem still has not been resolved. From this came sexism.

Nowadays, the brothers want to prove they are “machos.” They see a sister and think of her as a sexual object. They whistle, call her “mami” and tell her how “fine she is.” If the sister doesn't want to be treated like this, she stops being “feminine.” Or when a brother and a sister marry, the sister becomes property, to cook, iron, wash dishes, to be the household slave. Or when a sister is a prostitute, selling her body as the only way to survive, she has to take beatings from amerikkkan soldiers and from the pimp. These abuses are immense. This is machismo.

On the other hand, the woman has learned to accept that she is a sexual object, ironer, and cook, and that she isn't worth anything! This is passivity.

Meanwhile, the yanquis laugh because our nation is divided in half. Brothers and sisters keep themselves weak and don't struggle against their common enemy.
On Women in the Revolution

The worker or lumpen isn’t guilty of the misery we live in. It isn’t the fault of the women lumpen or workers that there aren’t any jobs or adequate living facilities. We have to stop being “machos.” This won’t free our nation. We have to stop being passive. We must struggle against believing we’re weak, stupid, or better than other sisters. We have to feel proud that in 1954, a sister named Lolita Lebrón knew how to defend the rights of Puerto Ricans.

The problems between men and women have to end; and in being united, we will fight together against the real enemy.

This is not a question of women’s liberation. This is for National Liberation. To achieve it, we need unity—unity of Puerto Ricans on the island and Puerto Ricans in the U.S.—a lumpen-worker alliance.

UNITY AMONG ALL Opressed PEOPLE!
FREEDOM FOR LOLITA LEBRÓN, ANGELA DAVIS NOW!

Gloria González
Field Marshall
YOUNG LORDS PARTY

Women in a Socialist Society
(From the newspaper Palante, 31 March–14 April 1972, volume 4, number 7)

How sad it is to be a woman!
Nothing on earth is held so cheap.
Boys stand leaning at the door
Like gods fallen out of heaven.
Their hearts brave the four oceans.
The wind and dust of 1000 miles.
No one is glad when a girl is born:
By her the family sets no store.
—Fg Hisan

Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too.
—Mao Tse-Tung, 1964

China in 1935 was a country of the very rich and the very poor. The rich had houses, land, cattle, and sent their sons and daughters to the best schools; while at the same time the working people were so exploited and so poor that even though they worked farming the land from sunrise to sunset, people still had little clothes, their homes were made from adobe (dirt), and there was so little food (the rich took most of the crops) that people ate leaves of the trees and every couple of years, one-third of the people would die from starvation.

Even though all the people suffered, the women suffered even more—nobody wanted girl babies, a lot of times girl babies were killed by their parents, women were sold to
their husbands, marriages were arranged by the parents. Once you were married, you weren’t allowed to leave the home, but had to spend the whole time serving the husband, in-laws, and children. You could only speak when spoken to, your feet were bound, on purpose, so you couldn’t walk far, and the bones were broken.

But as the poor and working people in China fought against the rich Chinese and the Japanese (who were invading the country), little by little, men’s attitudes and ideas about women began to change and everyone started to see how men and women should be on an equal level at home and in the workplaces and not one sex above the other. It was a long, hard struggle and it still continues.

China in 1972—working people control the hospitals, schools, factories, police, transportation, manufacturing—everything. Everyone works to improve society for everyone, not just for the benefit of the few. And working women are playing an important role—they are in the ‘revolutionary committees’ that run the cities; in the army, navy, air force, in the Taching oilfield large numbers of women workers work in oil-refining and extracting (taking oil from the earth); there are women electricians that work with wires and cables 30 meters above the ground; women workers in a province named Heilungkiang built a 110 meter long concrete bridge for transporting timber; women took part in digging a 1200 meter long pipeline that brought water to a village; in Peking women work in a factory that makes high-precision equipment for furnaces. In short, women work in all fields—farming, water, conservation, construction, forestry, fishery, meteorology, medicine, teaching, engineering, technology, geology, to name only a few! There’s equal pay between men and women for equal work; the retirement age is usually 50 with 50-70% of your former wage as pension. Pregnant women get 56 days of maternity leave with full pay and all the workplaces have child care centers. Many women factory workers get sent to school to get an education to learn more than one skill.

But still, the Chinese people understand that the main problem is imperialism, that [is the] economic system we have in the U.S. and all of its colonies, such as Puerto Rico and Hawaii. Capitalism: where the few rich control the lives of the majority, poor and working people. We all have to change the way that we were taught to act, think and do things, and the oppression of women is just one thing of many that has to stop.

At the same time, there cannot be any real equality between the sexes or an end to racism, wars, and bad working conditions, until the rich people who control us now are crushed, and we, the poor and working people, are in total control.

POWER TO ALL POOR AND WORKING PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD!
FORWARD SISTERS IN THE STRUGGLE!

WOMEN’S UNION
YOUNG LORDS PARTY