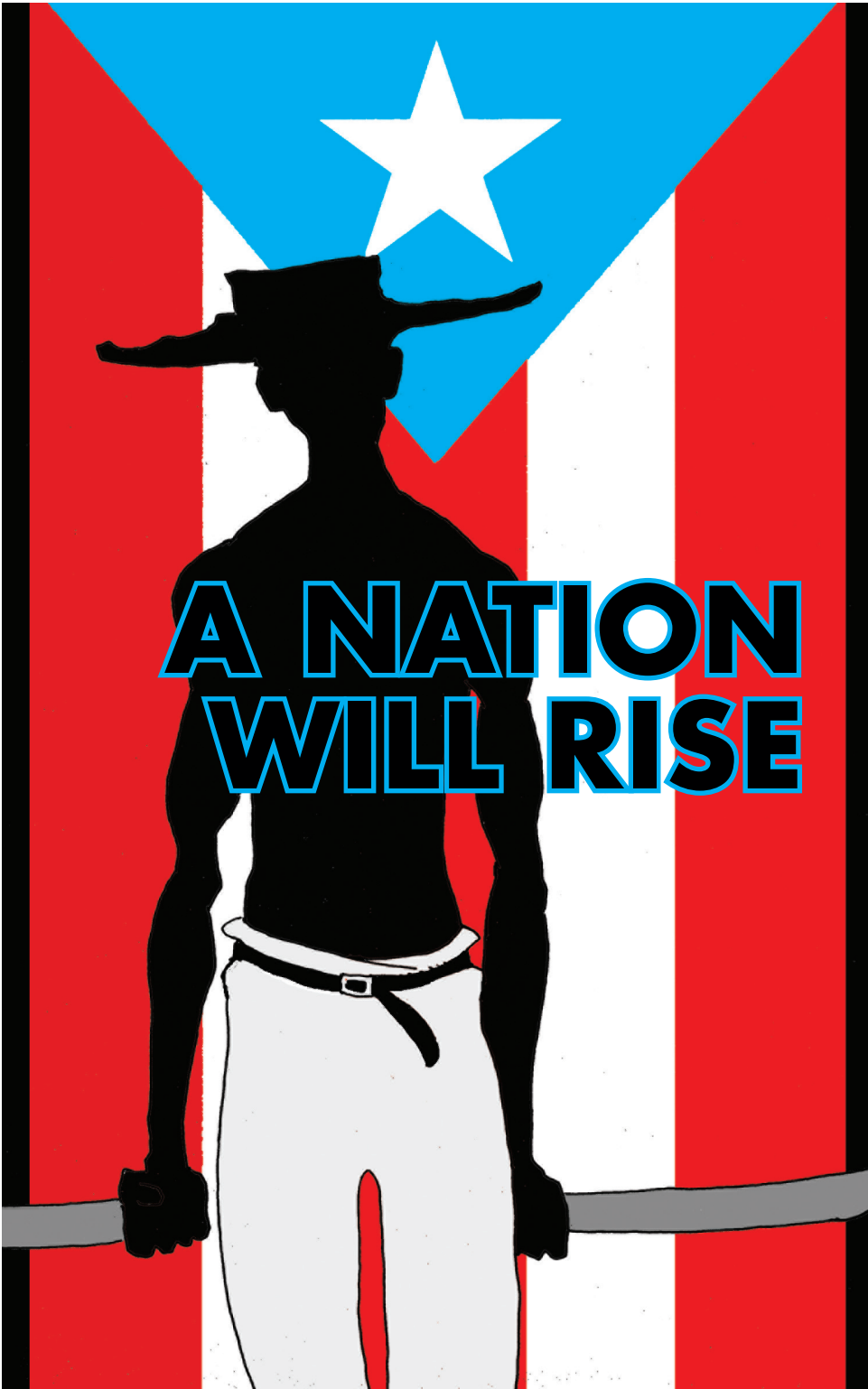


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# A NATION WILL RISE

The island nation of Boriken, now known as Puerto Rico, was invaded by Columbus and colonized by Spain in 1493. Once taken, the conquistadores immediately began a process of exploitation and enslavement of the land and the native Arawak / Taino people.

Within the first 20 years of colonization, after having killed off a large portion of the native population through raids, European diseases, and enslavement, the Spanish colonial government began to kidnap Congos, Yorubas and other people from West Africa to ship to Puerto Rico as slaves.

Both enslaved Tainos and Africanos began to escape into the central mountains of the island and would frequently attack Spanish settlements. As early as 1511 the Taino organized rebellions against the Spanish colonizers, and by 1515 enslaved Africans also commenced uprisings throughout the island.

Over the next two centuries while still under Spanish colonial rule, the people of Boriken began a process of adapting, evolving and ricanstructing themselves into what would come to be the Puerto Rican nation. This process developed into a new Puerto Rican identity — one that was different from that of the Spanish colonizers because it incorporated the native Taino and West African cultures. As such, they recognized that the time had come to make Puerto Rico its own independent nation with a unique cultural and political identity that was clearly separate from that of the Spanish.

Further inspiration came from the Haitian Revolution of 1804, where Haitians liberated themselves from the French colonizers. Other inspiration was Venezuelan Simon Bolivar's army of Indigenous and African people who wrestled independence from Spain for Bolivia, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela between the years 1810 to 1825, as well as Mexico's



u.s. military control of the very land that once belonged to the Puerto Rican people. Significant portions of the Puerto Rican island were and continue to be occupied by the u.s. military, as was the case with the Puerto Rican islands of Culebra and Vieques that are just off the coast of Puerto Rico. After several decades of resistance, u.s. naval war practices in Vieques finally ended in 2002 when the Puerto Rican people took-over the militarily controlled lands by squatting on bombing zones and using their own bodies as shields between the military missiles and the Puerto Rican soil itself. Though the war games stopped and the u.s. military eventually left Vieques, decades of such military practices have disrupted the lives of Viequeses and the ecology. Viequeses now experience an over 20% higher cancer rate than Puerto Ricans on the main island due to exposure to uranium and other military contaminants. Disruption of the local fishing industry by such practices has also left Vieques impoverished, and currently the Puerto Rican residents of Vieques are fighting off wealthy foreigners who come each day to buy up the land that is no longer occupied by the military in order to develop luxury hotels and resorts that will be owned and occupied by more foreigners.

Today, as Puerto Rico remains under the complete military and political control of u.s. imperialism, the anti-colonial / anti-imperialist struggle continues in Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican Diaspora. Well aware of this, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) continues to work behind the scenes to ensure that the u.s. flag will never cease to wave over Puerto Rico. The FBI assassination of independentista leader and EPB- Los Macheteros founder Filiberto Ojeda Rios, was part of that effort, which is why he was assassinated on September 23rd, 2005, the 137th anniversary of El Grito de Lares. Months later, the FBI raided the homes of "suspected" independentistas, attacking journalists who attempted to report on the raids, and arrested or harassed suspected "Macheteros" and independentistas. These events are just part of the latest wave of political repression imposed on Puerto Ricans by the u.s. colonial government.

Now more than ever we must come together to defend the Puerto Rican nation, a land with its own unique history, culture and identity that dates back thousands of years —a nation with the natural right to be free.

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ousting of the Spanish government in 1824. Ready to proclaim a new free republic, scholar and freedom fighter, Ramon Emeterio Betances and other Puerto Ricans formed clandestine cells throughout the island to organize the revolt that they hoped would finally free Puerto Rico. After learning that an informant had revealed their plan to the Spanish colonial authorities, and with Betances in exile in the Virgin Islands, it was agreed that the date of the revolt would be moved up.

On September 23rd, 1868, insurgents, both on foot and horseback, marched into the mountain town of Lares. As the army of freedom fighters approached, both workers and enslaved Africans staged an uprising that weakened the Spanish military. The revolt then began to spread to other parts of the island. In Lares, freedom fighters declared victory by raising the flag of the newly proclaimed Puerto Rican Republic at the central plaza, lowered and burned the Spanish flag and set up a revolutionary council to decide the future of the new Republic.

But having been warned of the impending rebellion, the Spanish were able to contact the Dutch colonial government of the Virgin Islands who intercepted a ship filled with arms and ammunition that Betances was sending to the insurgents in Puerto Rico. Eventually the Puerto Rican rebels ran out of ammunition and the better-equipped Spanish soldiers were able to quell the uprising. A new wave of even more intense political repression was the immediate aftermath, with military reinforcements being sent to Puerto Rico from Spain to secure its continued control over the island.

Although Spanish authorities silenced the "Grito" of September 23rd, it did lead to the abolition of slavery on the island in 1873 and an eventual form of autonomous home rule for the Puerto Rican nation by 1897.

However just one year later, on July 25th 1898, 26,000, u.s. soldiers led by General Nelson Miles, infamous for having led the massacre of hundreds of indigenous people at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1890, stormed the shores of Guanica, Puerto Rico. They invaded the island as part of the Spanish-American war, which would pit the US against Spain for

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control of Spain's last colonies in the Americas. Spain eventually lost the war of 1898 and was forced to cede Puerto Rico (along with Cuba, the Philippines and Guam) to the US as the spoils of war.

Puerto Rico has been a u.s. colony ever since. Betances, who died on September 16, 1898, just months after the u.s. invasion of Puerto Rico, was quoted as saying "I do not want to see Puerto Rico under the colonial domination of Spain nor the United States." Although his efforts had been focused on securing independence from the Spanish colonial regime, he had always warned of the impending threat of the new "imperialist of the north".

As the u.s. army marched through the mountains of Puerto Rico, they encountered poor Puerto Ricans who had been warned of the u.s. invasion. These mountain people, armed solely with machetes, and wanting neither Spain nor the u.s. to control them, attacked, captured and executed many of the invading u.s. soldiers. These "macheteros" would continue to sporadically attack US soldiers and other American colonizers throughout the early decades under u.s. rule.

Entering into the 20th century, the Puerto Rican nation continued its struggle for liberation, but now against the United States. Defending the Puerto Rican identity itself was yet another brutal fight under the u.s. colonizers, who imposed English as the primary language, forcing young children in schools to be "taught" in a foreign language they could not understand. American missionaries and teachers were shipped to the island to teach the American culture, history, religion and the English language with little regard for the Puerto Rican culture that was centuries in the making. In 1917, the u.s. further proved that they did not recognize the Puerto Rican nation when they imposed u.s. citizenship on Puerto Ricans and began drafting Puerto Rican men to fight for the u.s. in foreign wars. The autonomy that the island had seen for a brief period in 1897 was replaced by a full-on colonial status.

In 1922 The Puerto Rican Nationalist party was formed.

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When freedom fighter Pedro Albizu Campos, became its president in 1930, the party began an open, above - ground armed struggle against the US government. In direct response

to the repressive, racist, US. appointed American governors on the island who instigated the murder and even massacre of Puerto Ricans, between the 1930's through the 1950's the Nationalist Party was at the forefront of several uprisings throughout Puerto Rico. Stating defiantly that the u.s. had "declared war on Puerto Rico" with the military invasion of 1898, the Nationalists led attacks on the head of the colonial puppet police force in Puerto Rico, the President of the United States and the u.s. Congress. During this time many Nationalists were imprisoned, including Lolita Lebron and her three compañeros, who spent 25 years in jail for having led the attack on the House of Representatives in 1954. Also arrested was Pedro Albizu Campos, who spent 20 plus years in u.s. prisons, where he was subjected to radiation experiments and died of cancer as a result just months after being released in 1965. A wave of political repression attempted to drown the independence movement, where self-proclaimed Nationalists would be black listed and placed under surveillance by the FBI. The u.s. had no intention of giving up its colony of Puerto Rico and threatened anyone who wanted freedom. When the u.s. government created what they called the new "free-associated state" or "commonwealth" status for Puerto Rico in 1952 it was their way of disguising the actual colonial status of Puerto Rico and a means of tightening its political reign over Puerto Rico.

By the 1960's, a new phase of Puerto Rican resistance began. After the decimation of the Nationalist above - ground "army", new freedom fighters began to use "clandestine armed struggle" against the u.s. government. Organizations such as el Ejército Popular Boricua – Los Macheteros (EPB), Fuerzas Armadas De Liberación Nacional (FALN), Los Comandos Armado de Liberación (CAL), el Movimiento Independentista Revolucionario Armado (MIRA), la Organización de Voluntarios por la Revolución Puertorriqueña (OVRP) and others, began engaging in clandestine armed actions against the u.s. government and military to once again bring attention to the colonial condition of Puerto Rico. Just as in years and decades before, Independentistas (supporters of Puerto Rican independence) were harassed, attacked, imprisoned and even assassinated by the u.s. colonial forces.

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Part of defending Puerto Rico and Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and freedom has also involved resisting the