

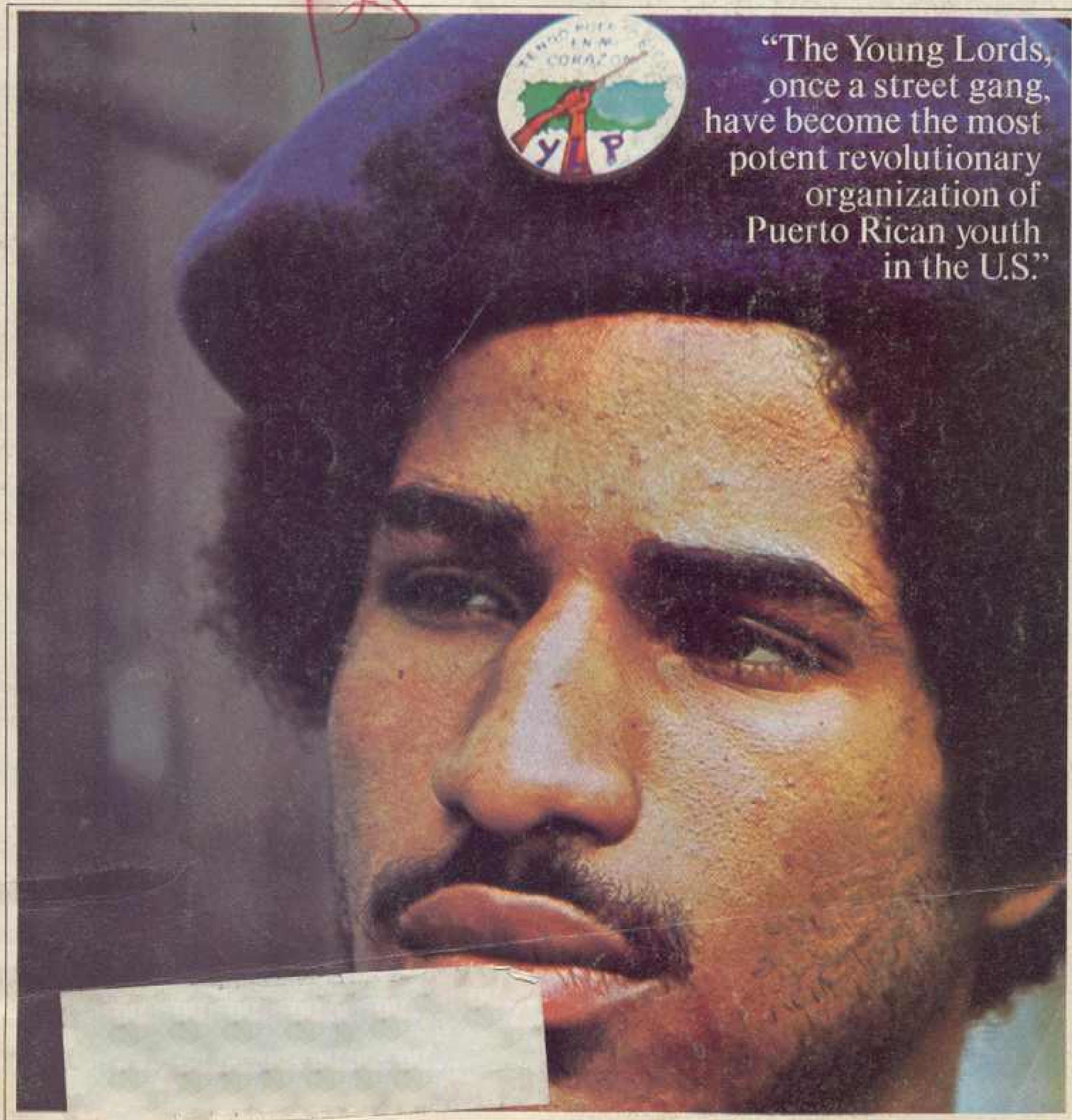
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once a street gang,
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in the U.S."



From Rumble to Revolution: The Young Lords

"The Young Lords, until 1967 just another street gang, have become the most potent revolutionary organization of Puerto Rican youth in the United States."

CEIL KEEGAN IS 27 YEARS old, a widow, the mother of two small children. Deep brown circles appear under her eyes where the bones were crushed during one of the three beatings she has suffered since Christmas. Several months ago Ceil was walking near her home in Westside Chicago when three men drove up, forced her into their car and took her to a party a few blocks away. She was slapped around and beaten for three hours. The three men were plainclothes cops. They stood by smiling. Later they dumped her back at home, nearly dead. A few weeks after that, just a block from her home six kids from a white gang beat her and left her crumpled in the street, unable to move. Ceil is a target because she works in the headquarters of the Young Lords Organization, a Puerto Rican street gang-turned-political movement.

Today Ceil is probably safe from the intergang warfare which left her lying in the street. Not because she's dropped her work for the Young Lords, but because of the way the Lords are working with street gangs all over Chicago.

The Lords, until 1967 just another gang, have become the most potent revolutionary organization of Puerto Rican youth in the United States. The Lords are not prodigal sons, returned from suburbia to organize the ghetto. Less romantically, they started out operating in fundamentally the same style as in *West Side Story*. That history sets them apart from the vast majority of radical organizations around the country. They have negotiated peace pacts among nearly all of Chicago's white and Latin gangs, convincing them to fight, not against each other, but against the system which oppresses them. Influenced by the Lords, the 3000-member Latin Kings, the city's largest Puerto Rican gang, have begun to organize themselves politically and have started their own breakfast-for-children program. At the same time, the Lords have battered constantly at West Lincoln Park's established institutions to make them serve poor people.

In the fall of 1968 they took over the Armitage Street Methodist Church—now the People's Church—to found

their headquarters and begin a day-care program.

In the spring of 1969 they led hundreds of their Puerto Rican brothers down the street to an empty lot which was to be made into \$1000-membership private tennis courts, and transformed it into a children's park.

By summer they had built a coalition with several other community organizations to fight an Urban Renewal plan that envisioned West Lincoln Park as an "inner-city suburb" for middle-income whites. That battle still wears on as the Lords and their allies have joined with architects and lawyers to present their own plans for poor people's housing.

Last winter they opened a free health clinic in the basement of the People's Church, initiating the first attack on the health problems of the entire Puerto Rican community.

The Chicago YLO has inspired the formation of similar groups in Puerto Rican communities in other cities. By far the most significant of these is the New York City Young Lords. A political split between the two organizations which occurred in June has so far been free of the usual acrimony. The two groups, as is clearly revealed in their parallel development, are in any case bound together by common roots—a bond which they now express with the phrase "revolutionary compañeros."

[GANGS AND REVOLUTION]

ONCE THEIR POLITICAL conversion began, it took no more than six months to establish YLO's revolutionary outlook. Dennis Cunningham, one of several Movement lawyers in Chicago who have handled cases for the Lords and the Latin Kings for several years, points to the Lords' early and continuing affiliation with the Black Panthers as fundamental to their political development.

Like the Panthers, YLO is organized into ministerial divisions, with specified lines of authority and levels of responsibility. So far the structure has not become highly rigid. The sense of personal loyalty and friendship which pervades the

by Frank Browning



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whole collective is probably stronger than the machinery of organizational discipline.

YLO's Field Marshal is a young man named Cosmo. In his job he hangs out on the street, jiving with other gang people. Cosmo recognizes that the Chicago YLO in an important way still is a gang: "You have to understand, man, that even *before*, we were in some ways already revolutionary. Dig? It's not that we were a gang one minute and the next we were all Communists. What we had to realize was that it wasn't no good fightin' each other, but that what we were doing as a gang had to be against the capitalist institutions that are oppressing us."

Up to about six months ago the YLO was completely dependent upon Jose (Cha Cha) Jimenez, chairman and head of the gang since long before its politicization. Cha Cha is 21 and has been in the gang since 1959; as soon as he began to move into the leadership he was shuttled in and out of jail on all the usual charges stemming from "rumbles," petty theft, possession of drugs, disorderly conduct. Now he faces a one-year sentence on a charge of stealing \$23 worth of lumber last summer. A companion convicted on the same offense was given 30 days. His YLO brothers are trying desperately to raise money for appeals, but they do not sound optimistic. Besides, Cha Cha went on trial again early in August on a mob action charge stemming from demonstrations against the city's Urban Renewal plans. When that trial is over he faces seven more charges.

While serving time earlier, Cha Cha discovered how full the jails were of Puerto Ricans—not just gang members, but old and middle-aged people, workers and welfare mothers. It became clear to him that the real enemy was not the Latin Kings or the Paragons or the Black Eagles; the real enemy was Daley's Chicago Urban Renewal, local Alderman George McCutcheon, and the U.S. government, whose imperial colonization policy had so mangled Puerto Rico that he and his family had been forced to leave just to survive.

A year ago last spring, Brother Manuel Ramos was shot to death by an off-duty Chicago cop. The cop crashed a YLO party and when he started badgering one of them, Ramos tried to clear it up. The cop drew his gun and fired dead-on into Ramos's left eye. "I think it was at that point that I became a real revolutionary," Cha Cha says. "Instead of going out and killing a pig, I saw the need to sit down and analyze the ways of getting even. Not with a gun. It wasn't the right time. It still isn't. We have to educate the people before we think about guns."



YLO

CHA CHA CHARACTERIZES most of the early demonstrations as being like gang fights because of their diffuse political character. April 1969 was a real turning-point for the Lords' political demonstrations. Just as a national conclave of Presbyterian ministers opened in Texas, the Lords moved into Presbyterian McCormick Theological Seminary. "Blacks were going down to demand money," Cha Cha reflects, "so we sent a Latin to get money for building houses. At the same time we felt we should do an action here to back him up and make them understand that if they didn't give poor people houses, we were going to take over the offices at McCormick."

"We went into the place, barricaded the doors and set up security with walkie-talkies. At first there were only 40 people."

"We had a press conference and by morning the place was full of poor people and guilty middle-class people. Food was always supplied to us by the people of the neighborhood. People outside tried to make trouble between us and other gangs, and the gangs would come to the gate, but we would rap with them and then they stayed to help and saw that they were political too. Dr. Arthur McKay [president of McCormick] told people he was going to call the police. It was on the news."

"We went back and held a press conference and said no warrant to leave, no piece of paper, was going to evict us anymore. McKay talked to the Board and dropped the charge, and we got a call from Texas saying we had got \$600,000 for low-income housing in Lincoln Park. The Board agreed to meet our demands for housing, that their financial records be open, that McCormick join to help community groups, that it publicly oppose the racist policies of Urban Renewal, and that it open its facilities to the use of the community. We were in the building for five days before we got that decision."

If the Lords' activities get results, they also reveal their enemies. The YLO occupied the Armitage Street Methodist Church in November 1968. For six months they had asked the congregation for permission to use the basement as a day-care center. They had the support of the church's minister, Rev. Bruce Johnson. Nevertheless, an exodus of about 15 per cent of the primarily middle-class membership followed the occupation. Those who have remained with the church—now the People's Church—have transformed it into a center for dialogue on the theology of liberation.

The Lords realize that while their old image as a street



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gang helps identify them to other street people, older people in the community remain fearful. Local power-brokers like District Alderman George McCutcheon and the right-wing Chicago Tribune try to dismiss the Lords as just a bunch of rabble-rousing vandals.

The Lords never had much hope of winning the hearts of the landowners and city bureaucrats. Still, for the rest of the community—even for those middle-aged or older working people and welfare mothers who have been forced to move from one tiny apartment to another, one jump ahead of the Urban Renewal bulldozer—the Lords' history as a gang is cause for ambivalence.

But there are signs that the Lords are also reaching out more effectively into the entire community. At least two of their projects have had a profound impact on the whole of Lincoln Park and, if they can maintain organizational solidarity, could make them the most important political force in Chicago's Puerto Rican community.

[GETTING IT ON]

FOR THE LAST 15 YEARS, Lincoln Park has been on the urban planners' maps as an ideal spot to create a middle-class enclave, a suburb in the heart of the inner city. Entire blocks on Armitage, Halsted and Larrabee streets now lie bare where Urban Renewal has leveled the homes of Puerto Ricans and poor whites.

Last June the Lords and several other local groups formed a Poor People's Coalition to fight Urban Renewal plans to have the Hartford Company construct middle-income housing. The Lords asked a young architect, Howard Alan, to develop plans to be entered as a contract bid before the Urban Renewal board. (A \$3000 architect's fee was paid by McCormick Seminary.) Community Urban Renewal Director George Stone led them to believe that if the Coalition submitted technically adequate plans, they would get the job.

Alan designed a building, working closely with the Poor People's Coalition and various members of the community. There would be three stories, each set back so that the roof of the floor below formed a play terrace for the apartment above. The front walls were all glass, and workrooms were placed next to them so that mothers would be able to work while watching their children play. "The terraces were designed," says Alan, "for poor people's interaction in response to an existing way of life whereby poor people could

rely on each other."

The Lincoln Park Establishment seemed not to take the Coalition's project too seriously until the local Daley-appointed Conservation Community Council—a (supposedly representative) local community board selected to participate in Urban Renewal planning—came through with an 11-2 recommendation favoring the Coalition's bid.

No Community Council recommendation on a construction bid had ever been reversed by the Department of Urban Renewal (with one exception—which was overturned by the Chicago City Council). Furthermore, there has always been a policy that DUR meetings provide ample opportunity for public discussion.

As soon as the chairman opened the meeting last February, he asked all those in the packed audience opposed to the Hartford Company to stand. All but about 10 rose. Just then, a member of the five-man DUR board moved that the bid go to a private contractor. An immediate unanimous vote supported his motion, and by the time the crowd realized what had happened, the board members were clearing away their papers and were on their way out. One man jumped from the audience to grab a microphone and was immediately surrounded by a phalanx of police. Next day the Chicago Tribune headlined, in six columns, "Renewal Hearing Disrupted."

Under the plan approved by the DUR, 15 per cent of the new housing will go to poor people. The Coalition's plan called for at least 40 per cent.

YLO Minister of Information Omar Lopez refers to the Coalition's defeat as only a skirmish in what is really a war against Urban Renewal. He promises that the Urban Renewal buildings will never go up until they are designed to serve poor people.

SINCE FEBRUARY, HOWEVER, the Lords have done little on neighborhood housing—to the dismay of Howard Alan, who is anxious to work up other bids. Mio Villagomez, a lieutenant in the YLO Health Ministry who came to the Lords last winter, sees this as one of the organization's serious problems, stemming mostly from a lack of internal discipline. And he says it shows up elsewhere, when members—perhaps because of the close relationships that grew out of their long association in the gang—fail to concentrate on their own jobs, show up late for meetings, spend too much time bullshitting instead of talking to new people in the streets, or let old programs lapse when a new one has caught their interest.



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It is a pattern that will not be easily abolished. One of the things Cosmo notes about street gangs, which has both helped and frustrated the Lords in winning over other gangs to cooperative political work, is a faddish attraction to new styles. For though they may dig what the Lords are doing, it's really hard to develop the tenacity to follow through on organizational detail. That kind of periodic excitement which moves from one new program to another is what Mio criticizes as a lack of self-disciplined democratic centralism.

As long as it was dependent on Cha Cha's gentle-but-tough charismatic style, YLO seemed unlikely to solve this problem. But he has steadily shifted much of the leadership responsibility to his ministers. Friends of the organization believe it is now strong enough to stand without him, should the city's efforts to imprison him succeed. He resigned as chairman in mid-July so that full responsibility for YLO would devolve upon the Central Committee, and "in order to allow the second generation of Lords to assume the burden of responsibility and pleasure of serving the people."

OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO YLO strength are two new people who have come into the Lords during the last year: Omar Lopez and Alberto Chivera. Their personal warmth and serious efficiency have brought them into powerful positions as Ministers of Information and Health, respectively.

Alberto, a third-year medical student at Northwestern University, runs the health clinic, a program of free medical service to the community staffed by doctors, medical and nursing students and professional health workers. The clinic, which opened in February with a handful of patients, now receives nearly 50 people each Saturday afternoon, with services from prenatal care to eye examinations.

At first many women were afraid to go to the clinic. They were wary of the old gang image and frightened by what they had read in the city's newspapers. Then health workers started canvassing door-to-door, asking people if anyone needed medical care and making arrangements for them to come to the clinic. If they failed to appear, they were sent a personal letter inviting them to come in the next week. Sometimes members of the Health Ministry and doctors go to the homes of people who can't come to the clinic.

Alberto expects that eventually the clinic will be run entirely by the community, with only occasional help from the Lords—a real People's Clinic freely offered to and freely

run by the people it is designed to serve. There is, of course, a tendency of such programs to deteriorate into the piecemeal style of government welfare: patching together one project here and plugging up another there. But the health clinic can also be a stepping-off point for further action.

The fact that the clinic does work primarily in the neighborhood means that it is tying itself very effectively into the social structure of the community. If the Lords can continue that direct relationship with the Puerto Rican women, who form one of the strongest sources of traditional stability, then their chances of growing into an effective community-wide political organization are greater than ever before.

On the surface the Health Ministry appears to offer nothing more than a slightly better version of the city's welfare program. But the camaraderie and sensitive care that the clinic has come to offer have probably become the Lords' most successful organizing tool. Not only does it go a long way toward eroding their traditional gang image, but it doesn't take too many trips to the clinic—where treatment comes free—for the people to realize that their frustration is rooted in the medical system, especially as it is embodied by Grant Hospital.

When the clinic first opened, Grant had agreed to provide free follow-up examinations upon referral by the clinic's doctors. For a while it worked. Then the hospital started billing patients and initiating collection procedures. By that time, though, enough people were behind the Lords that they could escalate their service demands beyond what Grant would concede while still staying well within the community's reasonable expectations. One especially important demand was that the hospital remove police from the emergency room (police regularly interrogate patients before and during emergency treatment). Grant's intransigence on both counts has in the process heightened older community people's awareness of its inadequacy both as a medical and as a social institution.

THROUGH THE HEALTH CLINIC more than any other program, the Lords have been able to strengthen their bonds to the community and stimulate some political awareness of how the established social service institutions work. In addition, local shopowners and businessmen have begun to support the Lords' programs. Most of the food for the breakfasts is given freely by local



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grocers. One record store owner, a staunch supporter of the Puerto Rican Independence Movement, has given recordings of the Puerto Rican national anthem to be played each morning at the breakfast program.

The Lords, though strong opponents of an apolitical "cultural nationalism," are deeply committed to the liberation of Puerto Rico. They consider themselves revolutionary nationalists and maintain many ties with revolutionary leaders on the island. Before he came to Chicago last February, Communications Deputy Tony Baez was active in the Movement on the island, escaping to Chicago for fear of imprisonment. The Lords see their role as one of making Americans realize that the U.S. government has its own resort colony in just the same manner as the 19th century European empires. [See RAMPARTS, June 1970]

"We feel it our duty to see that 'Free Puerto Rico Now' will be an issue in the next year, second only to getting out of Vietnam," one Young Lord explains. "Why the stress on a nationalistic feeling for an island so far away? For a Puerto Rican living in Chicago who was forced to come here as a cheap laborer, that rallying point gives a sense of pride and identity. All were brought here because of the systematic destruction of the Puerto Rican economy and the death of jobs and promise."

It is above all this common heritage of continuing oppression which binds the Puerto Ricans living in Chicago or New York, not only to their countrymen in Puerto Rico, but also to each other and to those in other cities around the country.

[THE LORDS IN NEW YORK]

THE NEW YORK YOUNG LORDS (who since last June's split with the Chicago YLO have constituted themselves the Young Lords Party, or YLP) come out of a community whose conditions and concerns parallel the Chicago group's. Guided by the immediate needs of the people, the YLP has focused on the problems of inadequate health care and housing, malnutrition, institutions refusing to serve the community—the same issues around which the YLO organized in Chicago. At the same time, however, sources of divergency in their development can be seen, especially in organizational and tactical style and in strategic priorities, and perhaps also in the personal backgrounds of the two groups.

The New York Lords' first action was in July 1969. Un-



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able to obtain brooms from the Sanitation Department to clean 110th Street in *El Barrio*, they got together with people in the neighborhood and built a barricade of garbage across Third Avenue at 110th. In the days that followed, the action spread to 111th and 112th Streets. At each location, the Lords held a rally and signed up some of their first recruits. The garbage offensive lasted until September 2. The Lords played a hit-and-run game, block to block, talking and spreading politics as they went. Thousands of Puerto Ricans fought the police that summer. Many joined the Lords or at least became friendly to the struggle.

That fall, the Lords began to work with welfare mothers. In October they started door-to-door lead poisoning detection tests. They found that cases of lead poisoning—due to the illegal use of cheap lead paint by tenement landlords—reached epidemic proportions in their community.

As the health work continued, the Lords themselves learned how to do simple blood tests for iron deficiency anemia, another poverty disease widespread in the community. The lack of proper nutrition convinced them to undertake a free breakfast-for-children program.

For weeks, the Lords visited the First Spanish Methodist Church on 111th Street and Lexington Avenue, trying to convince Humberto Carranzana, the Cuban refugee who ran it, to open the large basement facilities for the breakfast program (the church was in use only a few hours a week, on Sundays). On Sunday, December 7, when the Lords attempted to address the congregation, police were called in and beat and arrested 13 Lords. The women who were in the church fought back just as hard as the men, and the Party points to this as the awakening of its struggle against male chauvinism. The Lords returned to the church on December 28, 1969. This time they took it over, renamed it People's Church and began an 11-day occupation. They established an embattled communal enclave with free breakfasts, free clothing and health services, a day-care center, a liberation school, community dinners, films, and on New Year's Eve a revolutionary service to herald "The Decade of the People."

Over a hundred thousand people passed through the doors of the church during those days. The Lords explained their programs. They invoked the teachings of Jesus as a people's gospel of helping those in need.

The barricaded, barred and chained door of the church gave way to police hammers and chisels at 7:15 A.M., Wed-



SHAINESS/LNS

nesday, January 7. The occupation ended peacefully—as the Lords had promised, for their part, that it would. All of those busted were charged with civil contempt of a January 2 court injunction against remaining in the church. In March all of the charges were dropped.

SINCE JANUARY, SUPPORT for the Young Lords in the community has continued to grow rapidly. This was made unmistakably clear at the Puerto Rican Day Parade on June 7: As the Young Lords passed by in their purple berets, hundreds of thousands of people greeted them with cheers and the clenched-fist salute.

Community support was demonstrated in a different way a week later with the arrest of the YLP Chief of Staff, Juan "Fi" Ortiz, 16 years old, on charges of kidnapping, armed robbery and assault. The next day four different newspapers provided four implausibly differing versions of Fi's supposed crime; all of them were variations of the theme that 21-year-old Jack McCall of Newark, New Jersey, was kidnapped on an East Harlem street, forced into a car at knifepoint, driven to Brooklyn, struck on the head and robbed of \$40. McCall escaped and reported the car's license number to police, who within the space of a few hours checked it, located the car and Fi and arrested him.

Fi's bail was set at \$1000. The judge apparently found the police story less than convincing for the bail must approach a record low for charges of kidnapping, armed robbery and assault.

The night of the arrest, hundreds of people gathered to protest at a rally called by the Lords in front of the People's Church, which since the occupation had become a symbol of the struggle in El Barrio. YLP Chairman Felipe Luciano told the crowd: "We will not allow the brutalization of our community to go without any response. For every Puerto Rican who is brutalized, there will be a retaliation."

The Lords left the rally to return to their Bronx office to work on the current issue of their paper, *Palante*. The crowd raised YLP banners left over from the Puerto Rican Day parade the previous Sunday and marched through the streets of El Barrio chanting, "*Despierta, Boricua. Defiende lo tuyo*"—"Awake, Puerto Rican. Defend what is yours."

Suddenly, small groups of people broke from the march and fanned out north and south on Third Avenue. The gates of the A&P supermarket were pulled down and people filled up bags of groceries. Men and women gathered merchandise from other stores on the avenue; barricades went up



AREVALO/YLO

to keep the cops—now with guns drawn—away from the people in the stores. Poverty program offices and welfare centers were also targets. Rocks and bottles pelted patrol cars. A cop was beaten when he tried to make an arrest. A car belonging to the Housing Authority, New York's Municipal Slumlord, was found abandoned on 113th Street. People covered it with garbage and crowned it with trashcans.

[THE PEOPLE'S MEDICINE]

LINCOLN HOSPITAL is located in an industrial sector of the South Bronx, the edge of one of the largest, most run-down Puerto Rican ghettos in the City.

At 5:30 on the morning of July 18, a group of about 200 Puerto Rican men and women from the YLP, the Health Revolutionary Unity Movement (a city-wide group of Third World health workers), and the Think Lincoln Committee (made up of workers and patients at Lincoln Hospital), walked into Lincoln with the aim of turning the hospital over to the community. Among their demands were door-to-door health services for preventive care, sanitary control, nutrition, maternal and child care, drug addiction care, day care and senior citizens' services, a 24-hour-a-day grievance table, and a \$140 minimum weekly wage for all workers.

Hours later, hundreds of people streamed in through the front door to get free tests for tuberculosis, iron deficiency anemia and lead poisoning. Passersby looking up at the ancient, grimy building that could easily pass for a warehouse were surprised to see the Puerto Rican flag flying and banners in the window proclaiming: "*Bienvenido al hospital del pueblo*"—"Welcome to the People's Hospital."

At 10 A.M. there was a press conference. Yvette Trinidad of Think Lincoln answered a question: Why use take-over tactics? "There was garbage piled on the corner of 142nd Street and Cortland right outside of this hospital. We complained, we petitioned, we called the Mayor's office. Nothing was done. Addicts from all over town came over here to search for dirty needles in the rubble. One day we decided to act. We moved the garbage into the office of Dr. Antero Lacot, the hospital administrator; that same day the garbage got removed."

At a political education class at the hospital run by Denise Oliver, YLP's Minister of Finance, three Puerto Ricans, all under 12, told of their experience with medicine.



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"My brother broke his arm and had to wait two hours in the hall before a doctor came out."

"My aunt died of a wrong blood transfusion."

"My friend's mother died of hepatitis from a dirty needle."

Negotiations with the Mayor's office over the demands broke down after four and a half hours. By afternoon's end, Tactical Patrol Squad and "Special Events" cops pulled up and parked in front of the hospital. But groups of the Lords and sympathizers, many from gangs like the Bones, the Skulls and the Savage Seven, were leaving the hospital unobtrusively, a few at a time. By the time the 150 helmeted cops marched in formation into Lincoln, there was no one inside except hospital employees. The police captain, paunched and pompous, led his 150 men back out, still in formation. They had removed the Puerto Rican flag from the hospital roof.

The hospital occupation lasted a little over 12 hours. New York radio and TV news broadcasts flashed stories of the terrible conditions at Lincoln all day long. Newspapers across the country carried the story. The AP quoted Hospital Administrator Lacot as saying that the Lords did a service to the community by dramatizing conditions at Lincoln.

[ACTIONS AND IDEOLOGY]

IN DISCUSSING THE difference which led to the New York-Chicago split in the Young Lords, Omar Lopez, Tony Baez and others in Chicago point to the backgrounds of the individuals involved. The Chicago group is made up largely of high school dropouts and some who didn't finish grammar school. The New York chapter evolved out of a political organization called the Sociedad Albizu Campos, most of whose members had either graduated from or dropped out of college in or around New York. The Chicago people feel that the New Yorkers were preoccupied with ideological refinement, whereas they had neither the time nor the educational background to concentrate on theoretical work.

"Here in Chicago we're more concerned with the immediate needs of the people, but we still understand that the real struggle is not a local one," says Omar. "That's why we entered a coalition with the Panthers and the Young Patriots on a national and international level. Yet if we talk of being the vanguard, we need to be up ahead and still have something behind us too. We're better able to analyze when we're out on the streets talking with the people. Ideas must come

after actions, not just from reading Marx, Lenin or Mao."

The New York group does not consider its concerns abstract. In their view, a lack of ideological clarity in Chicago was part and parcel of a number of related problems: lack of organizational discipline, leading to inconsistency in ongoing programs; inadequate internal political education; frequent changes in leadership; erratic publication of the national paper—shortcomings that are to a large extent acknowledged by the Chicago group.

The New Yorkers felt that Chicago YLO was not up to leading a sustained, closely-knit national organization. Last May, after several unsatisfactory meetings, the New Yorkers proposed that the Chicago leadership come East for an extended period to join in forging a new national structure and program. The Chicago people refused. Like the New Yorkers, they were unwilling to leave their local work. The split followed, even though relations remain amicable and Chicago members are "hopeful" that they can continue to "work in a way that will enable us to come together again."

THE LORDS ARE TRYING to confront the problem of how to sustain organizational continuity—a perennial problem on the left. The most long-lived organizations are often the most irrelevant sects. The most vital movements—in campus struggles, for instance—are often plainly ad hoc and ephemeral. Clearly a synthesis is needed, and the experience of the two Young Lords groups will be instructive.

It is no accident that episodic organization is endemic to the left. Not only are groups like the Lords and the Panthers subjected to increasingly ruthless repression, but the left also lacks the access to money, power and friendly media that sustains the established institutions of society. The continuity of radicalism is at bottom a continuity of the suffering and outrage that give rise to it. In time these may find their expression in many different organizations or actions.

At the Lincoln Hospital press conference, a reporter asked how the Lords could go on taking over one thing after another. And Minister of Information Yoruba replied, "Because we serve our people. That's why we could move from People's Church to a TB truck to Lincoln Hospital—and you-all don't know where we're gonna be tomorrow."

*Research in New York conducted by Roberta Weintraub/
Liberation News Service.*