

# PUERTO RICO: A SHOWCASE OF DEMOCRACY

*And Man Who Has Helped  
Make It So Is Astute  
And Erudite Statesman*

By HAROLD UNDERHILL

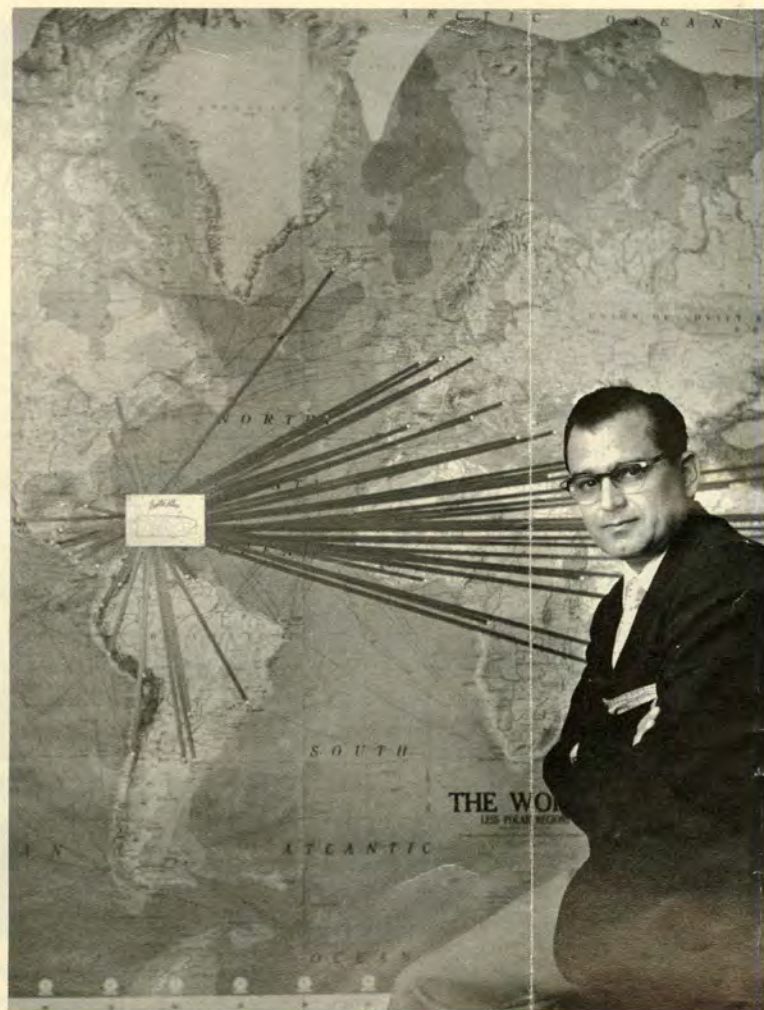
JUST AFTER being welcomed to San Juan by recently re-elected (for the fourth term) Governor Luis Muñoz Marin, important visitors often meet a man whose work has done much to keep Puerto Rico in the limelight as a "showcase of democracy" in the Western world.

He is Dr. Arturo Morales Carrion, Puerto Rico's Undersecretary of State, a man of special importance to *becarios* (scholars) from all over the globe who are interested in learning more about certain activities that focus attention on this Commonwealth in the American picture.

Dr. Morales Carrion's own words on U.S.-Puerto Rican relations are eloquent in this regard: "We have been won over, not by the kind of U.S. youthful nationalism, the pride of the emerging muscular giant that came to our shores in 1898, but by that deeper stream in American culture that believes in the rights of the common man, that shares its sympathy with the underdog."

Thus, in poetic but pointed language Morales Carrion speaks for the 2,300,000 people of one of the United States' best friends. And these sentiments he conveys almost daily to the stream of visitors who come to study what's happening in Puerto Rico and to learn how *they* can utilize what has been accomplished here.

A GRADUATE of the University of Puerto Rico, Morales Carrion took a masters at the University of Texas, followed up with a doctorate at Columbia. In the early 1940s he was in the Cultural Relations Division of the State Department in Washington. For several years he headed the history department at the University of Puerto Rico. In 1953, he was tapped to become Undersecretary of State for the Commonwealth. As such he heads TCA (the Technical Cooperation



Harold Underhill photo

*Dr. Arturo Morales Carrion, Puerto Rico's Undersecretary of State, with a map indicating some of the countries from which "Point Four" visitors have come to study ways and means in this democratic showcase of the Caribbean.*

Administration), counterpart of the ICA in Washington. That TCA has its hands full was stressed not long ago by a member of another government group—the Puerto Rico Planning Board—in these words: "We have so many visitors these days from other countries that sometimes I seem to spend more time *explaining* what we're doing than actually *doing* anything . . . but we're happy to be able to share ideas and achievements with the rest of the world."

Who comes to Puerto Rico for this special purpose? Recent visitors have included a woman medical technician from Surinam, here to see how tropical diseases are being defeated; a government man from Tunis, who wanted to learn about sewer installations, and a new method of setting power poles and stringing power lines, using a helicopter. One man was sent here a few months ago by the Ceylonese government to study sugar cane production, because Ceylon is tired of importing sugar and wants to grow its own. Other recent visitors have included social workers, farmers, editors, agronomists, police officers. Harried city planners come to study the all but insurmountable problem of how to provide massive quantities of low-cost housing for expanding populations that are spilling too rapidly into great urban centers such as Manila, Saigon, Bombay, Rio de Janeiro and Jakarta.

The success of Puerto Rico, which fifteen years ago was called the "poorhouse of the Caribbean" but now a "showcase," must confound the Kremlin, and it certainly arouses the curiosity of the free world. Currently enjoying the second highest per capita income in all Latin America, Puerto Rico has scampered up the hill of success from dismal valleys that included a one-crop (sugar cane) economy,

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All photos: Bahamas News Bureau

*Busiest thoroughfare in the Bahamas is Nassau's Bay Street, fringed with tropical palms and flowers and lined with attractive shops offering quality merchandise at bargain prices.*

## IN JANUARY

United States. You could spend your days happily browsing in the shops, and it would be worth your while if you aren't really looking for a dreamy tropical beach.

There are plenty of these, by the way. You can't beat Nassau's popular Paradise Beach. But there are others, unvisited by most tourists—beaches basking in the lazy sunshine. And completely peaceful.

If you really want to find the romantic, out-of-the-way spots and to savour the rich beauty and unspoiled charm of these islands, you can board a Bahamas Airways plane or a slow boat and explore the utterly enchanting Out Islands.

**E**VEN THERE you may run into sophistication. Craig Kelly's lovely "French Leave," on the island of Eleuthera, is perfect for those who, while wanting to "get away from it all," prefer to loaf in luxury. Similarly, the Lighthouse Club on Andros Island, the Rock Sound Club on Eleuthera, and the new Grand Bahama Club. They are all smart, expensive and exclusive.

If you *really* yearn for unvarnished repose, you can charter a little Bahamas Airways seaplane and head southeast over a string of magic, multi-colored jewelled cays (pronounced *keys*). Strung like a glittering necklace, these have beauty that is unparalleled. Land at any one of the tiny islands and you are in for a treat, or head further south toward a little Inn called "Peace and Plenty" at George Town, Exuma. You will never regret it, for there you will find peace and seclusion—the charm of the Bahamas as they used to be before bustling prosperity and commerce descended upon New Providence, the island on which Nassau is located.

Or you may decide to go to Abaco, to cosy Plymouth Inn on Green Turtle Cay, where there are no cars and no night life.

On the other hand, if you'd like the intoxicating beat of the drums and the maddening rhythm of Bahamian music, you cannot do better than go to Blackbeard's Tavern to hear Nassau's famous George Symonette, and you'll enjoy the food, too. Afterwards, there's the Junkanoo Club across the road. And no

visit to Nassau would be complete without a visit to Dirty Dick's. It's a must.

You prefer hotel life? In this respect, as in many others, Nassau is the best of all possible worlds. The Nassau Beach Lodge, the Emerald Beach, the British Colonial, the Fort Montague, the lovely old and charming Royal Victoria, and the Prince George, right on the waterfront. All are pleasant; most are expensive. But there are a host of hotels such as the Dolphin, Mayfair, Olympia, which do not come into the luxury price range.

**CLUBS?** There are several superior ones, including the very exclusive Lyford Cay Club and Coral Harbour; also the charming and excellently run Country Club, and the Balmoral Club.

Regarding new restaurants, an item of interest to returning tourists is that the persons who used to run Cumberland House have now moved to more spacious premises at Buena Vista, on Delancy Street. There, in a fabulous setting, Lorraine Onderdonck and Hedwig Hauck are catering to a capacity clientele every night. This is a must with new visitors and a natural for old ones who know good food.

Another new restaurant, in a charming setting, is "White Gates," which, on West Bay Street, conveniently close to town, is also drawing the carriage trade.

For discriminating diners out and gilt-edged socialites, however, the number one must is still the Bahamian Club, only gambling club in the British Empire. Really smart, this club offers out-of-this-world food and music. Do bring your evening clothes. Saturday night, such attire is *de rigueur*, as it is in many of the leading hotels.

There are innumerable other attractions. Every visitor should see the Ardastra Gardens, at Chippingham, where the world's only troupe of flamingo "rockettes" preen and parade. These glorious pink birds, saved from extinction, perform twice daily their fabulous routine of marching, dancing and other marvels under the direction of their trainer, Hedley Edwards. The troupe this year has a new star, "Princess Buster," a young flamingo with a coy air and a charming curtsy.

Don't miss taking your buggy, bicycle or run-about up to the top of Fort Fincastle. It is one of Nassau's less publicised jaunts, but the view of the town from there is memorable. More so, even, than from Fort Charlotte, which nonetheless is still one of the must-be-visited places.

Even when you go back to the chilly North, you can't escape! You will have "sand in your shoes." In Bahamian parlance that means, of course, that you will surely return to the "Isles of June."

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disease, unemployment, unspeakable living conditions, and a general sense of despair.

Today, jets are joining piston-engine planes in bringing 450,000 tourists a year to the island; 660 Fomento-promoted factories get down to business at 8 a.m. every day; traffic jams clog San Juan and the big suburbs that fan out from the city. *Supermercado* is a new word in the dictionary, and a rising middle class has money to spare for drive-in movies, bowling alleys, a night of dancing at the "Rock and Roll" or an evening at the San Juan Drama Festival's production of "Death of a Salesman."

Literally thousands of \$7,000 to \$14,000 homes are springing up in and around San Juan, Bayamón, Arecibo and other cities. The ever-warm ocean is being churned up by an increasing number of outboards and yachts and sailing craft.

**I**N THE MOUNTAINOUS interior where sugar, tobacco and coffee still reign, the change is not immediately obvious, until you learn that per capita income has leaped from \$110 to \$571 in about twelve years, and that family income is now at \$2,700. Both are startling figures for the great mass of the developing world. In India, Indonesia, Ghana and many other countries, even the \$571 is a storybook figure, and the \$2,700 a dream worthy of a Pharaoh.

Naturally, other countries want to know how Puerto Rico achieved all this. One reason why the Commonwealth is more impressive, in many ways, than the U.S.A. in general is that Puerto Rico is on a more comprehensible scale. Senator Alexander Wiley phrased it thus: "Visitors from underdeveloped areas are often far more impressed with Puerto Rico's progress than they are, even, with progress in the mainland United States. Puerto Rico has started to build itself up within a relatively short period, whereas the United States' head start was much longer." Another reason: The awesome progress of the U.S. is often "too much" for visitors. They like to see things done on a scale they can afford, in a country coping with elemental problems that are everyday tasks for them. Thus, the

man from Tunis, checking on sewer systems for underdeveloped areas. Thus, the housing people, coming to see how San Juan is handling the cataract of humanity pouring into what the sociologists call a "primate" city—the one major city in a country, like Manila, Singapore, and others throughout the world.

**D**R. MORALES CARRION, the man who plays Virgil to the *becarios'* Dante, is aware of his country's important role in the world and speaks of it eloquently. He sees Puerto Rico as "a cultural link between the United States and Latin America . . . and a psychological outpost in the developing world." This he said to the U.S. House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on its visit to the Commonwealth. He went on to remind this group that Puerto Rico has "a moral value of the first magnitude, *at a time when the United States' greatest need is not to conquer the moon but to conquer the friendship of mankind.*" He reminded the Representatives that the Commonwealth, "our creation, your creation, has turned into an open house for the world to see."

No mundane statesman, scholarly Dr. Morales Carrion serves up his thoughts with the fine gravy of poetry and philosophy, and in a speech before a UNESCO meeting in Denver, a few months ago, he casually cited Kipling, Whitman, Emerson, Sir Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Plato, Stephen Vincent Benet, Archibald MacLeish, the lyric poet Ruben Dario and several other worthies.

Adept at entertaining at pig roasts for his *becarios* on the palm-fringed shores of Luquillo Beach, he is also an astute statesman, highly aware of Puerto Rico's role in Caribbean and international affairs. The new Caribbean Organization, for instance, replacing the old Caribbean Commission that was often considered "colonialistic," has established its headquarters in San Juan. Membership in the old body was composed of delegates from the four metropolitan powers of France, the United States, Holland and England. The new Caribbean Organization is comprised of a dozen West Indian dependent areas . . . and Puerto Rico.