The PDP Democratic Hegemony (1944-1969)

Under the dynamic leadership of Luis Muñoz Marín, the PDP in 1944 moved decisively into the center of the political stage in Puerto Rico - a position it would occupy for a quarter of a century. During this span of years, there was a great leap forward, a profound mutation in the society and the economy, in the political experience, in the Puerto Rican view of himself and the world. No other period in the island's history could attest to such a dramatic transformation, nor could it show such an alteration of the social horizon. The hard crust of an agrarian economy was permanently broken, the rural character of the culture was changed including new population shifts and distribution. Puerto Rico became an urbanized country, increasingly industrialized, with new social classes, of fluid mobility, with an expanding mass education, and with new patterns in government and private organization and developing networks of external contacts. Old problems were put aside and new problems emerged. There was hope and drive, but there was also searching criticism and premonition. A breakthrough in colonialism and the iron ring of poverty was attempted - and much was realized through a popular consensus, but the bright, shining goals of final achievement eluded the efforts. By 1969, the consensus began to dissolve and to give way to an era of increasing confrontation with regard to status,

sharpened internal divisions, and acute perplexity. The economic momentum was maintained for a while it too led into a period of acute federal dependence. The contemporary Puerto Rican crisis then arrived, quite distrinct from the hope and trauma of '98 on the plight of the Thirties.

The Emergence from War

By early 1945, at the time when the PDP was establishing itself as the dominant political power in Puerto Rico, the war had entered into its final stage. The Axis troops were receding before the Allied onslaught, the submarine menace was fading away. In the Caribbean, Puerto Rico was a busy, vital hub of armed activites. It had fittingly played its role as a Caribbean Malta, serving as a staging area, as a crucial base in the air bridge from the U.S. to Natal to Dakar to Northern Africa and beyond; and as a key defender of the Atlantic approaches to the Panama Canal and the "soft underbelly" of the United States - its unprotected Gulf coast.

But the island's manpower had also made its contribution to the war effort. The great majority of Puerto Rican units in service were stationed in the Canal Zone and at numerous bases throughout the Caribbean guarding the vital installations the U.S. had acquired in its destroyer deal. Others went beyond the Western Hemisphere. The 65th. Infantry Regiment, a descendant from the Puerto Rico Regiment of Volunteers established on March 2, 1899, by General Henry, was sent to Panama in January, 1943 and after service there, returned to New Orleans and then sailed to North Africa on March 7, 1944; some of its elements moved to Italy and then to Corsica as a security unit. The Refiment finally

joined the Seventh Army, fought in the Maritime Alps, and also participated in the march that swept into Germany.

The Puerto Rican National Guard, created in 1919, as a result of World War I, was federalized and brought into active duty on October 15, 1940 as the 295th. Infantry Regiment, and its troops saw service in Curaçao, Aruba, Surinam, Trinidad, Cuba and Jamaica. Another Regiment, the 296th., after performing training missions in Panama, went to Hawaii as a regimental combat team and was ready to participate in the War operations against Japan when the hostilities came to an end. ( )

A total of 65,000 Puerto Ricans served in the armed forces of the United States, during World War II, compared with 18,000 at the time of World War I. Over 36,000 men were drafted by the Selective Service System, while a very high proportion - 23,000 - were volunteers. Service in the armed forces was attractive to many of the unemployed youth in the island, but a number of problems arose in connection with the draftees. There was first, the lack of sufficient skill in the English language to permit effective training and integration into regular units. Special orientation training programs had to be set-up, but they were only moderately successful. In view of the fact that a very high percentage of officers were only English-speaking, the lack of Puerto Rican motivation to learn the language or their poor accent, added to the complications. The enlisted men were also submitted to tests not designed for people of their language and culture, and naturally, many of them did poorly. In some cases, where mechanical skills were tested and the test was only given in English, only a limited number of Puerto Rican

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( ) Memorandum of Roy K. Davenport, Deputy Under Secretary of the Army, "Puerto Ricans in the Armed Services," September 8, 1965, pages 10, 26, 62-63.

were expected to meet the needed qualifications. Eventually, the Army was more aware of these problems, and through more careful selection was able to find that Puerto Rican soldiers could be as alert and capable as any other group. If for the Puerto Rican, the Army was a school experience, drafting Puerto Ricans also taught lessons on the nature of cultural diversity to the military hierarchy. ( )

The proportion of Puerto Rican officers was rather low: of over 45,000 enlisted men in the Army, only 1,101 were officers. The great majority were continentals, americanos: In spite of the fact that the troops had fought in Europe, Mac Arthur - according to Tugwell - had refused to have them for his operations, reflecting an official distrust. ( ) Yet many Puerto Ricans came back with a pride in their contribution to the defeat of Nazi power. The 69th. Regiment had its heroes, and its march became a popular military tune. If their casualties were relatively low - only 368 dead in World War II -, they had dutifully defended not only their island but a vital area for U.S. and hemisphere security and hard gone to other lands to fight a common enemy.

These troops were drafted according to laws passed by a Congress that for nearly half a century had been quite indifferent to Puerto Rican pleas for self-government. Many of the soldiers - and certainly many of the civilians who supported them - firmly believed that they were fighting a war for the freedoms mentioned in the Atlantic Charter which Roosevelt and

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( ) Ibid., 2, 117-139.

( ) Ibid., Tugwell, The Stricken Land, 670-671.

Winston Churchill had jointly signed. The third paragraph of the Charter stated: "They (the United States and Great Britain) respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." But as Tugwell pointedly observed: "Puerto Ricans thought this applied to them; but they tended to forget that it was a Roosevelt-Churchill declaration and not a congressional one." ( ) In the years ahead and in the stiff battles to be waged for self-determination in Puerto Rico, the armed forces would think mostly of the interests involved in the U.S. new status as a superpower. The Navy, for instance, would for a time be adverse to an elective governor for Puerto Rico. To Secretary Frank Knox, the strategic imperative was all what Puerto Rico was really about. If the U.S. leaders were not thinking of a "Christian Rhoades," as the Spanish Navalists did in the Sixteenth Century, they were thinking in terms of a Caribbean Malta, in the American Mediterranean, as inheritors of the British Naval empire.

So, as the war ended, there was an inventory of problems and possibilities. The American military complex, now aiming at stategic globalism, would look upon Puerto Rico as one more key link in a long chain. The Congress, dominated in no small measure by anti-New Deal forces, would regard Tugwell as a dangerous radical. The Administration would be torn by the desire

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( ) Ibid., infra, 595.

to improve the colonial relationship and its distrust of too high a dose of autonomy. It had a well-meaning new President in Harry S. Truman who needed time to control things. And in Puerto Rico, two crucial events took place: the readjustments to a peace economy and the renewed independentist drive for fulfilling the war promises of self-determination.

Regarding readjustment, as Tugwell wrote in his 1946 report, "the end of the war did not catch Puerto Rico napping." "A marked advance in industrialization was initiated in 1945-46 as the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company began operation of a paper board and a glass container factory, started the construction of a heavy ceramic plant, and a shoe factory, and began a cotton textile mill. ( ) This modest post-war development program, however, would lead Puerto Rico into the industrial era. Tugwell's pet project at this time was the Puerto Rico Agricultural Company, which was, however, to founder badly. The Land Authority, on the other hand, could claim highly successful operations. Their Cambalache Sugar Mill paid the highest wage rate in the sugar industry and their proportional profit farms - understood as one of the keys to agrarian reform - showed a net profit of over $191,000.00. Furthermore, nearly 15,650 cuerdas or acres were distributed as homestead plots to agregados and 25 new rural communities were established. ( ) What was also important: General Fund revenue receipts increased from over $37.5 millions in 1941-42

( ) Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto, Honorable Rexford G. Tugwell (San Juan, 1947), I.

( ) Ibid., 80.

to $82.2 million in 1945-46. ( ) Puerto Rico was certainly moving into a faster pace and the new emphasis on distributive justice was showing results.

For Tugwell, 1945 marked the approaching end of his role. He had felt the satisfaction of seeing a great outpouring of support for the PDP and its program which he, as governor, had tried to beef up with administrative know-how. His advice for the post-war years was for the island to enlarge its sources of income, to promote productive interprises even if it meant making hard choices with respect to increasing social services. But his mind now turned to status, in a search for a new relatinship which would avoid the old dichotomy of statehood vs. independence. "The sacrifices inherent in complete separation - he said in his legislative message of February 13, 1945 - seem to me to exclude that as a solution; statehood would involve a very long and distressing struggle; some formula for association as a more completely self-governing people within the framework of the United States seems to me one which would be agreable to both Puerto Ricans and members of the States. It is possible to find a union in which Puerto Ricans can keep the citizenship and much of the economic relationship they have had now for three decades, and in which their right to self-government will be recognized."( ) He strongly felt the times were propitious, since the national administration was committed to the utmost freedom for all-peoples, consistent with permanent peace in the world, and he referred specifically to the Atlantic Charter. "It is time,

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( ) Ibid., 80.

( ) "Message to the Sixteenth Legislature. First Regular Session," Puerto Rican Public Papers....., 264.

past time, for Puerto Ricans to choose the form of government under which they desire to live...." he said. It would be unfair to propose a plebiscite not authorized or defined by Congres. Fairness to everyone required that the Congress offer the choices it was willing to accept rather than to require that Puerto Ricans should petition for status with the risk of rejection.

The problem that Tugwell posed in this message was the crucial issue regarding a status for the rest of the century. When the U.S. embarked on its imperialistic venture of 1898 and took Puerto Rico, the tutorial role assumed was framed without the context of an international new policy. Congress willingly accepted this view and decreed a status not too dissimilar from the British Royal Crown colony model, and then congressional interest went into a period of "benign neglect." Galvanized by the coming thunder of World War I, Congress was willing to grant citizenship and while make some adjustments, ~~but~~ retaining basic control of the island's destiny. And then, again it went into another era of Lethargy and indifference. The Second World War brought to the fore the strategic imperative and the cry for self-determination. But was Congress to be bound by the Atlantic Charter or by the principle of congressional supremacy over territories and dependent areas with its old linkages to Nineteenth Century expansionism? Was Congress with its innate conservatism and its jealous regard for its constitutional prerrogatives be willing to accept that Puerto Rico as any other dependent people under

the U.S. trust, had inalienable rights above and beyond the dictates of a constitutional provision? ~~That was~~ Those were the questions.

Tugwell thought that Puerto Rico could not be abstracted from the hazards of the nation and the world. He had developed enough insight to realize that the old tutorial role had come to an end. For what his experience showed was that an appointed governor whose source of power was Washington could not function anymore unless he was subservient to a Puerto Rican legislative majority. He could not serve two masters at the same time, particularly if they happen to be at odds. Historically, the old tutorial scheme was collapsing, just at the time when King Sugar was also challenged by the thrust towards industrialization. In proposing a free association, based on common citizenship, Tugwell really was not breaking new ground. Stimson, Frankfurter, Towner, Roosevelt Jr., under different circumstances, had also come to the same conclusion. But Tugwell was emphasizing the new road within the context of the great historic drama of a war that would unleash in the post-war era all kinds of liberation movements and a profound change in the relationships of peoples all over the world.

The Piñero Appointment

By December, 1945, Tugwell announced his decision to resign. This opened the way for the Truman administration to review the possibility of (1) appointing a native Puerto Rican and (2) favoring an elective governor measure and a referendum on independence, statehood or dominion. The new Director of the Division of Territories, Edwin G. Arnold , prepared a list of possible nominees with Jesús T. Piñero as the first and best

choice. Piñero had been elected Resident Commissioner in 1944, was very close to Muñoz, knew the economic problems of the island and furthermore, was an affable, likeable man, modest in bearing, who got along fine with his congressional colleagues. With little effort, his winning ways had made him one of the "boys." Other candidates included a Puerto Rican general, Pedro del Valle, who had distinguished himself at Guadalcanal, Justice Cecil Snyder of the Puerto Rican Supreme Court, the perennial candidate Martín Travieso and José Gallardo, Gore's old choice. The list was not impressive.

Muñoz, naturally, preferred somebody closely associated with - or sympathetic to - the PDP. The Republican-Socialist coalition, on the other hand, favored del Valle, who at one time was interviewed by Truman. The idea that this marine general, who was completely out of touch with the island could actually step into Tugwell's boots, in the complex Puerto Rican situation, was politically preposterous. The PDP legislature reacted promptly. On February 21, 1946 a joint resolution and two bills were passed. The joint resolution recommended that a candidate with popular approval, or an elected representative or a cabinet member should be appointed if the governorship became vacant. The bills provided that, if this was not possible, the people should express their preference at a special election. Furthermore, another bill authorized a plebiscite. The people of Puerto Rico - Muñoz sardonically wrote - had also the right to make recommendations.

"We are interested in the democratic significance of a policy - he added. "We would rather have, if it came to that, a liberal Chinaman than a reactionary Puerto Rican." ( )

Tugwell had to veto both bills on constitutional grounds. This was a confrontation with Muñoz and the PDP which the governor much wanted to avoid. Secretary of Interior, Julius A. Krug, who had succeeded Ickes in February, 1946, was reluctant to suport Piñero in view of his close association with Muñoz. But the PDP legislature forced his hand. By a vote of 54 to 3, it recommended the appointment of Piñero. The implicit message was clear: a governor, not to the liking of the new reform forces dominating the island, would have all kinds of trouble. Krug wisely decided to overcome his scruples and avoid an unnecessary confrontation. So, upon Krug's recommendation, Truman announced Piñero's appointment on July 25, 1946, an appointment confirmed by the Senate, six days later. ( ) The Jones Act, of course, was legally in force, but the whole spirit in which the Act had been applied, was drastically changed. Piñero's appointment clearly demonstrated that new winds were blowing. It was not simply a stop gap measure, but the beginning of a real drive for the long, long overdue, elective governor.

But as Muñoz fought in Washington, bad judgment or misunderstanding, he had to brace himself for a much more difficult and heart-rending struggle in Puerto Rico. There was dissension in the party on the delicate, crucial question of ideology. The

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( ) For the events here described see, Bhana, op.cit., 94-97.

( ) Ibid., 97-98.

restlessness, long brewing, in the pro-independence wing came to the surface. In spite of all efforts to avoid it, the rent was deep, and finally it brought about the parting of the ways.

The Advent of the PIP

The PDP, since its beginnings, had had two wings: those who favored independence and those who favored autonomy or dominion status. The pro-independence wing, in turn, was made up of two groups. One was fervently convinced that independence was the ultimate status. They were willing to go along with Muñoz' removal of the status issue from the general elections, but would insist on a firm position in the days ahead. The other pro-independence group also believed in separation, but they were above all muñocistas: they had absolute faith in Muñoz' political instincts, in his deep sense of social justice as the overriding goal. They were willing to follow his leadership.

To orchestrate these divergent views required an utmost ability. Moving from victory to victory, with the increasing devotion of the masses, Muñoz was able to preserve unity, but by 1945-46, the crisis finally broke. A brief recapitulation is in order. During the war, Senator Tydings again introduced a bill on April 2, 1943, to give Puerto Rico its independence. It had less of the punitive nature of his 1936 bill, and gave the island twenty years to regulate its trade relations by a 5% yearly increase of the U.S. tariff. Secretary Ickes, on behalf of the Administration, opposed the bill. It was certainly coming, from the Administration's standpoint, at an inopportune time. The bill, however, led to the establishment

of a Puerto Rican Commission of status by the Legislature. ( )

In spite of little support for the measure, Tydings doggedly insisted in holding hearings, and asked for a report from the United States Tariff Commission with reference to the implications of independence. The bill got nowhere, and only showed that Tydings had not forgotten the events of 1936. But it stirred the independence groups in Puerto Rico, and the Tariff Commission Report had a profound influence at the time, on the search for viable formulas.

Throughout 1943, various pro-independence groups were actively promoting the idea of a general congress. Some were connected with the Nationalists and some were members of the PDP. Several members of the Legislature had actually sent messages to Tydings in support of the bill. In April, 1943, a General Independentist Assembly was held in San Juan which cabled Tydings urging economic amendments to make independence viable under the Atlantic Charter. ( ) Later in the year, in August, the First Pro-Independence Congress (CPI) was held, with the collaboration of several PDP members, including the Senate floor leader, Vicente Géigel Polance, the capable drafter fo many of the social measures adopted by the PDP. The Congress position was clear: it proclaimed Puerto Rico's right to independence, reaffirmed its friendship with the United States and asked recognition of Puerto Rico's independence by the Congress. ( )

( ) Ibid., 60-62.

( ) For the text see, Antonio Pacheco Padró, Puerto Rico: Nación y Estado, (San Juan, 1955), 24-25.

( ) Pagán, op. cit., III, 228-231.

With the 1944 victory, the CPI decided to put pressure on Muñoz and asked for a constitutional convention. Muñoz insisted that the party would hold a popular referendum at the latest when peace was achieved. But he declined to encourage the movement. When the CPI met for the second time in December, 1944, there was a new momentum. The leader now was Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, a staunch believer in independence, who had returned from the States and had been closer to Albizu. A new friends for the movement was found in Congressman Vito Marcantonio from New York, ready to introduce his own independence bill. To Muñoz, it was clear that the trend was toward the founding of another party, and he stated that he would certainly have no objection but asked that it be done in the open. At this stage, the Executive Committee of the Congress reaffirmed its non-partisan character; it did not want a break with Muñoz, but made evident that it would not follow this leadership. ( )

In January, 1945, Tydings once again introduced his bill. Again the Administration made clear its opposition and the need to explore all avenues. In the Interior Department, it was thought that both "quick statehood" or "quick independence" would be disastrous for the island, while Tugwell was espousing his idea of a special relationship. Muñoz' position, as stated in May, 1945, was that the Congress should offer several alternatives, with the economic guarantees spelled out.

( ) The Documents are found in Bothwell, op. cit., III, 419-427.

When a Puerto Rico Legislative Commission pressed Tydings on the matter, the Senator finally agreed and a new bill was drafted with the help of the Resident Commissioner, known as the Tydings-Piñero bill. ( ) Truman further suported the view, on a special message of October 16, 1945, that to the three formulas should be added the right of Puerto Rico to select its own governor with a larger measure of self-govenment; different alternatives should be offered to the islanders. ( ) While the Tydings-Piñero bill found no echo in the Congress, in Puerto Rico it precipitated the rift between Muñoz and the CPI. By September, a sharp polemic between Concepción de Gracia and Muñoz made the break complete.

By February, 1946, Muñoz accused the CPI of sabotaging the PDP program. He felt he had to call a spade a spade, and insisted that true populares should not be fooled. He actually defied the CPI to go before the voters rather than resort to infiltration tactics. He wanted - he said - an open democratic fight. Puerto Rico should solve its status problem within a realistic diagram. He still was unwilling to discard independence, but it was evident that his mind was moving away from this solution. A very substantial group of party leaders were ready to go along with him.

Concepción de Gracia and his friends took up the gauntlet. On October 27, 1946, the Congress dissolved and became the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño or PIP. Its goal was the attainment

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( ) Bhana, op.cit., 77-83.

( ) Bothwell, op.cit., III, 454.

of immediate sovereignty, but it was willing to enter the electoral struggle. Its first act, if successful, would be to approve a Joint Resolution demanding from the U.S. Government the independence of Puerto Rico and appointing a Commission to negotiate the terms. ( ) As distinct from the Nationalist Party, the PIP was opposed to revolutionary action. It entered the fray as a democratic party and while critical of U.S. colonialism it was not, like the Nationalists, a violent anti-American group. Its leaders came from the professions and the Puerto Rican middle class, with a sprinkling of labor activists. It drew strength from the intellectual circles, and demonstrated, from the beginning, a strong attachment to the rhetoric of constitutional liberty and national sovereignty.

So as the post-war world emerged, Puerto Rico had a native governor appointed by the President, an Administration promise to search for different formulas, a very divided and confused and conservative Congress to deal with, and a new party, with a well-defined pro-independence ideology. The events that followed in rapid succession were to be an unusual chapter in the relations between the island and the United States and were to put them in a new perspective.

Towards the Associated State: the elective governor

A crucial element in this changing picture was the PDP's shift in connection with the status question. The shift was connected with the economic realities of the period. Several of these economic realities were analyzed in the U.S. Tariff Commission Report,

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( ) Ibid., I, 661-666.

prepared at Senator Tydings' request. Some brief consideration should be given to this document because of its profound influence on Muñoz and the status controversy.

The report, prepared largely by the conomist Ben Dortman, dwelled on the present basis of the Puerto Rican economy, the economic provisions of the Tydings and Tydings-Piñero bills, and the prospects of economic betterment for the island through changes in the political status, including the requisites for economic development. With a careful, persuasive logic, it tried to justify the status-quo. It was dominated by a neo-Malthusian view; the real problem of PuertoRico, - it argued - was the growing size of its population. The 1943 Tydings Bill, by placing Puerto Rico outside the U.S. tariff system, gave little promise of promoting the island's economic welfare; the Tydings-Piñero Bill not only would seriously compromise the island's sovereignty by remaining practically as a U.S. dependency, but for the U.S., for granting free trade to Puerto Rico, would have to modify its reciprocal most favoured nation commitment with a large number of countries. Since the U.S. had failed to grant free trade to the Philippines, it was not to be expected that Congress would change the policy. With regard to dominion status, the Report acknowledged that the economic relationship would be more favorable, but it was immediately dismissed on the basis that it would not solve the basic economic problems of Puerto Rico. The implication of statehood were also considered. Puerto Rico would have to be treated as any other state, and, therefore, would no longer retain the customs collections; nor the Federal excise

taxes; nor its privileged position vis-a-vis the Federal income taxes. No additional benefits the island could reasonably expect to receive on becoming a state, would outweight the losses of present benefits.

To sum up, in the Commission's view, ~~it was practically a "no-exit" report.~~ There were no ready solutions, and even under the most favourable political circumstances, such economic progress as the island could achieve out of its own resources and on its own initiative was bound to be slow. "The immensity of the task - it dogmatically concluded -.....should not deter the island's leaders form shouldering it and continuing to make whatever progress is possible." "In this effort, Puerto Rico was entitled to the U.S. helping hand. The Report was, essentially, a "no-exit" document. Puerto Rico did not have a way out. It was the stricken island, as long as its population grew. Neo-Malthusian factors were blamed for what was the implicit aknowledgment of the limits of tutelage. There was little else that the U.S. could do and Puerto Rico was destined to a gloomy future, according to the iron logic of Dortman's dismal science. After nearly a half a century of dependency, this was the balance sheet.

The Commission Report and the experience regarding the Philippines made a deep imprint on Muñoz and his associates. What was clearly emerging was the lack of a congressional disposition to grant Puerto Rico any special concessions that would enable it to find a way out of its predicament, while affirming the principle

of self-government. The Commission Report was condemning Puerto Rico to the proposition that political colonialism was its only reality. This was completely unacceptable to Muñoz and the search began for an alternative.

Several years later on July 17, 1951, in one of his most revealing speeches, Muñoz acknowledged that his 1945-1946 experience with the Tydings-Piñero bill was decisive as a turning point in his thinking. A careful reading of the hearings on Philippine independence made obvious the crucial unwillingness of the United States to continue granting free trade to Puerto Rico under a separate status. The most-favoured nation policy loomed as an unsurmountable obstacle - the argument which the Tariff Report had stressed as decisive.

Upon his return to Puerto Rico, Muñoz decided to make his views known in a couple of articles, published on June 28-29 in El Mundo. He stated,then, his conviction that no more energies should be spent on solutionsto the status issue that were impossible for Puerto Rico, but that a creative effort should be made to find a formula that would not be an enemy to the solution of the difficult problems the island was facing, and would protect with dignity its right through an association with the American Union. After these articles, he met with the PDP's governing board. There was some insistence that pressure should be preserved on the older policy, but Muñoz was authorized to judge when the time had come to chart a new course of action. ( )

( ) "Muñoz Marín Recapitula Desarrollo del Pensamiento Político Sobre el Status," a speech at Barranquitas, July 17, 1951.

Parallel with the elaboration of Muñoz' views, Dr. Fernós-Isern made a statement to El Mundo on July 4, 1946. With cogent logic, he insisted that no democratic solution of the status problem could be achieved until Congress made an expression of Puerto Rico's right to its sovereignty and reach with Puerto Rico an agreement, a pact, a voluntary association where bilaterally the terms would be defined. He further proposed that, at the request of Congress, the people of Puerto Rico should adopt a democratic constitution which would contain the basic economic and political terms of association, leaving an open road to the future. When Piñero assumed his duties as governor in September, 1946, Dr. Fernós succeeded him as Resident Commissioner. The PDP had now a man of unusual ability, and political acumen in Washington. ( )

Behind these expressions of political reorientation, there was a socio-economic purpose: the drive for industrialization and the need of the U.S. market. It was not only that the status controversy had seemed to reach a dead-end; what had become obvious was that the King Sugar era was dying away. Puerto Rico needed a new developmental model that could created more and better paid jobs, promote social mobility and expand the business and entreprenurial base of the economy. For while Muñoz and Fernós were designing new sophisticated diagrams to deal with what looked as insoluble problems, a shift was taken place in the economic promotion program. The thrust was towards the lure of industrial capitalism as a trunaround in the island's economy.

( ) Antonio Fernós Isern, Estado Libre Asociado: Antecedentes, Creación y Desarrollo Hasta la Epoca Presente (Barcelona, 1974), 66-

Operation Commonwealth and Operation Bootstrap would be the pointers to the next quarter of a century, the point and counterpoint of Puerto Rican development.

1947 was the year of theelective governor's law, passed by Congress. It was also the year when developmental thought in Puerto Rico took another course. Both changes were influenced by one fact: Tugwell was no longer governor of Puerto Rico. In the Congress, it meant that violent opposition to his New Deal's views would subside; a climate of cooperation with Interior and the Puerto Rican leadership followed, preparing the way for the lective governorship. In Puerto Rico, the Development Company began charting a new course which was distateful to Tugwell: the offering of special inducements to rpivate capital and enterprise, in order to multiply industrial concerns and job opportunities. Taking a leaf from the Mississippi Industrial Commission, the Development Company, under Moscoso, had begun an advertising campaign in the United States; but a special lure to the industrialists was necessary. This was the tax-exemption device that was put into law in 1947. It was tax exemption from income taxes. Tax exemption plus free access to the American market plus the wage differential became clues to Puerto Rico's effort at industrialization. Under these conditions, rapid industrial development became eventually known as Operation Bootstrap. But the implication was obvious: the advantages could not occur neither under independence nor under statehood, given

the parameters described in the Dorfman report. ( )

Early in 1947, both Muñoz and Governor Piñero visited Washington. In their conferences with Interior officials and congressional leaders, it became evident that the most that Puerto Rico could get out of Congress was an elective governor bill. Interior was willing to push for the measure, with Fernós laying the groundwork in Congress. Senator William Lancer from North Dakota had introduced a pro-statehood bill, while Tydings, submitted once more his pet measure for independence, but both bills were opposed by the Administration. Instead, full support was given to the Butler-Crawford bills introduced in the Senate and House, respectively. A gradualist policy was stated: Puerto Rico would get self-government "little by little." This policy clearly did not satisfy Puerto Rican aspirations. To those who held to the old dichotomy, the bill meant undue delay, or "colonial reform." For the PDP leadership it was a step forward. With the governorship in Puerto Rican hands, new efforts could then be attempted.

In contrast with a half-century of congressional experience, the Butler-Crawford bills had relatively smooth sailing on the Hill. The bills rpovided for an elective governor who was empowered to appoint the members of his cabinet. Congressional conservatism and distrust of Puerto Rican ability to deal with its finances, was evident in the retention of the Auditor as a pre-

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( ) David F. Ross, The Long Uphill Path (San Juan, 1966), 77-105.

sidential appointee; and Senator Robert A. Taft at the last minute, forced an amendment for the Supreme Court judges to remain also as federal appointees. The strategic imperative remained unaffected, especially since the Navey reclaimed in 1947 an entire half of Vieques island, on the assumption that the whole eastern area of Puerto Rico would assume great strategic importance in the post-war area. ( )

In dealing with its territories, and with regard to the governorship the U.S. had adopted a policy of resident appointments which was not extended to Puerto Rico until Piñero was designated by Truman. Puerto Rico had characteristically lagged behind Hawaii where governors were required to have three years' redidence. But in permitting now an elective governor in the island, a change was made in the colonial pattern which added to the uniqueness of Puerto Rico within the American orbit.( ) It paved the way for the next step: the Commonwealth relationship.

As Puerto Rico readied to elect its first governor in over four centuries of history, it was obvious that the PDP was headed for another resownding victory. Its political platform this time stated a commitment to ask the Congress for a solution to the political status based on 1) the calling of a constitutional convention to draft a constitution adequate to the

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( ) Fernós Isern, op.cit., 69-80; Bhana, op.cit., 100-103.

( ) Earl S. Pomerny, "Flection of the Governor of Puerto Rico," The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly (March, 1943), Vol. XXIII, No. 4, 355-360.

democratic administration of the public interest and 2) an authorization for the Legislative Assembly to ask for a plebiscite whenever the time was appropriate, to determine whether Puerto Rico should constitute itself as an independent republic, or petition to become a state and 3) an expression of Congressional willingness to act in accordance with the Puerto Rican determination. The PDP was facing a coalition committed to statehood, as well as the PIP, with its clear-cut preference for independence.

The PDP swept the country with Muñoz as its gubernatorial candidate. The PDP obtained 393,386 to 182,977 for the pro-statehood coalition and 65,351 for the PIP. ( ) But it was not merely status that persuaded the voters, but the dynamic social and economic program that the PDP had put into action and which was creating a broad political consensus across the island, including the erstwhile pro-Republican San Juan area.

The elective governorship was, legally, an amendment to the Jones Act. It was a creature of the congressional will, an unilateral concession which Congress could theoretically withdraw if it was not satisfied with Puerto Rico's future political behaviour. In that sense, it was still a colonialist vestige. But in practice, it signified a profound change in the way Puerto Rico was governed. The island's governors had been responsible to the President or had worked with instructions from the Washington bureaus.

( ) Fernós, op.cit., 93-94.

Their source of power was not the people. They had had, however, to accomodate their policies to the pressures of the Puerto Rico legislative assemblies which, particularly in the area of appointments, did not prove to be obedient tools of the imported executive. But the governors were the visible symbols of American tutelage.

All of this changed with the first Muñoz governorship. From the very first days, he made clear that this mandate came from the people, not Washington. He used to the full his powers of appointment to make government responsive to the PDP program which had been strongly supported at the polls. He appointed Géigel Polanco as Attorney General, emphasizing the ties with the Puerto Rican Legislature, while two of his closest associates, Ernesto Ramos Antonini and Samuel R. Quiñones, were respectively elected Speaker of the House and President of the Senate. Close collaboration would supersede the traditional historical adversary relationship.

Furthermore, the Governor autonomous power of decision was manifested in the appointment of a respected educator, Mariano Villaronga, as Commisssioner of Education. Villaronga stood for teaching in the vernacular Spanish, with English emphasized as a second language. He had been nominated for the post by Piñero, but Congress had failed to confirm him. Controversy over the language policy had been a crucial issue in US-Puerto Rican relations, second only to the status question. In the last days of the Tugwell governorship, the PDP legislature had approved a law providing for the teaching of Spanish as the vernacular and English as a second language, but Tugwell had vetoed it. The elective governor law had implicitly decided the impasse, by giving the governor the right to

appoint the Commissioner of Education and therefore, leaving to Puerto Rico the determination of the language policy to be followed in the schools. This was an important gain for self-government in a very sensitive area, involving cultural values and feelings.

Since the governorship had been the visible symbol of American predominance, Muñoz endeavored after 1949 to make it a symbol of Puerto Rican popular democracy. He used it not only as the executive arm to carry out the party's program, but as a springboard for new ideas, as a political pulpit for his teachings. The governor's messages from now on dealt not only with recommendations for legislative action, but came to unfold principles and objectives of democracy's role in Puerto Rican development. They expressed Muñoz' public philosophy, and the aims and purposes of the movement he had founded.

If Muñoz' economic objective was what he called "the Battle of Production", he was also concerned with establishing clear priorities between investment and social service. Though willing to promote private enterprise to increase production and multiply jobs, he was not preaching a laissez-faire philosophy, but rather the need of abolishing as soon as possible extreme poverty and social insecurity. In 1950, he dreamed of greatly decreasing unemployment by 1960, of eliminating the adverse balance of trade, and reducing economic dependence on federal expenditures. He was encouraged by the fact that between 1940 and 1950, the labor force had increased from 624 thousands to 786 thousands, and that unemployment had been reduced form 18% to 13%. He was especially

that already per capita income in Puerto Rico in 1950 was higher than most New World countries, with the exception of the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela.( )

Muñoz' proyections were highly optimistic. They stood in sharp contrast with the gloomy determinism of the Dorfman Report. Puerto Rico was entering into a take-off stage which most of the American tutors had not anticipated. This island was moving away both from the monoculture of the King Sugar era and from the ever domination of American political tutelage. There was a correlation between the extension of greater self-government to Puerto Rico and the new spirit bent on overcoming the heritage of adversity. Some of Muñoz' rosy proyections would be realized; others would fall by the Wayside. But for those engaged in the developmental effort, those were exciting years, when everything seemed possible.

There was an inherent contradiction in this public philosophy which was not just typical of Puerto Rico, although the island was a forerunnery of this issue in the developing world. The contradiction was between the values of the acquisitive society which rapid industrialization would bring about and the ideal of the "good life" that Muñoz' was preaching. The "good life", in his view, could never be the mere multiplication of gadgets, induced by consumerism, but rather what he called "the creative ideal of abolishing extreme poverty and enriching freedom and personal security." ( ) In overcoming the heritage of

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( ) See for an analysis, "Mensaje II", in Luis Muñoz Marín, Mensajes al Pueblo Puertorriqueño (San Juan, 1980), 30-54.

( ) Mensaje "I", Ibid., 9.

adversity, he firmly believed that the people would hold fast to a value system, to a life-style, that would enhance compassion, solidarity, a sense of collective worth, a feeling of belonging, to what he called "la patria-pueblo" - the people - fatherland - as distinct from the fatherland as an abstraction. He strongly believed that creative diversity enriched the world, and that this creativity could lead to an understanding between Puerto Rico and the United States, in a way that would be revolutionary in our times.

The era that was ushering in Puerto Rico would certainly go a long way in achieving some of the economic objectives and even surpassing them. It would do much in reducing extreme poverty and in providing vertical social mobility. Institutions would be created - as the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture - devolted to affirming the heritage of la patria-pueblo. Muñoz himself would have the opportunity of going beyond this Operation Bottstrap and Operation Commonwealth to define the ideal world of Operation Serenity. But the thrust of the acquisitive society that industrialism was fathering would be too strong for the deeply humanistic values that the PDP's public philosophy espoused. When these values weakened, the developmental model would run into trouble, giving rise to a new period of perplexity, polarization and confusion. But in 1950, there was in Puerto Rico a visible momentum, - the status, the economy, the society were in a state of flux.

The move towards a third political solution finally took definite shape. The old notion that Puerto Rico could evolve into something resembling a dominion status began to influence

PDP thinking led by Muñoz and Ferno's Isern. The resounding electoral victory gave this trend an unequivocal authority in dealing with Washington. Their ideas were gradually interwined: 1) that Puerto Rico should determine the shape of its internal government by framing and adopting a Constitution, republican in form and compatible with the U.S. Constitution; that the relationships between Puerto Rico and the Federal Government as distinct from local matters, should basically continue under a statute regulating them; and that this process should involve agreement by Puerto Rico and the Congress, the people expressing their endorsement in a referendum and Congress recognizing the principle of government by consent in the needed statutory enactments.

A complex series of moves followed: the first stage, from March to July, 1950, involved initial congressional action; the second stage, from August, 1950 to February, 195 , covered the Puerto Rican response: the debate, the referendum and the constitutional convention; the third stage, from April to July, 1952 again involved the Congress, and the resulting legislation was at last signed by the President on July 3, 1952. The final stage, took place in Puerto Rico: the Constitutional Convention adopted the terms set forth by the Congress on July 9, 1952 and on July 25, 1952, the new status - the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico - was officially proclaimed in a solemn ceremony, attended by visitors from the United States and the Hemisphere.

During this period, there was intense debate in Puerto Rico and much questioning in the Congress concerning the meaning and scope of the new relationship. The complexity of the move was

such that, in retrospect, it is surprising that it took really so short a time to bring about the change. Certain factors obviously helpped the new legislation: there was congressional realization that the United States had to comply with the decolonization precepts involved in the United Nations Charter. There was a thoroughly sympathetic administration led by President Truman; and there was great respect for Muñoz as a political leader and for the wise ways in which Fernós handled himself in Congress. Furthermore, a bipartisan spirit dominated the Congressional discussions. Even so, the establishment of commonwealth fell considerably short of the dominion model, and there were areas which would not adequately defined or were later open to diverse and critical interpretations. It was a significant step forward, but it did not put the status controversy to rest.

To go into the manifold aspects of this political and constitutional process is beyond the scope of this essay. Some of the main highlights, however, ought to be emphasized. The new relationship was proposed by the Puerto Rican leadership, bearing in mind the innate political conservatism of the Congress. In contrast with previous legislation which bore clearly a Washington imprint, the drafts were framed originally by the Puerto Ricans themselves. In a "Brief Personal Statement on how I see the Political Status Issue", delivered to U.S. officials at the end of 1949, Muñoz insisted Puerto Rico was seeking "a new kind of statehood" of interest to the United States and the Hemisphere.

It was growing in attitude, not as a theory, but rather in the way of a political mutation, "more like phonetics develop than like Esperanto is constructed". The process should soon become the object of deliberate policy. The people should be enabled to draft a constitution, subject to final Congressional approval. To perfect the democratic relationship, provision should be made for Puerto Rican consent. Puerto Rico would continue to be exempted from U.S. tax laws, but Muñoz hoped that in a number of years productivity would increase to the extent that Puerto Rico could pay federal taxes without basic harm to the population. At that time there could be no objection to the island becomeing a federated state. But Muñoz felt that even then, it should be weighted whether it was the desirable thing to do, for maintaining this new political mutation would serve the great mutual interest of the United States and the rest of the Hemisphere. And he ended with the key concept which he was to repeat time and again: "The mutation may be worth preserving as a model for a world federating more and more dissimilar cultures into less and less great fraternal units." ( )

On February 27, 1950, Muñoz arrived in Washington and met with President Truman, Interior officials and Congressional leaders. A draft of the proposed legislation was sent to Senators O'Mahoney and Butler; and before the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Muñoz presented his views. On March 13, 1950,

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( ) The statement is found in NA/RG 126/OT/DT, 9-6-8, Box 862, Part VI.

Ferno's introduced the constitution bill (H.R. 7674) in the House. The bill recognized the principle of government by consent, stating that the proposed Act would be "adopted in the nature of a compact so that the people of Puerto Rico may organize a government pursuant to a constitution of their own adoption." ( )

The Administrative wheels were turned to provide support. In the Congress, the bill was subject to careful scrutiny. Fernos' insistence on the "compact" idea was accepted by Stewart French, legal aide to the Senators. A precedent was found in the Enabling Act of the Northwestern Territory; its roots, therefore, went deep into U.S. constitutional development. When hearings were held by the House Public Lands Committee, an impressive battery of administrative representatives pressed for passage. Edward G. Miller, Jr. of the State Department endorsed the bill by putting it within a wider context. In view of the importance of "colonialism" and "imperialism" in anti-American propaganda, the Department felt that H.R. 7674 "would have great value as a symbol of the basic freedom enjoyed by Puerto Rico, within the larger framework of the United States of America." ( ) As in 1916-1917, action on Puerto Rican status was related to U.S. international commitments and to its role in the New World.

The bill was naturally opposed by those who preferred statehood or independence. The Republicans wanted to be sure that the bill did not preclude the road to statehood or independence. Concepción de Gracia, particularly, objected strongly to any constitution subject to Congressional amendment or suspension as violating Puerto Rican inherent rights to sovereignty. In the House, Marcan-

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( ) Documents on the Constitutional History of Puerto Rico.., 153.

( ) Bhana, op.cit., 127.

tonio called the bill a "snare" and a "delusion," only by granting sovereign rights would the island's problems be solved. But the Congres felt that in providing for a referendum, the measure would offer Puerto Ricans an opportunity of accepting or rejecting the Act. There was a feeling that the bill was in conformity with the principle of extending self-government as embodied in the U.N. Charter. Between May and June, strong bipartisan support developed. By July 1, 1950, the bill had passed both houses and on July 3, 1950, Truman signed Public Law 600, setting the wheels in motion for the Puerto Rican constitutional phase. ( )

In August, the Puerto Rican Legislative Assembly approved a law providing for the referendum in PL 600 on Jun 4, 1951, to be preceded by the registration of new voters early in November, 1950. The public debate bagan in earnest in October; but it was not going to be limited to verbal fireworks. This time the Nationalists were ready to strike and a brief, bloody interval ensued.

Albizu Campos, after having served his term in Atlanta and having refused to ask for pardon, had returned to Puerto Rico. More than ever did he now favor direct, revolutionary action in the face of the electoral path the PIP was following. As soon as he arrived in Puerto Rico, he made known his views that Muñoz had to be stopped. If his small band of Nationalalists, had played a low-key role during the years he had been in jail, they had moved throughout the hemisphere setting, building up considerable

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( ) Fernós, op.cit., 108-112.

sympathy for their cause in Latin America. The Cold War struggle had also helped their propaganda and many anti-American forces throughout the world led by the Communists, were willing to accept prima facie their claims that Puerto Rico was occupied by U.S. troops and ruled by U.S. puppets.

For Albizu the road to independence was no longer through the ballot box but through revolutionary action, spurred by resolute personal sacrifice. Stopping Muñoz was one phase; challenging U.S. power was the overall objective, in a dramatic way that would call the attention of the world. The Nationalists began a cache of arms throughout 1950. As the debate on PL 600 unfolded, and the new status seemed now in sight, they decided to strike. Following a prison break, they suddenly started revolutionary action in two inland towns - Jayuya and Utuado - that were ill-protected by the police. But their most dramatic push in Puerto Rico, involved a daring attack on the Governor's palace. With guns blazing, two cars moved down the narrow street in an effort to penetrate the palace. They nearly succeeded. From behind the thick walls of the old building, a handful of defenders fired on the leading car which was stopped dead in its tracks. Five Nationalists were killed and two policemen wounded. The attack was repulsed, and the Governor's life was spared. Orders immediately went to the National Guard to retake the two towns, which was done with machine guns, bazookas and tanks.

The uprising was soon quelled, as a series of arrests took place throughout Puerto Rico in what at times was a panicky operation. Thirty-three persons were killed, and Albizu was taken to jail, after his house was besieged by the police. ( )

Puerto Rico had barely begun to catch its breath after this brief, violent, upheaval, when other news stunned the country. Two Puerto Rican Nationalists, Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola, now took upon their hands the task of dramatizing the revolt before world opinion by an assault on Blair House, where Truman was residing while the White House underwent repairs. They engaged in an exchange of shots with the police but failed to penetrate the building. Both Collazo and one of the policemen were killed, but Torresola was only wounded and survived. Coming right after the Nationalist revolt, the attack on the President received world attention, and few people later remembered that Muñoz had been the first target.

The Nationalists failed, however in their local objectives. They did not stop Muñoz, they got no revolutionary help from the <u>independentists</u> sectors, they did not prevent massive registration for the referendum, and actually inspired a great surge of sympathy and support for the Governor. But internationally, they succeeded in giving the impression in many places that theirs had been a popular revolt. The Cuban House of Representatives, for instance, cabled Truman lamenting events in Puerto Rico and requesting his intervention to prevent bloodshed and safeguard Albizu's life, and they proposed to send a commission to investigate, a step Muñoz strongly refused to accept, even though pressed at

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( ) Artken, Jr, <u>op.cit.</u>, 188-189.

first by the State Department. ( )

Deeply concerned about the effects of the Blair House attack, on American opinion, Muñoz wired Truman his condemnation of what he called the "bastardly attempt....against your person." He assured the President that the Nationalists had failed both in their primary objectives and in affecting the bonds of friendship, association and mutual trust between Puerto Rico and the United States. Truman replied in the same vein: "I am sure - he cabled back - that the American public understands the irrational and insignificant background of the disorders and does not in the least hold the Puerto Rican Government or people responsible for them..." ( )

After this short, bloody flare up, the status debate continued its course. The vote on PL 600 demonstrated again the PDP strong popular following. There were 387,016 votes in favor; 119,169 against. The solid political consensus that PDP represented carried the day. Again, in August, 1951, the PDP elected seventy delegates to the convention, with the statehooders represented by twenty-two, an active minority group which included their new upcoming leader, the industrialist Luis A. Ferré.

The Convention met from September 17, 1951 to February 6, 1952, under the chairmanship of Fernós-Isern. Long and searching debates took place in a responsible atmosphere. A group of leading constitutional scholars were asked to give their advice and constitutional precedents were carefully studied. The result was a very progressive document which received wide praise from several quarters. Crucial to its meaning, were the assertion

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( ) See the communications in NA/RG 48/D1/off. of Secretary, 9-8-2, Box 3696 Part VIII.
( ) NA/RG 48/D1/ off. Sec., 9-8-2, Box 3696, Part VIII.

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of Puerto Rico's ~~national~~ rights and the commitments to the democratic system and human rights, as well as the loyalty to the principles of the Federal Constitution and the idea of compact. The Constitution created the Associated Free State (in Spanish, Estado Libre Asociado), later translated as Commonwealth in order to allay fears that Puerto Rico was asking for statehood. In many ways, in later years, this duality of terms was going to create ambiguity and misunderstanding.

A final Resolution of the Constitutional Convention adopted on February 4, 1952, asked the Governor to submit the constitution it to the people in another referendum. It insisted that, with its adoption, the goal of complete self-government was attained and that the "last vestiges of colonialism" had disappeared in the principle of compact. But the Convention did not close the door to other options, leaving open the possibility that Puerto Rico could develop in other ways "by modifications of the Compact through mutual consent" and reserving the right of the people of Puerto Rico to propone and accept modifications in terms of its relations with the United States. Underneath the pride expressed by the Convention, there was a feeling that the status proclaimed could grow in different directions, that it was not really the end framework of relationships.
of the street. ( )

Again the people went to the polls, and again they voted on March 3, 1952 in favor of the process by giving the Constitution 373,594 votes to 82,877. Delivered to Truman early in April, it was transmitted by the President to Congress on April 22, 1952.

( ) See the Resolution 23 in, Documents on the Constitutional History of Puerto Rico, 166-167.

with the applicable provisions of the US Constitution, with the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act and with PL 600, "adopted in the nature of a compact." It was a brilliant, shrewd maneuver to do away with the dangerous monkey wrench thrawn in the complex situation. The Joint Resolution finally passed as Public Law 447 on July 7, 1952. A few days later, the Constitutional convention accepted the Congressional amendments, on the understanding that the people would vote on them at the general election. And finally, the climax was reached when on July 25, 1952, fifty-six years after Miles' landing, the Commonwealth was proclaimed and Muñoz raised officially and symbolically the Puerto Rican flag side by side with the American, at the old fortress of El Morro. In a gesture of good will towards the Puerto Rican people, Truman, on that date, commuted the death sentence on Collazo to a life sentence. ( )

The establishment of the commonwealth relationship, the Associated Free Stae or ELA, was a product of a hurdle race won in Congres, and sanctioned in Puerto Rico by a solid expression of the voters' will. It pointed to new ways and possibilities, but it left crucial questions hanging in the air. From the PDP's viewpoint, PL 600, adopted "in the nature of a compact," could not mean anything less than a "compact," and agreement between the Puerto Rican people and the Congress, subject to the principle of mutual consent. It could not be revoked unilaterally, which, undressed of legal technicalities, meant in plain English that limitations had been placed on the full authority arrogated by Congress, under the Treaty of Paris, to legislate for Puerto Rico. The Constitution, the compact and the principle of government by the consent of the governed did away according to this view, with the

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( ) Bhana, op.cit.

typical colonial relation, as with the concept of "possession." The result was a new form of federal relationship: an association with a union of states, endowed with a capacity for change and growth. The PDP insisted that this association was "permanent": for while the terms of the specific relationships could vary at any given time (Puerto Ricans could, for instance make in the future a contribution to the federal treasury or participate more directly in the framing of commercial treaties affecting them) ~~to the Federal treasury~~; the link of a common citizenship would maintain Puerto Rico within the American political system. It would be the "permanent bond" that Stimson once talked about.

In the process, Puerto Rico would retain its distinct personality, its historical identity in the West Indies, its cultural ties with the Spanish and Spanish-American speaking world. It would not be lost or assimilated within the broad, powerful current of American life; but thrive on its diversity while ~~keeping~~ helping the cause of hemisphere understanding. In Muñoz' graphic expression, it would be the olive in the Martini.

At the time of the creation of the Commonwealth, there was a strong popular consensus in Puerto Rico in support of this interpretation, and there were, no doubt, many sectors in the United States who looked with great favor on what was obvious a creative, positive way out of a most difficult dilemma. There was great hope and expectation based on a fact, quite visible in Puerto Rico: the island was moving forward, with a bettering of the living standards and an increasingly good track record in democratic government and public service.

But there were also many doubters. The proponents of statehood would either reject the relationship or look upon it as a

mere mid-way station to political assimilation. The advocates of independence considered it as a deceptive colonial status: nothing but actual separation would satisfy them. Even friendly supporters of Commonwealth, felt that Congress had been too politically conservative or believed that the consent given by the people of Puerto Rico had been too broad, too generic with regard to Congressional authority. In what was obvious the most thoughtful defense of Commonwealth, the great expert on federalism, Carl J. Friedrich, pointed out in 1959, as failures of the framework, among others, the lack of Puerto Rican participation in the process of federal legislation, and in foreign affairs and defense, as well as the failure to contribute to the federal treasury. With remarkable prescience, he wrote: "There may be some serious danger ahead, should the present party fall apart or be replaced by another as the island's outlook and viewpoint change." ( )

These were to be prophetic words, but in 1952, the outlook was rosy. After over half a century of a colonial tutelage which had mixed good intentions with self-righteousness, altruism with ethno-centric claims to moral superiority, the Puerto Ricans had achieved a break-through. They were not only electing one of their own as governor to head a centralized state, their other top officials were also no longer chosen in Washington while their judicial system was now to be run by Puerto Ricans - with the exception, of course, of the U.S. District Court - and furthermore, they would not have an American Auditor checking their public expenditures. Neither were they to endure any longer the ~~parole~~ parade of Commissioners of Education in bringing their imported philosophies

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( ) Carl J. Friedrich, Puerto Rico: Middle Road to Freedom: Fundamental (Cambridge, 1959, 41.

into the system. And the powers that the commonwealth government had in dealing with local matters, stemmed out of a constitution, framed and devised in Puerto Rico itself and not in congressional halls.

Future generations would have trouble in understanding the profoundly psychological change that took place in 1952 as Puerto Rico regained with their constitution the right to have their anthem and flag. It was a great emotional experience when Muñoz raised symbolically the Puerto Rican flag in El Morro; a sight that would have brought ulcers to the likes of Henry, Mont Reily, and Judge Hamilton; but would have been hailed by Caroll, Stimson, and Roosevelt, Jr.

Considerable attention began to be paid internationally to what was happening in Puerto Rico. The island had become a haven from many democratic exiles from totalitarian governments in Latin America and Spain. Already in the late Forties, distinguished Spanish intellectuals as the poets Pedro Salinas and Juan Ramón Jiménez (later a Noble Prize winner) had made Puerto Rico their home. To them, was added the world renowned cellist and freedom lover, Pablo Casals, whose presence made posssilbe the creation of the Casals' Festival, a yearly event in classical music. The University of Puerto Rico offered also its academic hospitality to outstanding professors of Latin America who had to leave their countries: Risieri Frondizi of Argentina, Mariano Picón Salas of Venezuela, and Luis Alberto Sánchez of Perú, among others. And likewise in the Fifties, one of the architects of the democratic revival in the Caribbean, Rómulo Betancourt, exiled himself in Puerto Rico and developed a lifelong fraternal friendship with

Muñoz Marín. Visited by men like President José Figueres of Costa Rica and Alberto Lleras Camargo of Colombia, Puerto Rico became a hub of what later was called the Latin American "democratic left": a loose movement of parties committed to social and economic change, profoundly averse to totalitarian governments, and critical of U.S. policies in support of the prevailing dictatorships in Santo Domingo, Venezuela, and Argentina. A host of U.S. public figures in sympathy with this trend, also visited the island, among them, Roger Baldwin, Norman Thomas, Francis Grant, Archibald Mc Leish, Adolf Berli, as well as academic professors, such as John Galbraith, Sidney Mintz, Julian Steward, Daniel Boorstin, Henry Wells, and many others. A considerable literature in the Social Sciences sprang with a new vision of Puerto Rico as a land, best by difficult problems, but no longer condemned to a gloomy future of poverty and despair.

If in 1940-1945, Puerto Rico had played the role of a Caribbean Malta, from 1952 onwards, it was affirming a role as a bastion of democratic thought and action in the Caribbean. Many groups througout the area and in Latin America were naturally in sympathy with the independence movement; but there were others that admired the way in which Muñoz and his associates were transforming a heritage of poverty and want while progressively achieving more powers of government vis-a-vis the most powerful nation in the world. This role was to be enhanced during the Fifties as shall be later explained. But first, it gained international attention at the United Nations.

The colonial question had been a cause of much concern and debate at the U.N., since its inception. The promise made with regard to self-government in the Atlantic Charter, later reaffirmed in the Declaration adopted by the U.N., appealed as a principle applicable to both the peoples under colonial rule and the metropolitan powers. Under Article 73 of the Charter approved at San Francisco in 1945, a general obligation was stated regarding the member states which administered non-self governing territories - an euphemism for colonial establishments. The general obligations recognized the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories were paramount and included their political, social, economic and educational advancement. Article 73 (2) obligated the member states not only to develop "self-government" but also "to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions". The San Francisco Conference did not define precisely the term "non-self governing territories," nor specified criteria for determining when a territory is, or ceases to be, "non-self government. " ( ) This lack of definition posed later very difficult problems which affected the international status of Puerto Rico under the UN charter.

The UN General Assembly created in 1947 the Committee on Information from Non-Self Governing Territories, usually referred to as the Committee on Information, to examine the information transmitted by the Metropolitan powers and submit reports to the

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( ) Emil J. Sady, The United Nations and Dependent Peoples (Washington, D.C., 1956) is a useful book on the subject.

General Assembly with recommendations, including the examination of the factors to be taken into account in determining whether a territory was non-self governing. This Committee became, historically, the watchdog of the commitments made under the Charter and was composed by 1952 of an equal number of administering and non-administering members elected by the UN Fourth Committee. It was the Committee on Information that examined the U.S. reports on its dependencies, including Puerto Rico.

With the achievement of the Commonwealth relationship, the Puerto Riçan Government felt that the U.S. should cease communicating to the UN information about the island, in view of the change in status. Dr. Fernós with Muñoz's support proposed that the U.S. should discontinue reporting. A draft letter prepared for the President encountered, however, some unexpected objection in view of Muñoz' insistence that Puerto Rico should no longer be referred to as a "territory", as well as legal reluctance in Washington to the implications of the compact. It took strong pressure from the Governor to overcome this resistance and finally an agreement was reached on the communication the Governor would send to Truman, as well as on the President's memorandum accompanying this document. Muñoz' letter stated quite clearly the compact theory as "the precise formula that the people, through their elected representatives had requested." The laws enacted by the Commonwealth Government pursuant to the compact, it said, "cannot be repealed or modified by external authority...." The President's memorandum dwelt at great length on Puerto Rican political development , and pointed out that Puerto Rico had entered into a "voluntary association with the United States, on the basis of "mutual consent" and that Puerto Rico had attained a

"full measure of self-government." These documents were to be the laws of the forthcoming debates at the U.N. ( )

To explain formally the Puerto Rican position, Dr. Fernós was appointed as a member of the U.S. delegation. But the governor felt that informal approaches should be made to foreign delegations at the U.N., especially with regard to sympathetic Latin American delegations, and the opportunity should be fully utilized to explain to the developing world Puerto Rico's hard road to self-government and social and economic development. Furthermore, that invitations should be extended to any UN member who wished to see for himself the Puerto Rican realities. To this effect an ad hoc group was appointed to develop close contacts and hold conversations with UN delegates. The group included the Speaker Ernesto Ramos-Antonini, Secretary of Justice, José Trías Monge, and the Under Secretary of State, Arturo Morales-Carrión. From time to time other officials participated in these efforts, including Senator Víctor Guriérrez-Franqui, Secretary of the Treasury, Sol L. Descartes, and public relations specialist, Rafael Torres-Mazzorama.

A systematic round of informal meetings took place and visits of UN members to Puerto Rico were arranged including those of delegates from Israel, Uruguay, and Ecuador. President-elect Figueres, who was on a tour of Latin America, lent a halping hand after having been provided with a memorandum. Eventually, a strong core of Latin American governments, not only participated in the debates but actually sponsored a resolution asking for cessation of information. This group included Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú, Costa Rica, Panamá and Chile and was representative of se-

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( ) Bhana, op.cit., 171-174.

veral of the democratic governments in the area.

While the pro-Commonwealth group was active, the PIP and the Nationalists also approached other member and brought the case for independence to their attention. Although they could not obtain a formal hearing, they discussed the Puerto Rican case with several delegations and circulated abundant material. Delegations from Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indionesia and Mexico were particularly receptive to their viewpoints.

A procedural matter almost defeated the resolution on Puerto Rico, sponsored by the Seven Latin American nations, when it came to the General Assembly. A clause was added to the effect that the General Assembly was competent to decide whether a Non-Self Governing Territory had or had not attained a full measure of self-government. A number of administering powers and other states which favored the resolution decided to abstain. Finally the Assembly adopted the Latin American resolution, by a vote of 26 to 16 with 18 abstentions. The vote came after hearing the U.S. delegate read a message from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to the effect that if at any time the insular legislature requested "more complete and even absolute independence" the President would recommend that Congress grant it. The U.N. Resolution asserted, therefore, the competence of the General Assembly to decide whether a territory is self-governing or not; recognized that Puerto Rico had achieved a new constitutional status, had established with the U.S. a mutually agreed association and had become an autonomous political entity. In favoring cessation of information, it added a significant clause: the Assembly expressed the assurance that due regard would be paid to the will of both the Puerto Rican and the American peoples in the event

either of the parties might desire any change in the terms of the association. ( ) This clause, drafted by the Peruvian delegate, Víctor A. Belaúnde, was included to bring Latin American support and protect the right of Puerto Rico to further developments in its status. The Commonwealth, - the Peruvian delegate affirmed in the debate - has "the momentum of freedom." ( )

The UN Resolution was, no doubt, a victory for the Puerto Rican government interpretation of the new status. Since Muñoz as elected Governor was not the U.S. Government administrator in Puerto Rico, it was clear that he did not have to report to Washington on the state of his administration in Puerto Rico. His duty was to report an annual message to the people who had elected him. A point was also scored when the American delegate Congresswoman , affirmed in the debate that Puerto Rico had a compact with the United States, and that mutual consent was necessary to make any changes. The fact that the resolution had been sponsored by seven Latin American nations, many of which were recognized democracies, strengthened the democratic role of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. But the resolution was adopted by an Assembly which was just beginning to include Third World Countries. Eventually, as their number grew, the concept of self-government was to be identified with independence and the basis of the Puerto Rican arrangement with the United States came to be questioned.

There was another event which would affirm Puerto Rican ties with the American Union. In June 1950, the United States became involved in what was technically called "a UN police action" in Korea, but was really a hot and bloody war in support of

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( ) Fernós, op.cit.,

( ) Personal information.

After reviewing the steps taken, Truman stated that with the document's approval "full authority and responsability for local self-government will be vested on the people of Puerto Rico...," and added "...No government can be invested with a higher dignity and greater worth than one based upon the principle of consent."

In Congress, the supporters of Public Law 600 promptly got to work to secure approval. In the House, some reservations were expressed with regard to Section 20 of the Constitution which recognized as Human rights the rights of every person to receive free elementary and secondary education and, to obtain work and an adequate standard of living. These provisions led to heavy attacks on the House floor. To some Congressmen, the Section smacked of "totalitarian government;" to others, it was a "socialistic bill of rights" dooming the islanders to economic destruction. In the Senate, this section also was seen with misgivings; questions were raised regarding the meaning of the compact with Senator O' Mahoney stating that Congress was reserving to itself, the sections of the Organic Act which were set forth on PL 600 as the Federal Relations Act; if the people of Puerto Rico "should step outside," the authorityof the Congress would not be impaired.

Two efforts to amend the proposed legislation sanctioning the process, suddenly revealed that there were opponents within Congress ready to upset the applecart. In the House, it was Congressman Meader from Michigan who introduced an amendment to the effect that Congress had not made an irrevocable delegation,

transfer or release of its powers under Article IV of the U.S. Constitution - The Territorial clause. But the House refused to go along with what would have been a very serious set back to the whole intent of the legislation, and as Congressman Fernández observed it would have broken faith with the people of Puerto Rico. Finally, the House voted for the Joint Resolution, approving the constitution.

In the Senate, the debate was even sharper, for one of the opponents was Senator Olin Johnston of South Carolina who believed that Puerto Rico was a "gigantic incubator of peoples who often do not understand American traditions and ideals," was dead set against Muñoz and believed that Section 20 implied that "socialism, or fascism unwanted by the great majority of Americans will have crawled in at our back door". Senator Johnston not only wanted to limit the governor's term to a one-four year period, but insisted that no amendment to the Constitution could be effective until approved by Congress. His interest, derived from what to many was a racist slur on the Puerto Ricans, was to assert clearly and distinctly congressional authority over the island. He succeeded in getting the amendment approved. Muñoz' reaction was predictable: he sent a cablegram to Washington insisting that the Johnston amendment would destroy "the whole spirit of the constitutional process." A negative reaction followed in the island. The whole process hung in the balance. Fortunately, when the amendment was considered in conference, wiser counsels prevailed in Congress. A substitute amendment, proposed by Ferno's, carried the day: Any amendment or revision of the Constitution would have to be

South Korea. Although the United States was not prepared for this action, the Truman Administration was ready to act in support of its "containment policy," designed to stop communist expansionism on a global scale.

The U.S. Army was short of troops and had to turn its National Guard regiments. On August 11, 1950, the 65th. Infantry Regiment of Puerto Rico was alerted and brought to full strength. On August 25, the troops left Puerto Rico under the command of Colonel William W. Harris, a West Pointer of St. Louis, Missuri, on board the USNS Marine Lynx and on september 23, they were already in Pusan, Korea; ready to engage in battle.

In the first stages of its operations, the regiment protected the main supply routes and engaged North Korean guerrilla units of different strength. But the fortunes of the Korean War, called it to more stern duties. In pushing towards the North, General McArthur, ignoring intelligence reports, recklessly overstretched his lines. The chinese came down, in great strength and surrounded the First Marine Division, in the vecinity of the Chozin Reservoir. The 65th. Regiment went to the rescue and formed a corridor to relieve the besieged forces. When the North was evacuated, the Regiment was among the last troops to abandon the beach. It was one of the outstanding performances of the Korean War and the whole Regiment was commended for its heroic action.

Many individual feats were carried out by Puerto Rican soldiers during the war. The Regiment, nicknamed The Borinqueneers, fought with stubborn determination and great valor. They paid a high price in blood. The statistics told an eloquent story: Puerto Rican casualties added up to 3,540 of which 743 were killed in action. One of every 42 U.S. casualties was a Puerto Rican

and the island had one casualty for every 660 inhabitants as compared to one casualty for every 1125 inahbitants of the United States. ( ) The troops, once despised by General Mc Arthur, in World War II, had given a good account of themselves, and the island had sustained proportionally more losses than most states of the Union. The "gigantic incubator of peoples" so disparaged by Senator Johnstone had given a strong helping hand to the proud general in extricating U.S. troops from his ill-advised military move.

As the Commonwealth status began to develop, its economic underpinning - Operation Bootstrap or Jalda Arriba! - started to show amazing results. The concerted attack on extreme poverty, the emphasis on productivity, and the reliance on planning gave rise to an increased tempo of development. In 1950, an expert planner, Harvey S. Perloff, after a careful study of the Puerto Rican experience, had summarized his views by observing that in contrast to many other areas of the world which had been subject to frequent political upheavals and whose economic plans were largely wishful thinking, "The Puerto Rican people have displayed a noteworthy political maturity as characterized by their ability to evolve an esentially sound and balanced development program in the face of inordinately difficult circumstances." ( ) The decade of the 50's, as an economic historian would note, were the "exhuberant years." More and more factories were coming into the island. By the end of 1955, they were

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( ) "Puerto Ricans in the Armed Services," 21-23, 85-86.

( ) Harvey S. Perloff, P.R.'s Economic Future: A Study in Planned Development (Chicago, 1950), 394.

pouring more than half a million dollars in wages alone into the economy every week, and giving employment to 28,000 workers, the goal set forth by Perloff in his recommendations. There began, in industrial pomotion, the "numbers game." Private investment increased at the rate of 36% per year from 1950 to 1954; and to about 46% from 1955 to 1959. Employment in industries brought unemployment to a low unequalled in the history of Puerto Rico's labor statistics: 12.4% in the last quarter of 1959. ( ) It was, again, an era of flattering statistics.

But if the establishment of Commenwealth status had left several question marks in its wake so it was with the march into industrialization, by the Fomento effort. It was true new, higher paid wages were available; it was true that income from manufacturing with its multiplier effect was now supplanting sugar as the leading source of insular revenues. It was true that the construction industry was in full bloom. But underneath the élan, there were nagging problems to cope with. There was an unexpected variable: post-war imigration to the States. The two-way flow left a "net migration" of people who left the island: over 500,000 between 1947 and 1961. The bulk of these migrants were unskilled or semi-skilled workers, with little formal schooling, or with unstable or seasonal employment. ( ) They were highly motivated by the search for employment opportunities. As American citizens, they could freely move between the island and the mainland in an unplanned, unpromoted wave. Fomento was reducing unemployment, but was unable to provide jobs for these Puerto

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( ) For a study of this period, see Ross, The Long Uphill Path, 129-168.

( ) Rita M. Maldonado, Why Puerto Ricans migrated to the United States in 1947-73", Monthly Labor Review, U.S. Dept. of Labor (September, 1976), 10.

Ricans who left in search of new horizons and were to face again their Jalda Arriba, their uphill fight in a more tense, prejudice-prone, racially divided society. In 1957, Governor Muñoz frankly acknowledged the problem. It was still extremely difficult to create good, abundant jobs and abolish unemployment. Migration had stabilized population growth, but even the new economic energy had not created the necessary employment opportunities and people were leaving the island. "We should not agree with this continuing situation" - he observed. "Our productivity should also overcome this problem." ( ) Our unemployment and migration remained in spite of the great effort.

In the meantime, the political hegemony of the PDP was assured. The 1952 elections following in the wake of the constitutional process reaffirmed the PDP majorities. The old Coalition was crushed in the polls. The erstwhile Republicans had changed their name into the Statehood Republican Party, or PER, with a clear-cut ideological stance against commonwealth. The Socialists were simply a former shadow of themselves. Their program had been taken away by the PDP. Only the pro-independence groups showed real aggressiveness as an opposition. When the votes were counted, the PDP had 431,409; the pro-Statehood party, 85,591 and the Socialists only 21,719. But the PIP doubled its 1948 vote and was able to poll 126,228. It became the second party in Puerto Rico and promised to be a new driving force in insular politics. ( ) The Socialists, as a result of the elections, decided to dissolve and join the PDP.

( ) Luis Muñoz Marín, Mensajes...., 172.

( ) Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y Partidos..., 215-217.

There were, however, contradictions within the PIP affecting its ideological purity: It openly respected the Nationalists, but at the same time, wanted to disassociate itself from their creed. It sharply criticized Commonwealth status as a farce and a hoax, and attacked the consent given to PL 600 as a poeple consenting to remain a colony. But when elected, the PIP representatives swore an oath of loyalty to the constitution as a juridical reality within which they were ready to struggle for the realization of their objectives. Furthermore, they had difficulty in balancing their two extreme wings: on the left, they were supported by the Communists groups, with their Marxist orientation; on the right, by militant Catholics. Only a common devotion to the independence ideal, brought the disparate factions together. It was not enough. Concepción de Gracia was a true believer of the cause, a man of firm democratic convictions and a lawyer and paralmentarian of unquestioned ability. But the party failed to penetrate the great bulk of the masses. It was, furthermore, rent by internal dissension. Factional disputes brought disentchantment to many of its supporters, particularly to those who had given the PIP their protest vote. By 1956, the PIP's attack on the PDP and Commonwealth foundered badly. In 1956, it only obtained 86,386 votes; in 1960, it went down to 24,103. ( )

The Republican Statehood party, or REP, on the other hand, began to recuperate during this period. The leadership after 1952 was assumed by two brothers-in-law, Miguel A. García Méndez

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( ) Robert W. Anderson, Party Politics in Puerto Rico (Stanford, 1965), 93-117.

and Luis A. Ferré. Both were rich men, and had a long experience in politics. Of the two, García Méndez had been more politically voluble, more involved in internal squabbles. Ferré, on the other hand, was more oriented towards American politics, and to a brand of moderate conservatism more attuned to similar groups within the U.S. Republican party. He strongly believed in a dynamic capitalism where capital would perform "an exalted mission of high moral character; and in which the worker will have satisfied his thirst for justice without having surrendered an atom of his right to freedom." Statehood to him was the redeeming force, that would do away with want and make Puerto Rican participants "of the grandeur of the United States, the nation of which we are loyal and honorable citizens." ( ) To achieve these aims which he turned into a mystique, it was not enough to campaign politically in Puerto Rico. Fruitful connections with the mainland Republican Party could be put to good advantage particularly in matters of patronage and the Congressional attitudes towards Puerto Rico. The wheels of fortune would help Ferré in his objectives, as the Eisenhower era began in the United States in 1952.

If the PIP accused Muñoz and the PDP of having hoaxed Puerto Rico into the acceptance of colonialism and fiercely denounced the Governor as a U.S. puppet, the RSP, under Ferré, began a consistent campaign of accusation against Muñoz as wanting, through devious means, to bring independence. Any act of the Commonwealth Government that could differ from what was believed should be the correct behaviour of federal state would be denounced as proof that the PDP was really after separation. More

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( ) Ibid., 90-91.

than any of his colleagues, Ferré, began to emerge as the man who was regrouping the old pro-statehood, Republican forces. He was, personally, a symbol of industrial success at a time when industrialism was changing Puerto Rico. His intent of developing a new capitalist ethics for the island as a business-politician, combined with his love of philantropy, and his linkages with U.S. moderate Republicans, gave him the image of a Puerto Rican Nelson Rockefeller, and gradually created a mass following. He and his associates, as distinct from the PIP lawyers, would become an upcoming force in the sixties.

For Muñoz and the PDP, thunder, therefore, came from both ends of the political spectrum. The social and economic changes were bringing great relief and new opportunities to many Puerto Ricans, but were creating new problems and new tensions and changing many of the social values, as a new middle class emerged. Muñoz was moving the ship of stae through the Scylla and Caribdis of political polarization. The consensus his movement had built depended not only on its social and economic success, but on a full understanding of his ideal of the patria-pueblo, his mid-way philosophy, not only in Puerto Rico but in the United States. It certainly needed a further growth of the Commonwealth status, a further difinition by the Congress of its key concepts as a form of creative federalism. Personally, Muñoz would continue to gain in stature as a visionary statesman; but he would fail in his political objective. The whirling successs of 1948-52 would not be repeated in his lifetime.

With the election of Eisenhower as President, the PDP for the first time was faced with the problem of dealing with a Republican Administration. It was under the Democrats that the social awakening in Puerto Rico and the PDP's drive towards reform and self-government had taken place. While there were some sympathetic Republicans in Congress and in the party towards Muñoz and his objectives, it was not to be expected that Eisenhower would react with the same receptiveness as Truman. The Eisenhower Administration, on the other hand, was an important region and here Puerto Rico had become a focal point of democratic and technical exchanges while remaining a key strategic area in the post-war era.

When President Truman launched his celebrated Point Four program in 1959 to make available U.S. technical know-how to what then were discribed as under-developed areas, Muñoz offered Puerto Rico as a training center particularly for Latin Americans and as a demonstration area of new techniques in palnning, education, public health and economic development. Accepted by Truman, the program had started in Puerto Rico, under the Planning Board, and trainees and experts had begun to arrive.

With the establishment of Commonwealth, a Puerto Rican State Department was created. Special legislation promptly entrusted this Department with the reponsability of initiating programs to make the Puerto Rican better known abroad. There was, therefore, an agency ready to assume wide responsibilities in coordinationg technical and cultural exhanges, in close collaboration with U.S. and international agencies, active in these fiels. The facilities of the Commonwealth government were at its

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disposal, including the manifold educational programs developing at the University of Puerto Rico.

When Muñoz visited Eisenhower in 1953, he made clear to the new President that the new Commonwealth was ready to make a contribution in an area vital to the new international policies. He had come to offer and not to ask, he said. It was then decided that a formal type of collaboration would be rached with the new International Cooperation Administration (ICA) which was headed by Harold Stassen. An agreement was drawn up, and signed, under which the Technical Assistance Program would encompass the Caribbean and Latión America.

Under the new understanding with the Eisenhower Administration, the increasing stream of visitors came to Puerto Rico, while Puerto Rican technicians were sent and a host of Puerto Ricans participated as delegates in inter-American and international conferences to many areas, even beyond the Western Hemisphere.

The program gradually expanded on Puerto Rican initiative to include cooperation with international organizations, such as the U.N. and the Organization of American States and their specialized agencies. By the year 1959, 6,500 trainees had come to Puerto Rico from 118 different countries, over one half coming from the Caribbean and Latin America. Fully one third had been sponsored by non-US programs, indicating a growing international interest in observing at close range the Puerto Rican experience.

But the program did not limit itself to technical training or exchanges. During this same period, over 1400 leaders of opinion and specialists of 79 countries came for short visits to get a general view of Puerto Rico and its development programs.

Furthermore, a program of international conferences was carried out in the most varied fields. Again, over 2,200 people from 56 countries came as delegates to discuss a wide rage of subjects from public health to economic planning, history, social theories, medical sciences, etc. The results of the program were hailed in the United States and in many places in Latin America. It turned Puerto Rico into a hemisphere meeting ground. It added to the Puerto Rican sense of pride and accomplishment. The uniqueness of the program fitted, in Muñoz' aside from its political connotation, it went beyond Puerto Rican insularity, opening up a window to the world. ( )

This dimension of growth, it was thought, would contribute to create better understanding for a new try at a clearer Congressional definition of Puerto Rico's status. There was a feeling that movement had to take place, to face critics form all sides of the spectrum and preserve the strong political consensus. Already by 1954, Muñoz was laying the groundwork in an article in Foreign Affairs, in which he argued that the time would come for an evoluation of the experience, with the basic points of association spelled out in an Act of Congress, agreed to by the Puerto Rican electorate. He felt that the area of federal functions which could not be left to specific consent included minimum wages, quota arrangements, common defense and political treaties; but other functions and legislation could be extended to Puerto Rico at the Commonwealth's own request or with its specific

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( ) For an exposition of the program see the statement by the Commonwealth Under Secretary of State in Hearings Before a Special Subcommittee in Territorial and Insular Affairs, H.R., 86 th. Congress First Session H.R. 9234 (Washington, 1960), 47-57.

consent. The long-range U.S. interest in the relationship was now not only military, and commercial. There was another new one: Puerto Rico had become - he wrote - "a small but effective engine of understanding of and goodwill for the United States." And, as proof, he pointed to the international programs that the Commonwealth was developing. ( )

In his contacts with the new Adminstration, Muñoz had suggested that a commission be created, at the executive level, to study the ways and means through which a further clarification of the status could take place. But nothing came out of these efforts and eventually it was decided to get further action from a Congress where there were still friends and a dominant Democratic party.

The challenges to the Governor were many, and one of them involved the Nationalists. Jailed after the events of 1950, Albizu's health rapidly deteriorated. He claimed he was been tortured by death rays and kept himself wrapped up in wet towels blaming the U.S. government for what he called "burning emanations" against his person. To Muñoz, Albizu's encarceration created a dilemma: if left to serve the prison term, this would add to the Nationalist campaign abroad regarding Albizu's political martyrdom. If freed, there was the conviction that Nationalist agitation and violence would result, disturbing Puerto Rico's development. But Muñoz, weighing both ends of the dilemma, decided to pardon Albizu in September, 1953, after doctors had declared the revolutionary leader as paranoid.

( ) Luis Muñoz Marín, "Puerto Rico and the U.S., Their Future Together," Foreign Affairs (July, 1954), 541-551.

The predicted reaction took place. Less than a year after Albizu's release, four Nationalists led by a young woman, Lolita Lebrón, entered the Visitors' Gallery of the U.S. House of Representatives and began shooting wildly at the legislature chamber, while shouting "Puerto Rico is not freed!" The attack, planned in New York, was to coincide with the opening of the Inter-American Conference at Caracas, on March 1, 1954, to draw world attention. It was a suicidal attempt, in line with the Nationalists' fervent conviction that only direct revolutionary action could bring independence to Puerto Rico. The planning showed that the nucleus committed to this theory was now mainly found in the Puerto Rican communities in the United States. In the island itself, there was no reaction, except the government's determination to send Albizu back to jail, which was done after forcing his surrender with tear gas. ( ) Miss Lebrón and her companions were captured and condemned by a U.S. court to life imprisonment and were later pardoned by the Carter Administration.

Soon after the return to jail, Albizu suffered a stroke in 1956. He was then taken to the Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan and put under the expert care of a group of well-known Puerto Rican doctors. Finally, on November 15, 1964, Muñoz again pardoned Albizu. A few months later, on April 21, 1965, the fiery leader of Puerto Rican revolutionary nationalism passed away. He had stood, until the end, for open, hostile confrontation to the United States. Although supported in the last years by the communists, his ideology was influenced by his profound attachment to

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( ) Ribes Tovar, op.cit., 140-159.

Hispanism and Catholicism - a far cry from the positions prevalent in Latin American marxism. To his followers, remained as an exalted and romantic symbol of their cause, but his heritage of hatred and hostility to the United States and his resort to violence would, in later years, be taken by groups committed to a Marxist-Seminist revolutionary view of history.

Five Congressmen were wounded in the Nationalists' attack on the House. The Congress, however, did not react angrily against Puerto Rico. When Fernós on March 2, deplored the attack, in a speech to the House, he received a standing ovation. Governor Muñoz flew to Washington to meet with Congressional leaders, and call on those that had suffered wounds. Representative Alvin M. Bentley from Michigan was nearly killed, but was able to recover. The shooting apparently had left no ill feelings, but it certainly did not promote the cause of revision. On April 12, 1954, Bentley made known his views that action should be taken to control Puerto Rican migration to the United States. Two days later, Republican Congressman Frank T. Bow of Ohio, under the influence of Ferré and the Puerto Rican Statehood Party, introduced a Joint Resolution favoring a Special Committee to undertake a study of all phases of Puerto Rican relationships with the United Staes, with special reference to migration. ( ) Nothing came out of this resolution, except the evident conclusion that the pro-statehood forces in Puerto Rico, through their friends in Washington, would do everything possible to discredit Commonwealth and prevent any further congressional action.

( ) Fernós Isern, op.cit., 371-382; on Bentley's reaction see Bothwell, op.cit., IV, 195-196.

But the pro-statehood forces in Puerto Rico, the (PER), were unable to check Muñoz and the PDP at the polls. In 1956, their program made a clear pitch for the support of the workers and the emerging middle class by insisting on applying the federal minimum wage to Puerto Rico and assuring full integration with the American economy. Puerto Rico's destiny - it insisted - "by the design of Providence as well as by historical determinism is to be a State of Union." ( ) Ferré, as the candidate for Governor, now challenged Muñoz, but the results continued to confirm the strong political consensus on behalf of the PDP. This party obtained 433,010 to 172,838 votes for the PER and 86,386 for the PIP. ( ) If it was a clear-cut victory for Muñoz and the PDP leadership, it was also an encouraging sign for Ferré. His party had regrouped and doubled its 1952 poor performance and, furthermore, it was showing new strength in the urban areas, including metropolitan San Juan where the new middle class was beginning to appear in the sprawling suburbia.

The reestructuring of the economy, and the society with more and more dependence on American capital and the emergence of a new urban life-style, heavily influenced by the market forces of consumerism, created a new arena for political competition, as distinct from the rural Puerto Rico of the Thirties and Forties. The expansion of the post-war U.S. industrial economy was benefiting the thrust of Operation Bootstrap. Under this new industrial experience, more wealth was reaching the middle and low sectors of

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( ) Pagán, op.cit., II, 350-351.

( ) Ibid., II, 390.

economy. But there was still heavy unemployment, and pockets of distressing poverty.

To Muñoz, it was necessary to create more productive wealth through savings, to invest more in education as the great economic multiplier, to prevent superfluous and conspicuous consumption, to get more people to own stocks in corporations, including the workers. ( ) A note of urgency began to creep in, a feeling that the Commonwealth status had to grow in answer to its critics. This neeed for action was increased as Congress prepared to admit Alaska and Hawaii into the Union. In his Message to the Legislative Assembly, in his speeches in the United States, including the Godkin Lectures, he gave at Harvard in 1958, he insisted on the concepts outlined in his Foreign Affairs article. A working group was quietly analyzing, within the government, the different alternatives and in 1959 a new effort was made with the introduction of the Fernós-Murray bill, in response to a request from the Commonwealth Legislature.

The Fernós-Murray bill sought to replace the Federal Relations Act with the "Articles of Permanenet Association of the People of Puerto Rico with the United States." It aimed at clarifying the concept of a compact, which had been under fire since 1953. Some important powers held by the Federal government were to be transferred to Puerto Rico, such as the right to fix its own duty on coffee and the right to petition Congress for reductions on specific imports such as codfish, a staple of the

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( ) Mensajes, 155-161.

Puerto Rican diet. On the other hand while Puerto Rico would continue to be exempted from the payment of Federal revenue taxes, a provision was included for the island to share in paying the expenses of Federal functions in Puerto Rico. In introducing the bill to Congress, Fernós made clear that Puerto Rico was not going the way of Alaska or Hawaii, nor was it asking for a dissolution of ties. It wanted to strengthen the Commonwealth as a sensible, dynamic concept which could preserve all its contemporary achievements. ( )

In essence, the Fernós-Murray Bill was not presenting far-reaching proposals. There was nothing in it that was not based on some kind of precedent in the relations of Puerto Rico with the United States. But it did not get anywhere in spite of some strong support form influential members of Congress. In the Hearings held at both Puerto Rico and San Juan, there was great praise for many of the accomplishments of the Commonwealth Government, however, was sharply questioned by Senator Henry Jackson. Both Fernós and Muñoz made crystal-clear their views: PL 600 was a compact. In their position they were to be supported by an opinion of the great U.S. constitutionalist Edward S. Cori, who affirmed that Congress in the use of its inherent sovereign powers, could enter into a compact with the people of Puerto Rico. A somewhat similar opinion was expressed by the U.S. Department of Justice. But there was much pressure from the pro-statehood movement in Puerto Rico against the Fernós-Murray Bill. The question

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( ) Fernós, op.cit., 422-432.

dragged into 1960 - an election year. It finally died in Committee. By that time, the PDP had to face another challenge: the outright intervention of the Catholic Church in the island's politics, led by the Bishops of Ponce, James Mc Manus, and of San Juan, James P. Davis.

The intervention of the Church in electoral politics was a strange aberration in Puerto Rico. In the nineteenth Century, the Church had been closely linked with and supported by the Spanish government. Church and state were separated after 1898. A shift took place in the higher clergy. American-born bishops substituted the Spaniards. The Church, in general, collaborated with the new rulers, and learned how to live in a society where Protestantism became an active religious force. No Puerto Rican attained the rank of bishop. Views and attitudes of the U.S. Catholic clergy began to dominate the Church's social behaviour. But the Church, knowing that it served the faith of Puerto Ricans of all ideological persuasions, ranging from Albizu to Ferré, was careful not to embroil itself in politics.

This all changed in 1960. The Bishops were pushing for legislative action to provide for religious education in the schools, a practice the majority of legislators opposed. The clergy wanted also to stop the dissemination of information on birth control practices. But in the case of Mc Manus, there was an additional motivation - he was dead set against the commonwealth relationship and already in 1959, and at the time of the hearings on the Fernós-Murray Bil had written to the Chairman of the Congressioal Committee urging that the Committee made clear that Puerto Rico was

just a territory of the United States. ( ) Behind the opposition to the PDP, other motives lurked which were not religious.

A huge mass rally took place on May 22, 1960. Bishop Davis used the occasion to censure the PDP and urge the organization of a Catholic party. This was followed by a well-orchestrated campaign, including a Pastoral letter, issued on June 30, to help the registration of the Christian Action Party or PAC. At the same time, press articles asked Catholics not to vote for Muñoz, the real political target of the Bishop's move. On October 4, Mc Manus made clear his personal objective: to destroy the PDP and to attain statehood. ( )

The Church intervention became a boomerang for those responsible. Muñoz and the PDP were restrained in their reply, eschewed all anticlericalism, and appealed to the historic roll of a Church beyond parties. No dent was made on the PDP political strength: in November, 1960 the party obtained 457,880 votes to 252,364 for the pro-statehood PER and only 52,096 for the PAC. The PIP was a distant fourth with only 24,103.

The PAC proved to be a rara avis in Puerto Rican politics. By 1964, it polled only 26,867 votes and was on the way to extinction. ( ) The Catholics that supported it returned to their traditional loyalties. PDP Catholics took their complaint discreetly to the Vatican. A change of Church policy became evident over the next years. Without much fanfare, Mc Manus and Davis left the island, and Puerto Ricans, for the first

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( ) See the documents in Fernós, op.cit., 488-493.

( ) Bothwell, op.cit., 276-325.

( ) Bayrón Toro, op.cit., 231-239.

time in the century, were now appointed to head the higher clergy, under Pope John XXIII, as in many other places, there were new changes in the Church's social role. Neither clericalism nor anticlericalism found a significant place in the complex, heated issues of Puerto Rican politics.

Muñoz and the Kennedy Interlude

In November 1960, as the PDP was sweeping Puerto Rico, John F. Kennedy was being elected President of the United States by a very thin margin. His years coincided with the high water mark of the Muñoz era in Puerto Rican politics. It also marked the closest relationship ever established between a Puerto Rican political leader and a U.S. President. Kennedy had a genuine liking for the people of Puerto Rico and great admiration for Muñoz and his achievements. There was another reason fro the prominence of Puerto Rico during those years. Kennedy, as no U.S. president before him, was deeply concerned with Latin America. He thought that a new hemispheric partnership was in order and that Latin America needed as much support and encouragement from the United States as Europe had received under the Marshall Plan.

It was natural that Kennedy should turn to Muñoz in search of advice and help. By 1960, Muñoz was already a strong voice of the "democratic left." His views now encompassed not only the Puerto Rican realities, but the problems besetting the hemisphere and, indeed, the developing world. Between 1956 and 1960, as the Commonwealth relationship was attracting attention, Muñoz used every opportunity to set forth his ideas. In offering the Puerto Rican experience, he was not asking for a more equal of the

so-called Puerto Rican model. Unfortunately, in later years, a distorted view of the Muñoz' position would be expressed. What Muñoz was trying to emphasize was that in order to attain economic security and democracy, Puerto Rico had been "healthily undoctrinaire, with no fixed taboos, no inmutable sacred cows...." He staunchly believed that democratic peoples had to be constantly creative and that "the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the people of it, are naturally by no means pretending to offer a pattern of political union." What he reiterated was the need for a people to be fired" by a vision of what human energies can do to overcome man-created or nature-created misery." He proposed a plan for the Hemisphere with the abolition of extreme poverty as a basic goal to be attained within the lifetime of children already born. "Let us not be doctrinaire either as to socialism or capitalism, but only as to freedom and human dignity," he argued. In his opinion, political democracy could not be permanently rooted until there was an effort at productivity and distributive justice. ( )

As the Commonwealth exchange program developed, more and more visitors passed through Puerto Rico. When Ricahrd M. Nixon stopped overnight in San Juan, after his ill-starred Latin America trip in 1958, Muñoz counseled him that the U.S. should reserve its embrace for its truly democratic friends, and keep the dictators at arms' length. When Milton Eisenhower was sent on a fact-finding mission to the area, Muñoz gathered a distinguished group of Latin American democrats and experts in economic and social development, and at an impromptu meeting in San Juan urged

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( ) Luis Muñoz Marín, "An America to Serve the World." April 7, 1956 (San Juan, 1956).

the President's brother to recommend a more farsighted policy in support of planning and aid through an Inter-American Development Bank. He was, furthermore, in touch with the Latin American democratic leadership and gave his moral support to movements engaged in promoting free governments and social and economic reform.

Attracted by Puerto Rico and Muñoz' views, Kennedy selected the island for his first major speech on Latin America as a presidential candidate. On December 15, 1958 at a Democratic dinner, Kennedy put forth the gist of a program of basic concern for human rights and democracy, for recognizing Latin America as a vital force in world economic and diplomatic affairs and for closer economic cooperation. For that, he claimed, there was need of leadership, "leadership such as that which you have achieved here in Puerto Rico.....Which our nation needs today in both domestic and foreign affairs....." ( )

This was neither rhetoric nor self-serving flattery. As soon as he was elected President, Kennedy appointed a task force for Latin America, which included two close associates of Governor Muñoz: Teodoro Moscoso and Arturo Morales-Carrión. The Task Force, chaired by another close friend and admirer of the Puerto Rican leader, Adolf Berle, prepared a basic set of recommendations which later became the starting point of the Alliance for Progress - Kennedy's key Latin American policy. The task force members before submitting their report, attended the Muñoz inaugural on January 2, 1960, and discussed the highlights of their recommendations with him.

The Puerto Rican input in the Kennedy Administration was further assured when upon the advice of Senator Mike Mansfield,

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( ) John F. Kennedy. The

and others. Morales-Carrión was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America and Moscoso was named ambassador to Venezuela, where Betaucourt had been elected President. After a period serving there, Moscoso was called to head the U.S. economic contribution to the Alliance, which had been adopted at a hemispheric meeting at Punta del Este in August, 1961.

There were great hopes, during those years, that two countries close to Puerto Rico would march along the path of democratic and economic reform: Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Together with Venezuela, they were linked with the historical experience of Puerto Rico. When Fulgencio Batista was overthrown by Fidel Castro, there was rejoicing in the island, where much support had been given to the Castro movement. In his trips to the United States, Muñoz argued on behalf of the Cuban revolution and hoped to develop with Castro close personal relationships. But the Cuban leader was going in a different direction and soon Puerto Rico began receiving disenchanted supporters of the Cuban Revolution who told Muñoz a different story. The ill-concerned Bay of Pigs invasion, planned under Eisenhower, but which Kennedy supported in the early days of his Administration, contributed to the estrangement.

Castro's way was the way of a communist and in a short time, the democratic left found in him an implacable opponent; much to Muñoz' disappointment. Castro made clear his complete backing of the Puerto Rican Nationalists and soon began a campaign at the U.N. to question the validity of Commonwealth status.

More promising was the situation in Santo Domingo after Trujillo had been killed by personal enemies. For Kennedy and Muñoz, as well as for Betancourt and other Latin American democrats, this was an acid test of what they had been preaching. They joined hands in promoting an essay of democratic government in a country torn by grave dissensions, with externaly difficult economic problems and little training in electoral practices. To emphasize his concern, Kennedy sent Morales-Carrión as special emissary to Santo Domingo at the end of 1961 to assure all democratic groups of his personal interest in returning democracy to the country.

On December 15, 196 , the President paid a special visit to Puerto Rico. As distinct from Eisenhower who had come to address an educational meeting and play golf, and had limited his contact to a brief interview with Muñoz at the airport, Kennedy came to see the people themselves. He received the greatest reception ever accorded a visitor. Nearly 700,000 Puerto Ricans lined the streets and the avenue leading to the airport to cheer him. It was a tremendous outpouring of support, which affected him deeply.

To stress his admiration and respect, Kennedy awarded Muñoz the Presidential Medal of Freedom, an award for those "whose life can be graced and the fullness with which it can be lived." It was followed by an evening at the White House in which Pablo Casals, the great cellist, performed for the President and his friend. ( ) This was probably Muñoz' finest moment. No Puerto Rican had ever been honored like him before; no U.S. President had ever shown so real affection and respect for the people of the

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( ) Arthur M. Schlessinger, Jr., A Thousand Days (Cambridge, 1965), 732-733.

island. The partnership created in 1952, after the long era of tutelage, seemed to be bearing the best of fruits. But it needed revision and redefinition, a move to make it strong enough to enhance the popular consensus. When the effort was tried, it again failed.

No further action was attempted regarding the Fernós-Murray bill in Congress. Muñoz had began to move in the Executive branch, where he counted on Kennedy's support and understanding. Already on February 10, 1961, he had asked the President to clarify before all executive departments and agencies the unique position of the Commonwealth. He especially wanted to avoid the notion that Puerto Rico was a U.S. territory or possession. Kennedy obliged, after careful consideration, with an Executive Order issued July 25, 1961. The Order, printed in the Federal Register, became, therefore, established U.S. policy. It was issued because "of the importance and significance of Puerto Rico in the relations of the United States with Latin America and, other nations..." The order summarized PL 447 and the 1953 U.N. Resolution and instructed all departments, agencies and officials of the executive branch to "faithfully and carefully observe and respect this arrangement in relation to all matters affecting the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico." ( ) Furthermore, a Presidential assistant, Lee White, was now the White House liaison for Puerto Rico, and an informal group of Kennedy aides, including Arthur Schlessinger, Jr., the noted historian, met from time to time with Muñoz to advise action on the Commonwealth status.

( ) Documents on the Constitutional History of Puerto Rico, 206

But the basic progress had to be achieved in Congress. Fernós had succeded in obtaining approval of an amendment of the Federal Judicial Code, to provide for direct appeals of decisions from the Commonwealth Supreme Court to the U.S. Supreme Court and not to the Boston Circuit Court. It was another step to remove the territorial or possession stigma. ( )

As a preparatory effort for new congressional action, there took place in 1962 an exchange of letters between Kennedy and Muñoz. In his letter, the Governor suggested that it was high time for growth to occur in the relationship and suggested the recognition of the basic principle of self-government for Puerto Rico "in permanent association with the United States on the basis of common loyalty, common citizenship, mutual dedication to democracy and mutual commitment to freedom." He insisted on the need of clarifying the moral and juridical basis of Commonwealth and the maximization of its powers and authority by devising forms of participation by the people of Puerto Rico in the Federal functions that affected them. His final suggestion was that the people of Puerto Rico should have an opportunity to vote on the arrangements, but also to indicate their preferences for any other form of relationship. ( ) In sum, he wanted action through a plebiscite to decide the status issue.

Kennedy replied by stating his full sympathy. He saw no reason why the Commonwealth concept should not be fully developed "as a permanent institution in its association with the United States," if that was what the people desired, and agreed that as a matter of fairness to all concerned, the people should

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( ) Fernós, op.cit., 549-550.

( ) Welles, op.cit., 253-254.

be consulted "so that they may express any other preference, including independence, if that should be their wish." ( ) Already legislation approved in 1960, made possible a plebiscite in Puerto Rico, whenever 10% of the electorate so desired. The way was open for another expression of the people's will. On December 3, 1962 a Joint Resolution of the Commonwealth Legislature formally proposed to Congress a procedure to solve the status issue comprising a consultation based on the three formulas, including that which Congress would agree with respect to Commonwealth. ( )

As Fernós later wrote, it was to be a rocky road to travel. Already the PER had exacted in the resolution that the term "permanent association" be substituted by "permanent union." It was more than a semantic question. For to the PER "permanent union" meant the direct road to statehood. Any return to the original concepts of association, debated in 1952, and encluded in the UN Resolution and the Muñoz-Kennedy exchange, would be denounced from hereon as a devious way to promote separation. The aim was to destroy before congressional opinion the concept of association as a viable, permanent alternative.

In April, 1963, H.R. 5945 was introduced in Congress. The bill would have established a twelve-man United States-Puerto Rico Compact Commisssion for the purpose of drafting a proposed "compact of permanent union" between the U.S. Government and the people of Puerto Rico which would be submitted to the Puerto Rican

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( ) Ibid., 253-254.

( ) See the text in Fernós, op.cit., 356-357.

on the presidency of Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic as a further strengthening of the ideals of ~~such a~~ social democracy, were widely shaken when Bosch was deposed by a coup. In the Legislature death reclaimed his old friend Ramos Antonini; a bulwark in the political defense of Commonwealth before the masses. And on November 23, John F. Kennedy was killed by an assassin in Dallas. To Muñoz, the bullet that killed Kennedy was also aimed at Puerto Rico. 1963 was for the governor a year of tragedy and adversity.

In 1964, he was coming to the end of his term and there were forces set in motion to create in him the conviction that the time had come to surrender the helm of state. In his last State of the Commmonwealth Message, he could point to the great strides Puerto Rico had taken. Both agricultural and industrial production were moving ahead. Cattle raising has become a most promising economic activity, while in industry nearly 24% of the new capital invested came from inside Puerto Rico. Net income was estimated to reach between $4.5 and $5 billions in 1975 - a tremendous surge forward.

The time had come to ask what was the Purpose of Puerto Rico - the overall objective of the people of the island. It could not be, Muñoz argued, sheer economic progress. Six points he urged as crucial priorities: quality education for all, the best of health care, a home for every family, an orderly balance between rural and urban life, more and more economic activity in the hands of Puerto Ricans, abolition of extreme poverty.

Education topped the list because it was through education that a "civilization of excellence" could be achieved. Not simply formal education; it was education for a lifetime to be pursued in the constant inner enrichment of life, in cities that should be, above all, civilized, with neighborhoods where good human relationships would flourish. He called attention to social progress, in the terms defined by Pope John XXIII in his encyclical Mater et Magistra, and from him he took the concept of the "family salary" as an objective. As he was finishing his last message, Muñoz was transcending the status question in search for a vision which he held was no Utopian, but achievable, not only by parties, but by generations joining hands together. There was great mobility in this vision, transcending the murky sea of politics. It could only be practical, if the consensus held, if government was stable, if polarization was avoided, if generations learned to work together, if there was an understanding Congress, and if there was a real feeling for la patria-pueblo.

The practical politician had returned to those basic beliefs and commitments with which he had started his long and remarkable carreer. He was again a visionary, as a torrent of affluence was engulfing the island with values, attitudes, conflicting views and passions which were very much the negation of what was to remain, historically, the expression of a Platonic ideal. A different Puerto Rico was in the making, more inclined to social strife, dissension, urban violence, drugs, class animosities, sharp polarizations and a decay in the political dialogue. It was the coming of a social crisis that still needed a few years to show its true dimensions.