Recordarme comentar esto a la vuelta del viaje - A o Wells

JUN 28 1954

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
RIO PIEDRAS, PUERTO RICO

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

26 June 1954

Dr. Arturo Morales Carrión
Under Secretary of State
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Dear Arturo:

Thank you for sending me the copy of Mr. Colligan's letter and the Biographic Information Form. I immediately filled out the latter and sent it to the Specialists Division of the International Educational Exchange Service, and I also sent a note to Mr. Colligan saying that I had done so.

I was delighted with the optimistic tone of Mr. Colligan's comments. It would be wonderful if the U.S. State Department will foot the bill for my trip. I am distressed to learn, however, that you have definitely decided that you will not be able to go.

As you know, I have been working on a study of the Puerto Rican party system. I enclose a second draft of part of that study, which I should appreciate your reading and criticising. It contains a few ventures into history writing, where I am not at all sure of my ground, and I should welcome your close attention to such passages.

The enclosed article is called "Ideology and Leadership in Puerto Rican Politics." I plan to follow it up with a second article to be called something like "The Organization of Puerto Rican Political Parties," on which I have already done a first draft.

Thanks again for your kindness in writing to Mr. Colligan.

Cordially,

Henry

Henry Wells

Confidential
Second draft, 28/VI/54

IDEOLOGY AND LEADERSHIP IN PUERTO RICAN POLITICS

By Henry Wells

Far and away the most powerful force in the political life of the new Commonwealth of Puerto Rico[1] is the Popular Democratic Party (_Partido Popular Democrático_, or PPD). Since 1945 elected representatives of the party have held the office of Resident Commissioner in Washington and more than two thirds of the seats in both houses of the insular legislature. Since the election of 1948 the president of the party, Luis Muñoz Marín, has been Governor of the island. Inasmuch as there are no other elective officials in the executive branch, gubernatorial appointees loyal to the party and its program fill all the top policy-making and administrative posts. And because the Governor also appoints all judges, the percentage of _Populares_ on the Commonwealth bench is understandably high.

The party's control over the insular government is a direct result of its extraordinary showing at the polls. Its island-wide candidates have never received less than 60 per cent of the total vote in any election save that of 1940, the first in which a Popular Democratic ticket was on the ballot. In the most recent election, that of November 4, 1952, the "Popular" candidate for Governor received a record 65 per cent of the votes cast. All other Popular candidates won by similar if somewhat smaller margins, not only on the insular level but also in senatorial and representative-district contests and in municipal elections. As a result of the 1952 balloting, every one of the seventy-six _municipios_ into which

---

1. The Commonwealth came into being on July 25, 1952, the date on which its constitution took effect. See _infra_, footnote 5, par. (c).

Puerto Rico is divided has a Popular mayor and none but Popular assemblymen.[2]

---

2. For the 1952 election data on which the above comments are based, see William M. Amy, Estadísticas de las elecciones celebradas en Puerto Rico el 4 de noviembre de 1952 (San Juan, P.R.: Junta Estatal de Elecciones, segunda edición, 1952).

The purpose of this paper is to shed some light on the nature of Puerto Rican politics by focusing attention on the reasons for the marked success of the Popular Democratic Party in gaining and holding the support of the electorate. At the outset it is well to dismiss electoral fraud or coercion as possible explanations. Puerto Rican elections have been singularly free, honest, and peaceful ever since the Popular party first came on the political scene - a state of affairs for which the party itself is in no small degree responsible. One of its earliest and most striking achievements, it may be noted, was the virtual abolition of vote-buying, a practice which had distorted the electoral process since the turn of the century.

Before going any further it is also advisable to dissociate the Puerto Rican type of dominant-party politics from the "one-party" politics of the South. The two have little or nothing in common despite the fact that the predominance of the Popular Democratic Party in Puerto Rico might seem to correspond to that of the Democratic Party in the southern states. The parallel is misleading. The Democratic Party in most parts of the South is not a party at all but a congeries of factions,[3] whereas the PPD is a

---

3. See V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), passim, esp. pp. 298-310, 406-409.

---

highly centralized and well-disciplined organization in which factionalism

seldom arises, even in its local branches. In the South the real election is the primary in which the factions of the Democratic Party compete for nominations that are tantamount to election; as a consequence voter participation in general elections ordinarily is low. In Puerto Rico, on the other hand, direct primaries are rarely held (nomination is by party convention), and voters and parties alike regard general elections as significant contests. Despite their dim prospects the minority parties wage vigorous campaigns, and the voters turn out in large numbers on election day. Only once since the Popular party entered the electoral lists have less than 75 per cent of the registered voters gone to the polls.

In short the Popular Democratic Party carries elections by authentic landslides, and the results may safely be said to reflect the will of the people. The problem then remains to identify the causes of the party's popularity. These are essentially two: the attractiveness of the PPD program of economic and social reform, and the personal appeal of the party's founder and leader, Muñoz Marín. The first of these factors ministers to deeply felt but long-neglected physical needs of the vast majority of Puerto Rican people; the other caters to psychological needs which, although historically conditioned, are deep-rooted and widespread in the island. The popular support of the PPD is thus grounded on the party's effective response to basic human demands.

The first of the three following sections attempts to explain why it was that prior to the rise of the PPD political parties had never come to grips with the chronic problem of poverty but had instead engaged mainly in sterile debates on the question of Puerto Rico's future political status; how it happened that the Popular Democratic party came forward with a program which, declaring "status" not to be an issue, concentrated

on means for raising the standard of living; what political results have flowed from this change of emphasis and from the measures subsequently taken to carry out the welfare program; and finally what the PPD's own position is on the status question, an issue to which it eventually had to address itself. The next section attempts to account for the great personal popularity of Muñoz Marín not only in terms of his own remarkable qualities of leadership but also in terms of a long-standing predisposition on the part of the Puerto Rican people to defer to personal authority, an attitudinal and behavioral pattern known as personalismo. The final section considers certain implications of ideology and personalismo as factors in the present strength and future prospects of the Popular Democratic Party.

THE PPD PROGRAM: THE IDEOLOGICAL FACTOR

Two facts about Puerto Rico must always be kept in mind in any attempt to understand the politics of the island. One is colonialism, the other poverty. For four centuries Puerto Rico was a colony of Spain and for another half-century a non-self-governing territory of the United States. Royal governors and their deputies ruled the island autocratically until the last days of the Spanish regime; the reforms decreed in 1897 were only beginning to take effect when the armed forces of the United States occupied the island during the Spanish-American War.[4] In 1900 Congress began

4. In a last-ditch but singularly unsuccessful attempt to bring an end to the insurrection in Cuba, and thus to avert armed intervention by the United States, the Spanish Crown on November 25, 1897, issued three decrees liberalizing the governments of Cuba and Puerto Rico. The first decree, the so-called Autonomous Charter of the Antilles, granted a considerable measure of self-government to the two colonies; the second instituted universal manhood suffrage; and the third brought Cubans and Puerto Ricans under the protection of the bill-of-rights provisions (Title I) of the Spanish Constitution of 1876. (The first two decrees are translated in Laws, Ordinances, Decrees, and Military

Orders Having the Force of Law, Effective in Porto Rico May 1, 1900 [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909], Part III, pp. 1821-1861. For the text of Title I of the 1876 Constitution, see Documents on the Constitutional History of Puerto Rico [Washington: Office of Puerto Rico, n.d.], pp. 9-12.) The Puerto Rican parliament elected under the Autonomous Charter convened on July 17, 1898; on the 25th American troops landed on the south coast of the island; on the 28th the parliament disbanded, never to reconvene. See José A. Gontán, Historia Político-Social de Puerto Rico (San Juan: Editorial Esther, 1945), pp. 316-318.

---

the period of American civil control by giving the Puerto Rican people a taste of self-rule; but only gradually thereafter did it increase the portion, and not until 1952 did it relinquish its power to overrule insular legislation and to determine the basic law of the island.[5]

---

5. (a) The Organic Act of 1900 (the so-called Foraker Act, 31 Stat. 77) permitted the Puerto Rican people to control their own municipalities, to send a Resident Commissioner to Washington, and to elect the members of the lower house of the insular legislature; but it vested in the President the power to appoint the Governor, the justices of the Supreme Court, and the members of the upper house (called the Executive Council, an eleven-man body, six members of which served as heads of the executive departments).
(b) The Organic Act of 1917 (or the Jones Act, 39 Stat. 951) made the upper house elective, authorized the Governor to appoint most of the department heads, and extended United States citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico. A 1947 amendment (usually called the Elective Governor Act, 61 Stat. 770) made the governorship an elective office, but the Auditor and the Supreme Court justices continued to be presidential appointees until the Commonwealth Constitution took effect.
(c) The drafting of a constitution by the Puerto Rican people was authorized by Public Law 600 of the 81st Cong., 2d Sess., 1950 (64 Stat. 319), enacted "in the nature of a compact" with the people of the island. This act did not take effect until ratified by the latter in a referendum. The constitution was thereupon drafted by a constituent assembly, ratified by the Puerto Rican people, and approved by Congress (66 Stat. 327).
(d) Under the terms of Public Law 600 about half of the Organic Act of 1917 was repealed upon the taking effect of the new constitution. By the repeal of Section 34 of the Organic Act, Congress gave up its right to annul insular legislation and withdrew the right of the President to uphold gubernatorial vetoes of such legislation. Other repealed sections included a bill of rights and provisions relating to the structure and powers of the insular government.
(e) Public Law 600 kept the remainder of the Organic Act in effect under a new title: the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act. It contains provisions concerning the Resident Commissioner, U.S. citizenship, the

applicability of federal laws to the island, economic privileges originally granted to Puerto Rico in the Organic Act of 1900, and other matters.
(f) Commonwealth status is the end product of all these changes. Its basic meaning is that Puerto Rico is self-governing in all local affairs. Puerto Ricans continue to be citizens of the United States and are subject to applicable provisions of the U.S. Constitution and to most federal laws of general application. They do not have voting representation in Congress or the right to participate in presidential elections, but on the other hand they pay no federal taxes.

Throughout both colonial regimes all but a small fraction of the people remained at or near a subsistence level of existence. Cash incomes were always very low: as late as 1940 the average annual net income was only $122 per capita. Most workers were landless agricultural laborers who had only seasonal employment. The great bulk of the population, whether urban or rural, suffered from chronic malnutrition and lived in wretched one or two-room shacks devoid of sanitary facilities of any kind. These conditions bred the familiar vicious circles of underdeveloped economies. Poverty made for widespread illiteracy and enervating disease; these factors resulted in low labor productivity; and this in turn perpetuated economic distress. Similarly, the high birth rate - a familiar concomitant of poverty - combined with a declining death rate to produce a constantly growing population; ever more mouths to feed exerted on static resources a pressure that resulted in an ever declining standard of living.

Neither Spain nor the United States made any serious attempt to solve these economic problems. The history of Spanish policy toward Puerto Rico indeed gives little evidence that the welfare of the inhabitants was ever taken into account. The American record looks somewhat better - various "Yanqui" governors tried, mainly with insular funds, to improve conditions by developing a public school system, establishing public health services, and building roads and other public works - but even so the United States'

attitude toward Puerto Rico's economic troubles was basically that of indifference and neglect.

Until about 1940 this attitude was shared by most of the island's political leaders. Economically secure themselves because members of the numerically insignificant middle and upper classes, the native *políticos* tended to pay little heed to the plight of their less fortunate fellow citizens. Their chief concern was the colonial status of their homeland, a preoccupation characteristic of the educated classes in most dependent areas the world over. From the early nineteenth century onwards, Puerto Rican intellectuals and party leaders were familiar with the anti-colonial doctrines of liberalism and acutely conscious of the successful efforts of their Latin American cousins in throwing off the colonial yoke. The political elite of the island therefore spent most of their time attacking the colonial system and arguing among themselves over the changes that should take place in the political *status quo*.

The Status Issue in Insular Politics. From 1900 to 1940 the status issue was the dominant theme in Puerto Rican politics. On one point the three political parties of the island were in complete and clamorous agreement: they were dissatisfied with the amount of self-government granted to Puerto Rico and with the failure of Congress to declare itself on the question of the island's ultimate political status. The parties differed, however, in their conceptions of what that ultimate status should be.

The Republican Party, founded in 1899 by Dr. José C. Barbosa and the majority party from 1900 to 1905, advocated admission of Puerto Rico to the Union as a state - a position to which the party has remained committed down to the present day.

The Union Party, founded in 1904 by Luis Muñoz Rivera and the majority

party from 1905 to 1933,[6] was less consistent. At first it declared itself

6. In 1897 Muñoz Rivera had founded the Liberal Party, which in 1899 became known as the Federal Party. In 1904 its name was changed again to Partido Unión de Puerto Rico. In 1924 and 1928 Unionists were elected to office as the dominant partners in an electoral grouping known as the Alliance, the other members of which were dissident (i.e., non-statehood) Republicans. In 1929 the Alliance fell apart and in 1931 the Unionists reorganized themselves as the Liberal Party.

in favor of any one of the following solutions: local home rule, statehood, or independence under a U.S. protectorate. In 1913 the Unionists dropped the statehood plank from their platform, but the party continued to be divided on the status issue. A few of its leading members still looked upon statehood as the ideal solution; a few others, led by José de Diego, called for immediate independence; still others wanted autonomy or home rule under the American flag.[7] The line taken by most Unionists, however, was the

7. In its 1922 convention the Union Party adopted a platform calling for the creation of an Associated Free State (Libre Estado Asociado) in terms that clearly anticipate the Commonwealth status recently achieved. It is to be noted that the word "Commonwealth" is rendered Estado Libre Asociado in the Spanish text of the new constitution (Art. I, Sec. 1). See Antonio R. Barceló, "El Partido Unión de Puerto Rico," El Libro de Puerto Rico (San Juan: El Libro Azul Publishing Co., 1923), pp. 194-200.

moderate position held by Muñoz Rivera at the time of his death in 1916: eventual independence for Puerto Rico after its demonstration of capacity for it through the exercise of increased powers of self-rule. Under Antonio R. Barceló, Muñoz Rivera's successor as party leader, the Unionists (after 1931, the Liberals) continued officially to reject the extremist solution of immediate independence despite the development of strong support for that policy in the early thirties under the leadership of Muñoz Rivera's son, Luis Muñoz Marín. In 1936 Muñoz Marín and his followers were expelled from the party because of their intransigence on the

independence question.

The Socialist Party was the only one of the three main parties which was prominently identified with a program of social and economic reform, but it too was deeply involved in the status controversy. A latecomer in insular politics - it did not achieve an island-wide organization until 1917 - the party began as the political arm of Puerto Rico's first labor movement, the Federación Libre de los Trabajadores de Puerto Rico, which in 1901 had become affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Hence the party was strongly oriented toward permanent association with the United States, Americanization of the island, and eventual statehood for Puerto Rico. This emphasis tended to overshadow the party's reform program, especially after 1924 when the Socialists joined with a group of pro-statehood but economically conservative Republicans to form the Coalition, an electoral grouping which carried the elections of 1932 and 1936. In control of the legislature from 1933 to 1941, the Coalition turned in an undistinguished performance, advancing only slightly the cause of economic reform and making no progress toward statehood.[8]

---

8. For details concerning the three parties' programs and activities, see Barceló, op. cit., and "American Rule in Porto Rico, 1899-1924," Current History, Vol. 21, pp. 511-517 (Jan. 1925); Sebastian Dalmau Canet, Luis Muñoz Rivera: su vida, su política, su carácter (San Juan: Tip. Boletín Mercantil, 1917), pp. 274-396; Santiago Iglesias, "Partido Socialista," and Prudencio Rivera Martínez, "Federación Libre de los Trabajadores de Puerto Rico," El Libro de Puerto Rico, op. cit., pp. 208-214, 898-902; Iglesias, Luchas Emancipadoras (San Juan: Cantero, Fernández & Co., 1929), passim; Antonio S. Pedreira, Un Hombre del Pueblo: José Celso Barbosa (San Juan: Imprenta Venezuela, 1937) pp. 133-154.

Two things must be noted concerning the politics of status as engaged in by all three parties before 1940. The first is that many political leaders were apparently less interested in the achievement of any one type of political status than in the advancement of their own political fortunes.

The history of this period is full of examples of politicians switching from one party to another despite the parties' ideological differences, and it is also marked by a series of party splits and mergers. Although these factional disorders often rang with protestations of "status" principles, they usually took place because of rivalries and disputes among the leading members of the political elite. The evidence suggests that for a considerable number of those leaders the symbols and catchwords of political status were simply weapons for waging a domestic power struggle.

The other feature of the pre-1940 period is that the controversies over the different formulas for Puerto Rican self-rule were all but meaningless to the great mass of voters. Although couched in emotional language, the arguments were essentially intellectual in character and hence over the heads of the common people. Inasmuch as these ordinary citizens, the rural and urban poor, did not associate their poverty with the political *status quo* and did not regard themselves as victims of colonial exploitation, they did not feel strongly about the need for change. Seldom consulted by their "betters," the vast majority of Puerto Ricans were bystanders on the political scene, active only on election day when they voted as they were told to vote by their landowner or employer, or as they were paid to vote by the highest bidder.

Rise of the Popular Democratic Party. After his expulsion from the Liberal Party in 1936, Luis Muñoz Marín retired temporarily from active politics and disappeared into the mountains. During this self-imposed exile he took the unusual course of living with the country people and talking to them about their problems. He discovered that they were not disturbed by Puerto Rico's then colonial relationship with the United

States and that they would not "buy" his independence arguments.[9] He

9. Muñoz had long thought otherwise. In his twenties he had written, "the sentiment for independence is real enough among the young fellows and the common people, and it only waits to be organized by a politician with some poetry in his make-up." ("Porto Rico: The American Colony," The Nation, Vol. 120, p. 381 [April 8, 1925].) Since Muñoz was himself a poet in those days, it is not unlikely that he had himself in mind when he wrote these lines.

learned that they were afraid of the consequences that might ensue - political instability and civic disorder of the Central American variety - if Puerto Rico were to become a sovereign republic. He also learned first-hand the depths of their economic distress and the need they felt for governmental action to better their lot.

This last discovery struck a responsive chord in Muñoz, for he had long espoused a reformist position on social and economic matters. In his youth, both in the United States and in Puerto Rico, he had been a Socialist and had written a number of articles calling attention to the desperate straits of the Puerto Rican peasant, to the wealth drained annually from the island by American-owned sugar corporations, and to the need for land reform and industrialization.[10] During the depression he had joined his late father's party and in 1932 had been elected

10. See especially ibid., pp. 379-382; "The Sad Case of Porto Rico," The American Mercury, Vol. 16, pp. 137-141 (Feb. 1929); "What Next in Porto Rico?" The Nation, Vol. 129, pp. 608-609 (Nov. 20, 1929); and "T.R. of P.R.," World's Work, Vol. 60, no. 7, pp. 21-24 (July 1931).

a Senator at Large on the Liberal ticket; although the Liberals were the minority party, it was Muñoz Marín, through his New Deal connections in Washington, who had arranged for the extension of federal relief funds to the island. Still more recently, only a few months before his expulsion

from the Liberal Party, he had attacked the Tydings bill for Puerto Rican independence on the ground that its provisions meant "ruin and starvation" for the island.[11]

---

11. For Muñoz' comments on the Tydings bill (S. 4592, 74th Cong., 2d Sess., introduced April 23, 1936), see El Mundo (San Juan, P.R.), April 25, 1936. Muñoz describes the bill's unsettling effect on his thinking about independence in "Development Through Democracy," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 285, pp. 1-2 (Jan. 1953).

As a result of his talks with the mountain folk Muñoz began to reconsider his commitment to independence and to give more attention to ways of solving the economic problems of the island. By the summer of 1938 he was ready to launch a political party that would waive the vexed status question and address itself to the task of social and economic reform. Registered under the name Popular Democratic Party and under the symbol of the pava, the highland farmer's broad-brimmed straw hat, the new organization took as its motto Pan, Tierra y Libertad (Bread, Land and Liberty). During the next two years Muñoz and his followers carried their message personally to the landless workers on the plantations, to the poverty-stricken jíbaros of the mountains, and to the slum-dwelling day laborers of the towns. Declaring that "status is not an issue," they pledged themselves to specific steps for promoting the welfare of the people. Every Popular candidate publicly took an oath to vote for an already drafted land-reform bill, for an income-tax measure, and for a minimum-wage law. Muñoz also urged the electorate not to sell their votes and to get into the habit of demanding results from those whom they elected to public office.

Popularity of the PPD Welfare Program. In the general election of 1940, popular response to this new approach was sufficient to give

the party tenuous control over the legislature - a one-vote margin in the Senate and another bare majority in the House thanks to the cooperation of two independents. Under Muñoz' dynamic leadership as President of the Senate and with the active support of Governor Rexford G. Tugwell, the Populares fulfilled all their campaign promises and in addition enacted a bold program leading to diversification of agriculture, industrialization, and expansion of social services.

During the 1944 campaign, in which status was again declared not to be an issue, [12] the Popular party ran on its record and promised to

---

12. During this campaign the following décima, or folksong, was sung by the jíbaros in at least one section of the mountainous interior:

El Partido Popular	The Popular Party
Independencia no tiene.	Does not stand for independence.
El que se les diga a ustedes	He who tells you that
Estos le quieren engañar.	Wants to deceive you.
Sólo justicia social	Only social justice
Para que tranquilo viva	So that you may live quietly
Y junto con su familia	And together with your family
Hágase un hogar dichoso.	Create a happy home.
Y si algo te cuenta otro	And if someone tells you differently
Embuste es quien lo diga.	He is telling you lies.

Reported by Eric R. Wolf, "Culture Change and Culture Stability in a Puerto Rican Coffee Community," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1951, p. 166.

---

continue its efforts to raise the standard of living. This time the response was overwhelmingly favorable; the party captured every office it contested, including all but two seats in each house. Thus entrenched, the Populares pushed rapidly ahead with their welfare program. During the next four years they introduced profit-sharing among the workers on the sugar-cane plantations recently acquired by the government. They distributed among some 90,000 landless peasants plots of ground large enough for a house and a vegetable garden. They established new medical centers,

enlarged and modernized public hospitals, and built over two thousand new classrooms in the public schools. They moved over 30,000 persons from slums to low-rent housing developments. They established new parks and playgrounds, provided financial aid for the unemployed and the aged, and extended electric power for the first time to more than 150 rural communities.[13]

---

13. See Luis Muñoz Marín, Historia del Partido Popular Democrático (San Juan, 1952), pp. 16-20.

Returned to office by equally large majorities in 1948 and 1952, the Populares have continued to register social and economic gains for the Puerto Rican people. Among the most significant accomplishments of the period since 1948 has been the rapid industrialization of the island. Under the stimulus of a governmental program of aids and incentives known as Operation Bootstrap, over three hundred factories have been established, creating more than 25,000 new jobs and providing an annual payroll of about $20,000,000. As of June 30, 1953, the average annual net income per capita had risen to $400, over three times the figure for 1940.

By concentrating on the economic problems of the island, the Popular Democratic Party has won the enthusiastic support of the common people who prior to 1940 had been largely indifferent to party struggles. They have responded to the PPD not only because its welfare program has measurably improved their living conditions but also because the party has addressed itself to their primary concerns and hence has given them a sense of being valued on their own account. The traditional status-oriented parties were never able to evoke this feeling of identification and

belonging among the masses.[14] As a consequence, two of the three old

---

14. Anthropological studies of selected rural areas and small towns in the late forties revealed a continuing lack of interest in the status issue on the part of the average Puerto Rican voter. One such study reports the following: "Investigation quickly discloses... that most of the inhabitants of the many small towns and of the rural areas are not intensely preoccupied with the question of Puerto Rico's colonial status. These people are too deeply involved in everyday problems of making a living, marrying, reproducing and raising children, and trying to enjoy a bit of recreation now and then to give thought to such complex, usually incomprehensible matters as political status, tariff advantages and disadvantages, or the position of Puerto Rico among the nations of the world... Once the city and University are left behind, the status question is likewise left behind, for the rest of the island's population performs its daily activities seemingly unaware of, or indifferent to, the question of Puerto Rico's political status." Morris Siegel, "A Puerto Rican Town," unpublished manuscript, Social Science Research Center, Univeristy of Puerto Rico, 1948, p. 294. See also the following unpublished Ph.D. dissertations, Columbia University, 1951; Eric R. Wolf, op. cit., pp. 166-167; Sidney W. Mintz, "Cañamelar: The Contemporary Culture of a Rural Puerto Rican Proletariat," pp. VIII/ 2-3; and Elena Padilla, "Nocora: An Agrarian Reform Sugar Community in Puerto Rico," p. X/25.

---

parties have disappeared from the political scene: in the 1944 election the Liberal Party failed to poll 10 per cent of the popular vote and hence lost its legal standing; the same fate overtook the Socialists in the 1952 election. Of the three, only the Republican Party remains, and its strength has declined with every election; in 1952 its candidate for Governor received only 13 per cent of the total gubernatorial vote.

It is not to be expected, however, that the Republican Party will follow the other two into oblivion, for it constitutes the rallying point for what appears to be a stable minority of more than 10 per cent of the Puerto Rican electorate who value statehood above all other ideological considerations. There is likewise a minority firmly committed to the ideal of independence, and the Independence Party which it supports seems also destined to remain in existence until Puerto Rico's political

status is irrevocably determined. Founded in 1943 as the Congress for Puerto Rican Independence and registered as a political party in April 1948, the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (the PIP) placed third in the 1948 election. In 1952 it attained second place, mainly at the expense of the other minor parties, and its candidate for the governorship received 19 per cent of the votes cast. The emergence of the PPD as a welfare-oriented party has thus resulted in a reshuffling of party support and in a precipitation of die-hard statehood and independence advocates into ideologically "pure" status parties.

The PPD Commitment to Commonwealth Status. This is not to say that the Popular Democratic Party has taken no position on the status issue. After 1944 the party began to get involved in the question, partly because Muñoz wanted the island to make some progress toward full self-government and partly because his hand was forced by unrest within the Popular high command. Prominent Populares had been among the founders of the Congress for Puerto Rican Independence, and by 1946 certain members of this group had withdrawn from the PPD altogether, later to become leaders of the Independence Party. The passage of the Elective Governor Act of 1947 [15] only whetted the appetite of other Popular leaders for more autonomy.

15. See supra, footnote 5 (b).

During the 1948 campaign, in order to satisfy these demands and to discourage further defections, the party brought forward the proposal that Congress permit the people of Puerto Rico to draft a constitution of their own to replace the insular-government provisions of the Organic Act. Interpreting the Popular victory at the polls as in part a mandate

to secure what in the end came to be called commonwealth status, the party leaders spent the next three and a half years seeking the approval of Congress and the Puerto Rican people for the specific changes involved. [16]

16. See supra, footnote 5 (c).

The successful conclusion of their efforts in 1952, and their support of the United States' successful argument before the United Nations in 1953 to the effect that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is no longer a "non-self-governing territory" within the meaning of Article 73e of the U.N. Charter, [17] have firmly committed the party to a defense of the common-

17. The successive stages in the United Nations' consideration of the Puerto Rican case are summarized in the following U.N. documents: A/AC.35/L.121, A/2465, A/2556, and A/PV.459.

wealth alternative in the perennial status debate.

Since 1948, therefore, the Popular Democratic Party has had two strings to its ideological bow: its welfare creed, and its sponsorship of commonwealth status. Of these the former is much the more dependable source of popular support. Despite the dramatic improvement in economic conditions during the last ten years, the Puerto Rican standard of living is still low by comparison with that of even the poorest state in the Union. Social and economic problems are therefore likely to continue to be regarded by the average voter as more important than the problem of political status.

MUÑOZ MARIN AS LEADER: THE PERSONALISMO FACTOR

The foregoing considerations might well seem to be explanation enough for the strong electoral support of the Popular Democratic Party. The fact is, however, that the party owes its success in considerable measure to the popularity of its founder and leader, Luis Muñoz Marin. As

Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill once were in their respective democracies, Muñoz is and has been since 1940 a figure of heroic proportions in the public life of Puerto Rico. Members of all classes tender him their respect, confidence, and support, but his following is grounded on the humble folk of town and countryside who are almost unanimous in according him their loyalty and even devotion. [18] One often hears it said in Puerto Rico

---

18. The anthropologist Mintz, who lived for more than a year in a cane-workers' village ("Barrio Poyal") on the south coast, reports the following: "When a loyal Popular in Barrio Poyal was once asked if he had a picture of a saint in his house, he pointed jokingly to a photograph of Muñoz Marín and remarked: 'There is my saint, he lives in San Juan; his name is San Cocho.' (Sancocho is a kind of stew.) Muñoz Marín is thus identified with the most fundamental needs of the common people." Op. cit., p. VIII/2. Mintz and others have called attention to the fact that many of the poor people refer to themselves as Muñocistas rather than as Populares. See loc. cit., Wolf, op. cit., p. 155; Padilla, op. cit., p. X/17.

---

that Muñoz alone holds the key to the island's political future: the common people, it is alleged, trust him so implicitly that they would approve any form of status recommended by him - statehood, independence or anything in between.

Muñoz Marín's Leadership. It is not easy to pin down the essentials of Muñoz Marín's stature as a political leader. His personality is complex and the external factors contributing to his success are manifold. Nevertheless the following items may be put forward as at least a partial explanation for his hold on the affections and loyalty of the great majority of Puerto Ricans.

To begin with, he is endowed with a number of attributes, quite apart from personality traits, which sociologists have long identified as concomitants of leadership. He bears a distinguished name. Son of a famous patriot (Muñoz Rivera is often called "the George Washington of

Puerto Rico"), he began his own political career with the enormous advantage of being in a sense already known. On his mother's side he comes of another prominent family, the Maríns, who have contributed significantly to the cultural life of the island. Tall and powerfully built, he towers above most of his _compatriotas_. Dignified but never stiff or formal, he has the bearing of command. His voice is deep and resonant, and he has the kind of face, scarcely to be described as handsome, which inspires confidence because of its expression of strength, humor, and fellow feeling.

As to his personality, here again Muñoz is almost the prototype of the popular leader. To say that he has the common touch is to understate, even to vulgarize, his rare talent for establishing a two-way relationship of sympathy and understanding with ordinary people, both face to face and in the group situation. The simplicity and directness of his public speech - he has a flawless command of idiom and accent in both English and Spanish - contrast sharply with the flamboyant tradition of Puerto Rican spellbindery but have had so compelling an impact upon the electorate that they bid fair to revolutionize the techniques of political oratory in the island. His earthy wit and virile energy are important assets among a people for whom _macho_ (masculine) is a word of highest praise.

Within the political elite Muñoz is acknowledged even by his opponents to stand head and shoulders above everybody else. The brilliance of his conversation, the fertility of his ideas, the shrewdness of his judgment of men and affairs, and the range of his knowledge, interests, and connections set him off as a man to be followed, not to be led. To this catalogue of traits must finally be added that hallmark of the gifted politician - the knowledge of when to compromise, when to give way, when to shift ground, when to push forward in order ultimately to achieve one's

objectives. This quality Muñoz seems to possess to a superlative degree, and it has saved him both from making irrevocable mistakes and from alienating vital segments of his support.

Thus endowed by nature and inheritance with the marks of leadership, Muñoz Marín seems to have been almost predestined to play a leading role in the affairs of his homeland. But the degree of predominance to which he has attained in Puerto Rico cannot be explianed without taking into account yet another factor - a highly favorable environment. His emergence as a kind of folk hero is wholly in keeping with, and indeed a product of, attitudinal and behavioral patterns that have characterized the island for many years.

Origins of Personalismo. The roots of personalismo in Puerto Rico, i.e., of the habit of deference to and dependence upon personal authority, are to be found in the distribution of political and economic power during the four centuries of Spanish rule. On the political level Spain's colonial policy can only be described as absolutism. Its chief feature was an extraordinary concentration of authority in the hands of the Governor General, an appointee of the Crown who was usually an army officer with the rank of Captain General. Vested with nearly absolute power by the Laws of the Indies and by royal decrees, he tended to rule the island as if it were a military garrison. His deputies in charge of the districts into which the island was divided for administrative purposes were also military officers until late in the nineteenth century, and his personal appointees headed and controlled all but two of the municipal governments of the island. Aside from three brief periods of liberal reform during the nineteenth century, civil liberties and popular participation in government were unknown. Having no opportunity to manage their

own public affairs, the Puerto Rican people became accustomed to depending upon externally imposed authority, personified by the governor and his agents, for whatever services government could provide.[19]

19. No comprehensive political history of Puerto Rico under Spanish rule has yet been written in any language, but two excellent sketches are available in English. One is Pedro Muñoz Amato, "Major Trends in the Constitutional History of Puerto Rico, 1493-1917," Revista de Derecho, Legislación y Jurisprudencia del Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico, Vol. 12, pp. 242-259 (1949), and the other is to be found in José Trías Monge, "Legislative and Judicial Reorganization in Puerto Rico," unpublished J.S.D. dissertation, Yale Law School, 1947, pp. 173-247. See also Lidio Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico (Siglo XIX), Vol. I (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1952), for an exhaustive account of the period 1808-1868. Volumes II and III, forthcoming soon, will carry the story through 1898.

Much the same dependence upon personal authority became the pattern in economic life during the Spanish regime. Although Puerto Rico was predominantly a land of small farms until the early years of the present century, sizable holdings had existed on the coastal plains since early in the sixteenth century. They had come into being as a result of the repartimiento system, a royal policy of awarding tracts of land, along with the Indians inhabiting them, to favored Spanish settlers. Redistribution of land titles in the eighteenth century broke up some of the large estates, but the individually owned sugar plantation, or hacienda, continued to be the prevailing form of land holding in the coastal areas throughout the Spanish period. Whatever the size of the hacienda, most of the work was done by the Indians (until their disappearance as a separate racial stock towards the end of the sixteenth century), by Negro slaves (until their emancipation in 1873), and by agregados, i.e., free but landless whites, Negroes, and mulattoes. All of these field hands and their families, as well as the household and other servants, were

totally dependent upon the hacendado, or landowner. They looked to him not only for direction of their daily rounds but also for help in time of sickness or other trouble. He was in short a paternalistic or quasi-feudal power figure to whom they were bound by ties of mutual obligation in all aspects of their lives.[20]

---

20. According to a recent description, the hacendado was "a patriarchal figure who acted at times as father, counsellor, physician and judge of his people. The term 'padre de agrego' (father by aggregation) is still used by some of the older residents of our rural communities when referring to the owner of the land where they live." Raúl Muñoz, Belén M. Serra and Angelina S. de Roca, "Research and Evaluation in a Program of Community Education," The Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 9, no. 2, p. 50 (1953).

In the mountainous interior, land holdings of twenty acres or less and subsistence farming characterized the Spanish period until the nineteenth century when coffee became a profitable cash crop. Large farms, or fincas, then began to appear even in the mountains, especially in the western half of the island, and the large landowner came to be the dominant figure in his highland community. Like the hacendado of the sugar plantation, the big coffee farmer tended to be the personification of authority among the jíbaros, the humble tenants and small holders, of his neighborhood.

Because of the overwhelmingly rural character of the island and the immobility of the peasantry in Spanish times, it seems likely that the large landowner was more important than the colonial official in the development of the personalismo tradition. According to the 1899 census, barely a fifth of the population (21.4 per cent) lived in towns of 1,000 or more, yet it was mainly in the urban areas that Spanish officialdom made its presence felt. The country people knew at first hand only the

authority of the local gentry. Around them, the unofficial but virtually omnipotent arbiters of rural life, developed the attitudes of deference and dependence that have since carried over into other fields and especially into politics.[21]

---

21. No economic history of Puerto Rico has yet appeared, but the following works contain material on land tenure and economic organization in the Spanish period: Víctor S. Clark and associates, Porto Rico and Its Problems (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1930), pp. 495-500; Raymond E. Crist, Sugar Cane and Coffee in Puerto Rico (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico, n.d., reprinted from The American Journal of Economics and Sociology, Jan., Apr., and July 1948), pp. 3-7; Harvey S. Perloff, Puerto Rico's Economic Future (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 12-16; and Rafael Picó and William H. Haas, "Puerto Rico," in Haas, ed., The American Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), pp. 41-55.

Personalismo in Puerto Rican Politics. The personalismo tendency could not manifest itself electorally in Puerto Rico until 1898. The parliamentary election of that year was the first to be held on the basis of universal manhood suffrage[22] and hence provided the first occasion on

---

22. See supra, footnote 4.

---

which appeals could be made to anything approaching a mass electorate. This contest, marked by extreme bitterness and even violence, was essentially a struggle between two strong personalities, Luis Muñoz Rivera and José Celso Barbosa, and their respective followers. For more than a quarter of a century thereafter, despite Muñoz Rivera's death in 1916 and Barbosa's in 1921, rivalry between the "Muñocistas" and the "Barbocistas" sharpened when it did not supersede the status issue as a cause of division and conflict in insular politics.[23]

---

23. For a discussion of the rivalry between Muñoz Rivera and Barbosa, see Pedreira, op. cit., pp. 121-149, and José A. Gautier Dapena, "Nacimiento de los Partidos Políticos bajo la Soberanía de los Estados Unidos," Historia, Vol. 3, pp. 153-178 (Oct. 1953).

Santiago Iglesias, founder of the Puerto Rican labor movement and of the Socialist Party, provides a third example of personalismo on the insular level before the rise of Muñoz Marín. Although the party and the labor movement gained much of their strength from the popularity of their economic aims among the workers, Iglesias' dynamic personality was in no small degree responsible for such success as they achieved. He had a devoted personal following which remained loyal until his death in 1939.[24]

---

24. I am indebted to my colleague Professor Reece Bothwell for the suggestion that one reason for Muñoz Marín's rise to power in 1940 may have been the fact that the veteran políticos Iglesias, Barceló, and Martínez Nadal - leaders respectively of the Socialist, Liberal, and Republican parties - had just previously died or retired from active politics, thus leaving the field open for the emergence of a new leadership figure. (Barceló died in 1938. Martínez Nadal had retired in 1939 because of ill health and died in 1941.)

But the phenomenon of personalismo is not restricted to the insular level of Puerto Rican politics. It has characterized local politics as well, ever since the beginnings of mass participation in political life around the turn of the century. On both the municipal level and that of the rural barrio, or district, it manifests itself in terms of popular dependence upon a single political leader in whom is focused most of the effective power available to the local community. In every municipio today there is a political boss, popularly known as the cacique, who is the local leader of the Popular Democratic Party. In a few instances the cacique does not hold public office, but usually he is the mayor, sometimes the Representative from his district, or occasionally even a Senator. Whatever his status, he tends to be regarded by his fellow citizens as the local embodiment of the party and hence of the government, as their most effective intercessor when they seek benefits provided by insular agencies, and as an ever-available source of favors, jobs, hand-outs, and advice.

In short he is expected to play the role of the paternalistic hacendado for the entire municipality.

The cacique has the power to perform these services because he normally controls the municipal assembly (though its members are elected) and the municipal administration (all members of which are appointed). In some cases he may even be able to influence the decisions of the local District Court, though in recent years the judiciary has become increasingly less susceptible to political pressures. But his most important source of strength is the fact that he is the municipality's link with the higher echelons of the party, whence many blessings flow.

Within the municipality the boss controls the rural areas through unofficial (i.e., unpaid) agents known as comisarios del barrio, who constitute his personal machine. Appointed by the mayor, the comisario is the key political figure in each barrio. Usually chairman of the barrio committee of the PPD, he dispenses the political patronage available to the community. He also acts as go-between for the people of his district in their dealings with municipal officials and performs other services for them, in the hacendado tradition, within the limits of his political and economic resources.

A recent survey [25] of social participation in the rural barrios,

---

25. The survey was conducted during the period November 1951 to February 1952 by the Division of Community Education of the Commonwealth Department of Education, with the assistance of the Institute of Social Research of the University of Michigan. Based on a scientific random sample of approximately 1800 adult respondents and representing the entire rural population of the island, the survey obtained information on the economic and social characteristics of the rural population, on the extent of its past and present experience with community action, and on its attitudes toward community action, including its perceptions of the role of leadership. The preliminary findings of the survey are summarized in Muñoz, Serra and de Roca,

op. cit. (footnote 20), pp. 43-52. See also "A Survey of Social Participation in the Puerto Rican Community," mimeographed (San Juan: Division of Community Education, July 1952), and "Report on Preliminary Findings...." (idem, Sept. 1952).

which contain 60 per cent of the island's population, revealed that most of the country folk look to the comisario or to a local man of property (the two are in many instances the same person viewed in different roles) for the solution of their problems. The rural respondents mentioned such persons three times as frequently as any other when asked to identify the leaders in their respective communities.[26] The survey also attempted to

26. See Muñoz, Serra and de Roca, op. cit., p. 50.

explore the rural population's general attitudes toward authority, with the following results:

> The dependence on government and on strong leaders is accompanied by a feeling of personal inability for the solution of communal problems as a result of an underestimation of personal capacities... Evidence of the predominance of this general attitude pattern was found in the survey. From one viewpoint the Sanford abbreviation of the authoritarianism scale developed by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, et al., was used. Its applicability, translation, and interpretation in this setting are, of course, in need of test but the results are interesting. Breaking the possible range at the mid-point the resulting dichotomy for the rural Puerto Rico sample is:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Somewhat authoritarian | 84% |
> | Somewhat non-authoritarian | 16% |
>
> Making a comparable split for the U.S. adult population as a comparison the figures are:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Somewhat authoritarian | 46% |
> | Somewhat non-authoritarian | 54% [27] |

27. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

Personalismo as a Factor in the Strength of the PPD. Given this background - a history of popular dependence on personal authority that dates back four and a half centuries and is very much alive today in the local communities of the island - it is not surprising that a man with Muñoz Marín's leadership traits should evoke widespread and devoted support among the common people. They have long been conditioned to entrust their affairs to just such an authority figure. Their motivation to put their trust in Muñoz is of course the stronger because of his identification with the PPD welfare program, for this is a factor that relates him to the ancient symbolism of the good landowner, the paternalistic hacendado who holds himself responsible for the well being of his people.[28]

---

28. The anthropologist Wolf came to this conclusion after living for eighteen months among the jíbaros of a coffee region. In support of the thesis he calls attention to Muñoz Marín's "tactic of 'going to the people'; his readiness to talk to the country folk; the simplicity of his speeches and language; his willingness to share their food and hospitality; his informality in clothes and studied dislike of urban articles of wearing apparel; his reputation as a man who can hold his liquor well; his appeal to women; his attempts to 'give life' to the people, to better their conditions. The kind of man who fits this description on the local level in the 'good landowner.'" Op. cit., pp. 154-155.

In every election Muñoz Marín is the greatest asset of the Popular Democratic ticket, which is usually voted "straight." (The habit of voting a straight ticket is urged upon the electorate during every campaign by frequent repetitions of the slogan "¡Una sola cruz debajo de la pava!" - "A single cross beneath the straw-hat!") To a considerable degree, therefore, the other Popular candidates ride into office on Muñoz' shirt-tails. But the party is also strong in its own right, and its highly centralized and well-disciplined organization contributes

significantly to Popular successes at the polls. The effect of *personalismo* in maintaining this sort of organization must not be overlooked. It expresses itself horizontally in concentration of power in the hands of a single leader in each *barrio* and *municipio*, as we have seen, and in the island itself - in other words, on every level of the party hierarchy. It expresses itself vertically in direction and control of the whole organization from the top of the party pyramid, each leader on the lower levels taking his cues from the echelon above him. Here again, however, we ultimately come back to Muñoz, for he heads the central committee of the party and is president of the organization as a whole.

IDEOLOGY, *PERSONALISMO*, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

It would be pointless and doubtless impossible to determine whether ideology or *personalismo* has played the greater role in the success of the Popular Democratic Party. It is enough to say that both factors have been vitally important - and to add that the party unquestionably could never have achieved its predominance on the basis of only one of them except by resort to patently undemocratic techniques of gaining and holding power. Together they represent a virtually unbeatable combination because they offer compatible, and indeed closely interrelated, responses to deep-rooted physical and psychological needs of the people - the need for economic security through identification with a werlfare-oriented program, and the need for emotional security through identification with a strong leader.

How long this combination can last is of course another question. A pronounced change in either factor - abandonment of the welfare ideology or disappearance of Muñoz Marín from the political scene - would certainly shake and might well destroy popular confidence in the Popular Democratic

Party. Muñoz is not immortal, and certain members of the Popular high command are ever tempted to pay more attention to the old question of political status than to the economic and social problems of the island. The future stability of the party is therefore by no means assured.

Changes now going on within the society itself introduce another element of uncertainty, but too little is known about them to justify much comment on their significance for the future of the PPD. It seems reasonable to suppose, however, that the Popular program has had a profound effect upon the way in which many Puerto Ricans regard themselves and their world. The liberation of thousands of people from the tyranny of struggling for the means to satisfy even the most elementary needs of life, the creation of a wide variety of new opportunities for work and prestige, the development of new habits and attitudes through employment in industry, offices and services trades, the progressive urbanization of the island - all these things may perhaps be producing a new type of citizenry, a group of self-reliant individuals for whom the personalismo tradition is less meaningful than it used to be. Even in the country districts, wheere PPD-sponsored economic reforms have had less dramatic impact than in the towns, forces are at work which may be changing rural attitudes toward authority. A program initiated by the Popular government itself, through its Division of Community Education, has recently had remarkable success in encouraging the country people to work voluntarily together on projects of their own choosing and by methods that they themselves adopt for the betterment of rural community life and for the

solution of common problems.[29] In the long run this kind of activity on

---

29. For a description of this interesting development, which may well turn out to be the most significant achievement of the whole Popular program, see Charles F. Cannell, Fred G. Wale, and Stephen B. Withey, eds., "Community Change: An Action Program in Puerto Rico," _The Journal of Social Issues_, Vol. 9, no. 2 (1953).

---

the part of the country folk could not fail to reduce their sense of dependence upon the _comisario del barrio_ and thus to undermine his power and prestige, and that of the municipal _cacique_ as well. In the still longer run, it might be expected to lessen their traditional deference toward authority figures on the insular level.

It is too early to tell what these social changes mean, but it is at least conceivable that, given time enough to consolidate themselves, they can provide the basis for a fairly orderly transition from the politics of paternalism to the politics of popular responsibility. Whether or not the Popular Democratic Party could survive such a transition is of course a question that no one can answer. But if that transition ever takes place, it will have been the Popular Democratic Party that made it possible.