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The Editor
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Sir:

I have read the letter from the Puerto Rican Senator Charles H. Juliá, which The Baltimore Sun published on April 2. I shall not comment on the insults he piles on the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico. What Mr. Juliá thinks of his fellow legislators and what they think of him is a purely internal Puerto Rican affair. But what he says about Governor Luis Muñoz-Marín and the Commonwealth's role in inter-American relations is of interest to the mainland reader. I should like to dwell on this point.

In his letter, Senator Juliá shows not only an utter lack of legislative manners, but also an utter lack of respect for historical truth. To claim that Muñoz Marín rose to power in Puerto Rico, aided by the money and prestige of the Federal Government, and that the Federal millions were behind him, is simply to indulge in an amazing distortion of well-known facts. Anyone familiar with the ABC of Puerto Rican politics knows that, while in the early days of the New Deal Muñoz Marín was looked upon with favor by President Roosevelt and his associates, his relations with Mr. Ickes and Mr. Gruening were severely strained after 1936. Dr. Rexford G. Tugwell, who certainly knew what was going on, summarizes the views held on Muñoz by Mr. Ickes' associates at the time:

"Mr. Ickes had had no advance information that his strength was formidable; indeed his subordinates had given him to understand the contrary, meanwhile doing what they could to see that their assertions were made good. Their representations were that Muñoz was an inconsequential son of a notable father, lamentably lacking in any quality of application, persistence or ability: an incorrigible bohemian, living his life

in cafés, talking largely with a miscellaneous and impermanent crowd of acquaintances: he had literary leanings, fancied himself as a poet --El vate, his detractors called him-- but he never worked hard enough to accomplish anything even at this amateur occupation: it was true that he sometimes talked largely about schemes for bettering the condition of Puerto Ricans, but he was offensively apt, in doing so, to confuse his nebulous ideas with the fundamental aims of the people. What he said they wanted must be what they did want; he offered no other evidence. He had been a legislator and had tangled obstreperously with Mr. Gruening. But beyond these casual items there was not much." (The Stricken Land, N. Y., 1947, Page 9.)

The Popular Democratic Party, which Muñoz founded in 1938, lived on a shoe-string. It had absolutely no money and no power behind it, except the strength of its ideals. This fact is known to everybody in Puerto Rico --including Senator Juliá. One may agree or disagree with the Party's role in Puerto Rican political history, but to claim that it rode to victory on the strength of the Federal millions is a gross misrepresentation of the truth.

In his irate attack on Governor Muñoz and his Party, Senator Juliá asks: "Who, other than Muñoz Marín and his stateside dupes, has ever said he had any important prestige in Latin America? Indeed, his so-called 'Commonwealth' of Puerto Rico brings nothing but sneers from nations of South America, for they recognize it for what it is, a shabby cloak over our real status, which is simply that of an unincorporated territory of the United States."

In replying, we are not so much concerned with Senator Juliá's utter lack of respect for history, as with his utter lack of information. His ignorance matches his venom. Was President José Figueres, the great democratic leader of Costa Rica, a Latin American "dupe" when, speaking before the Meeting of American Presidents in Panamá in 1956, he referred to Governor Muñoz as "one of the thinkers who has done most to solve New World problems"? Shall we classify President de la Guardia of Panamá as another "dupe" because he stated that Muñoz Marín "is a great New World figure" and asked for Commonwealth assistance in planning Panamá's economic development? Did President Lleras Camargo of Colombia "sneer" at Puerto Rico when he requested the cooperation of

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Commonwealth technicians in the preparation of a master plan for that republic? Is President Rómulo Betancourt a Latin American "dupe" because of his close friendship and well-known personal admiration for Governor Muñoz? And how about President Villeda Morales of Honduras who has praised the Commonwealth and sent mission after mission of Honduran students and public officials to be trained in Puerto Rico? And how about Mr. Galo Plaza, former President of Ecuador and one of the top architects of good inter-American relations? Was he publicly "sneering" at Puerto Rico when he extolled "the extraordinary performance of her people under the leadership of their great Governor," at the last Governors' Conference? And the seven Latin American countries that sponsored a resolution on Puerto Rico at the United Nations in 1953 - were they also "sneering" at the Commonwealth status when they declared that "the agreement reached by the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, in forming a political association which respects the individuality and the cultural characteristics of Puerto Rico, maintains the spiritual bonds between Puerto Rico and Latin America and constitutes a link in continental solidarity"??

Finally: is the fact that the Commonwealth has received in its brief history more than 6,000 students, visitors, and scholars from Latin America, thus becoming one of the most active inter-American centers of cultural and technical exchange, a proof of hemispheric "sneering" at Puerto Rico?

Or... shall we ask Senator Juliá to take some tranquilizers, control his temper and tongue, and do his elementary homework, before trying to fool the American people?

Sincerely yours,

ARTURO MORALES CARRION
Commonwealth
Under Secretary of State

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